

TESTIGOS DE LA FE POR LA PAZ

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

MAY 4, 2009 \$2.75



## Truth and Reconciliation

DANIEL PHILPOTT • JOHN PERRY • MARGARET BENEFIEL



*Also: Spring Books*

# OF MANY THINGS

**I**pen these words during the octave of Easter and the onset of official spring. We had a long winter here on the East Coast, but trees at last brim with buds and the ground swells with a medley of new life—colorful blooms that like Easter itself renew our hope, lift our spirit and tell us to rejoice and be glad.

And glad we are about our Spring Books issue this year. It contains reviews of a potpourri of new titles in a variety of categories. The first book is a chronicle of the greatest achievements in American intellectual thought, by the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian William H. Goetzmann. Next out of the gate is the beloved and critically acclaimed poet Mary Oliver with a new collection of poems, permeated with her customary attentiveness to nature's mysteries. Then comes a history of the papacy, by Roger Collins, a serious and stately book that is informative and illuminating (as well as occasionally entertaining).

In her stirring memoir, Marilyn Lacey, of the Religious Sisters of Mercy, shares stories from her 25 years working with refugees, migrants and displaced persons on several continents. Her living out of God's call is, as the book's subtitle has it, a story of "God arriving in strangers." The best-selling author Thomas Cahill has taken a break from his "Hinges of History" series and written a deeply moving account of a young black man on death row and the flawed Texas judicial system. Finally, a noteworthy book on the culture of punishment in the United States and what underlies our nation's shameful record on cruelty.

Reading any or all of these books is a good way to kick-start your May activities. But this month presents us with other special opportunities and celebratory occasions. One that is perhaps not widely known is "Be Kind to Animals Week," from May 2 to 9. Our nation's deep economic slump has prompted the neglect and abandon-

ment of large numbers of both domestic and farm animals. The public is encouraged to report instances of animal abuse, if possible adopt a pet from a shelter or rescue and, above all, become informed about policies and legislation that bear on the problem.

Mother's Day, most will agree, is the centerpiece of the month. One can thank Anna Maria Reeves Jarvis (1832-1905), a devout Christian who organized women's work clubs during and after the Civil War. Her daughter Anna Jarvis dedicated her life to establishing a nationally recognized Mother's Day (but she protested against the eventual "secularization" of the holiday). On this day we recognize the gifts we have received from our mothers, living or deceased. But we honor as well the gifts of all women who exercise a nurturing role in others' lives: godmothers, older siblings, teachers, mentors.

The Fourth Commandment enjoins us to honor our parents always. But on this one particular day we focus on a lifetime of connection and memories, a bond that can never be broken—and we are glad and rejoice. We may pick a bunch of spring blooms, fashion a corsage for Mom and indulge her as queen for the day. (I recall as a child once asking my parents, If there is a Mother's Day and a Father's Day, when is it Children's Day? My father's response: Every day is Children's Day!)

The merry month of May also brings family and friends together to celebrate first Communions and perhaps confirmations or weddings. As it is the month dedicated to Mary, there will be processions and "May crownings" of statues—still popular practices in many parishes across the land. All around us are signs of joy, rebirth and renewal.

May I suggest, readers, that you gift Mother (and all your loved ones) this holiday with a good book. You are likely to find the right one in the pages of **America**. **PATRICIA A. KOSSMANN**

# America

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*Cover:* A girl stands in front of photos at the tomb of slain Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera of Guatemala City. CNS photo from Reuters.

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## ON THE WEB

Justin Catanoso (right) talks about his book, *My Cousin the Saint*, and John W. O'Malley, S.J., and Msgr. John J. Strykowski discuss the pope and collegiality. Plus, photographs from **America's** centennial Mass and a report from James Martin, S.J.



## CURRENT COMMENT

### No Train, No Gain

A recent online search of The New York Times for the term “high-speed rail” returned this headline as the third result: “High-Speed Rail Line Is Planned by Japan.” The date? July 14, 1958. Also included in the results was another headline, this one from 2009: “Obama Seeks High-Speed Rail System Across U.S.” Has the United States finally decided to do what most industrialized countries have been doing for over 50 years—namely, make a meaningful investment in mass rail transit? We hope so. The chronic underfunding of the U.S. rail system is an international embarrassment. President Barack Obama’s announcement in April that he was making available \$8 billion to develop high-speed intercity rail transportation in 10 regions of the country is a welcome change indeed. A properly funded rail system would create jobs, reduce travel times and increase mobility. It would also reduce congestion on the highways and in the air and curtail carbon emissions, a leading cause of global warming.

Mr. Obama’s plan has already run into considerable criticism, mainly from the same tired coalition of automakers and pseudoconservatives who claim that the nation’s rail system should sink or swim on its own, without the added buoyancy provided by government subsidies. Such a critique would have some validity if the government were not already in the business of heavily subsidizing transportation. Ten billion dollars per year goes to the highway trust fund, and almost \$3 billion annually goes to the Federal Aviation Administration (not counting airport construction). And let us not forget that the federal government is now practically running General Motors. We have no quibble with these programs per se, but rail should get its fair share. Japan figured that out 50 years ago. We would still do well to learn the lesson.

### Everybody Is Somebody

One unexpected event during the installation of Timothy M. Dolan as head of the Archdiocese of New York on April 15 was the dramatic reaction of the congregation to a passage about life issues in the archbishop’s homily. At the mention of the unborn, the congregation leapt to its feet and cheered with the sustained passion of a political rally responding to a cue. Nothing else in the entire ceremony received a similar response, not even the formal announcement of the archbishop’s installation.

Nothing in Archbishop Dolan’s homily, however, invited such an intense reaction. Even as he spoke of the church protecting the weak and helpless as a “mama bear” protects its cubs, the archbishop was careful to broaden the scope of that concern to include not only the sick, the elderly and the poor but also others who often go unmentioned, like people who are mentally or physically handicapped and addicts. His plain-spoken, overriding idea that “everybody is somebody” was far from sloganeering. Indeed, it offers a highly positive and very useful way of explaining the church’s position to the world.

Church leaders around the country could enhance the public conversation about life issues by following Archbishop Dolan’s lead. Such inviting rhetoric would likely help the church accomplish its goals.

### The French Paradox

It is a truism that French youngsters, growing up in families accustomed to wine with their meals, learn how to handle alcohol. But pending legislation suggests otherwise, now that alcohol-related illnesses are the second largest cause of death in France. (Tobacco-related illnesses are the first.) To combat problem drinking among the young, Nicolas Sarkozy’s government has introduced a bill that would raise the age for beer and wine consumption to 18. Young people currently can buy beer and wine at age 16, and bartenders and shopkeepers seldom require proof of age. The bill also stops bars from allowing customers to drink as much as they want for a modest fee, a practice popular at student parties. The National Assembly approved the measure in March. The bill still needs the approval of the French Senate.

Binge drinking by French youth is of special concern. The number of people between the ages of 15 and 24 hospitalized for alcohol-related illnesses jumped 50 percent between 2004 and 2007. Although the overall amount of wine and liquor consumption in France has dropped over the past 50 years for the population at large, among the young it has been rising; hence the worry among health officials. France banned the advertising of alcoholic beverages on television in 1991. New regulations passed in March 2009, however, allow alcohol advertising on the Internet, a concession won by the powerful wine lobby. France’s high levels of alcoholism cause appropriate alarm among its health authorities, and whatever practical success the bill may have, it is at least a step in the direction of trying to protect French youth from a life-threatening addiction.

# A Modest Proposal

Silence and fervent prayer for vocations are no longer adequate responses to the priest shortage in the United States. As the church prepares to observe the Year of the Priest, which begins on June 19, open discussion about how to sustain the church as a eucharistic community of faith and fortify the pastoral life of Catholic congregations has become imperative. For making do within the limits set by present demographic trends presents a double threat to Catholic life: Catholic communities will become only infrequent eucharistic communities, or eucharistic communities will be severed from the pastoral care and public witness of priests.

In 2008 the sociologist Dean Hoge said: “We need at least a doubling of ordinations to maintain the American priesthood as we know it now. But this is impossible.” Of current diocesan priests, only 70 percent are available for parish ministry, with the rest sick, retired or absent for a variety of reasons, according to Mary Gautier of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. An increasing number of Catholics are unable to participate in a Sunday or weekday Mass. All this prompts the question, Will the priest shortage impose a eucharistic famine on the Catholic people?

The de facto remedy already applied in many places—making the priest a circuit rider moving from parish to parish to dispense the sacraments—risks narrowing the ministry of the priest and impoverishing the Christian life of the communities he serves. A narrowly sacramental definition of priesthood satisfies the requirements of only one of the three canons that define the pastoral responsibilities of the priest, Canon 530. As a consequence the sacramental office is as a practical matter severed from its integral connection with comprehensive pastoral care. Canons 528 and 529 provide a broader understanding of the priestly ministry. The first sees the priest as one who instructs, catechizes, fosters works of justice, shows special care for the education of children and brings the Gospel to those who have ceased to practice the faith. The second requires that he should come to know the faithful entrusted to his care, visit families, share their concerns, worries and griefs, help the sick and seek out the poor, the afflicted and the lonely. Diminishing numbers make it difficult to carry out this holistic vision of the priest’s pastoral ministry.

We hope that the upcoming Year of the Priest will lead to a broader discussion of the priesthood in the con-

temporary world and, in particular, will open examination of the various ways the shortage of priests can be addressed honestly and with imagination. New vocations can be promoted through youth rallies, the Internet and, as always, with prayer. In addition, the pastoral needs of parishes may also be met in part by more effective pastoral assignment of permanent deacons and by increased leadership by lay men and women.

What about the recruitment and training of married men as priests? Married priests already minister in the Catholic Church, both East and West. Addressing the married clergy of the Eastern Catholic churches, the Second Vatican Council exhorted “all those who have received the priesthood in the married state to persevere in their holy vocation and continue to devote their lives fully and generously to the flock entrusted to their care” (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, No. 16). That exhortation now applies to the more than 100 former Anglican priests and Lutheran ministers who have entered the Catholic Church, been ordained and now serve in the Latin rite. As we face the challenges of the priest shortage, some of the more than 16,000 permanent deacons in the United States, many of them married, who experience a call to priestly ministry might be called to ordination with a similarly adapted discipline. In addition, the views and desires of some of the more than 25,000 priests who have been laicized (and are now either single or married) should also be heard.

Our plea is modest. The bishops of the United States should take greater leadership in openly discussing the priest shortage and its possible remedies. These should not be conversations in which we face a problem only to find every new avenue of solution closed. Rather, they should be exchanges fully open to the possibilities offered by the Spirit.

In March, Cardinal Edward Egan, the newly retired archbishop of New York, said in a candid moment that the topic of married priests “is a perfectly legitimate discussion.” He added, “I think it should be looked at.” The cardinal later nuanced his statement, but the need for a creative re-visioning of priestly life to sustain the eucharistic life of the church in its fullest sense can no longer be delayed.



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

JERUSALEM

## In Israeli Jewish Schools, No Teaching About Christianity

**D**aniel Rossing uses one word to sum up the extent of teaching about Christianity in Israeli schools: none. “The answer is very simply no. Israeli students do not learn about Christianity in school,” said Rossing, director of the independent Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations. “All indications are that there is a very widespread ignorance with regard to Catholicism in general and in particular in regard to the revolutionary changes which have taken place in the Catholic Church regarding Judaism and the Jewish people,” said Rossing, who is an Orthodox Jew.

The Jerusalem Center and the independent Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies recently released the results of a survey looking at Jewish Israeli attitudes toward Christianity. Given the lack of exposure young people have to Christians and Christianity, Rossing said, he was not surprised by results that showed young Israeli Jews tend to be less tolerant of Christians than people over 30. People under 30 “are solely the product of the educational system and don’t have contact with Christianity, while [older people] have had other influences and opportunities for encounters,” said Rossing.

Sixty-eight percent of non-Orthodox Jewish respondents said that Christianity should be taught in Israeli schools and 52 percent said that the New Testament should be studied. Seventy-three percent of Orthodox Jewish respondents, however, and 90 percent of ultra-Orthodox Jewish respondents opposed teaching about Christianity in schools in any form. Only 3 percent of the respondents said they had no opinion, indicating that the vast majority of people feel strongly about this issue one way or the other, Rossing said.

Currently, if anything about Christianity is taught, says Rossing, “it is about the Crusades and the Inquisition. There is no teaching of comparative religion.” In response, some educators are pushing for teach-

ing about the local Christian communities in the schools so students can at least learn about “our neighbors in this land,” Rossing said. In schools where there are some local educational initiatives, there is more freedom in the curriculum and more exposure to the history of Christianity as a religion, but it is not a formal program reviewed and approved by the ministry of education.

“Jewish kids in Israel who finish high school will be totally ignorant about Vatican II. They will not have a clue,” said Rabbi Ron Kronish, director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel, which conducted its own study of the issue 10 years ago. At the time there were a few attempts to approach the subject in cultural studies classes, but not much has changed in the past decade, he said. In fact, according to Kronish, the situation may be worse. Most school-age children, for instance, will not have heard

anything about the pilgrimage to Israel by Pope John Paul II in 2000. “I have never heard about someone in Israel taking [it] upon himself to educate Jews about post-Vatican II Christians,” said Rabbi Kronish.

Rossing said that without a basic understanding of the history of Christianity and the influence of Christian culture, Israeli students are left with a big gap in their historical understanding of the world. “It is hard to understand today’s world without a good concept of Christianity and Israel, not to mention our neighbors,” said Rossing. He said that during workshops, representatives of his center have also discovered that Muslims—even those who live in mixed villages with Christians—are almost as ignorant about Christianity as their Jewish counterparts.

From CNS, staff and other sources.





NOTRE DAME DEBATE

## Invitation Stokes a National Controversy

**T**he University of Notre Dame's invitation to President Barack Obama to speak at its commencement in May—and the honorary degree it will bestow upon him—is the subject of the latest in a series of controversies that has fuelled a national debate on how Catholic colleges and universities should express their Catholic identities.

In Scranton, Pa., Bishop Joseph F. Martino engaged in a public dispute with the leadership of Misericordia University after a gay rights activist was invited to give a lecture there. At the University of San Francisco, some Catholics were angered by the decision

to award Irish President Mary McAleese an honorary degree even though she has publicly supported gay rights and women's ordination. Fordham University's law school presented U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer with a prestigious ethics prize despite objections because of the justice's votes to uphold the legality of abortion. And the University of San Diego revoked the faculty appointment of a theologian—Rosemary Radford Ruether—after learning that she was a member of the board of an organization that supports legal abortion. "It is a part of the continuing evidence that Catholic universities are becoming intellectual and cultural ghettos where the controversial issues cannot be discussed," Ruether said following the revocation of her appointment.

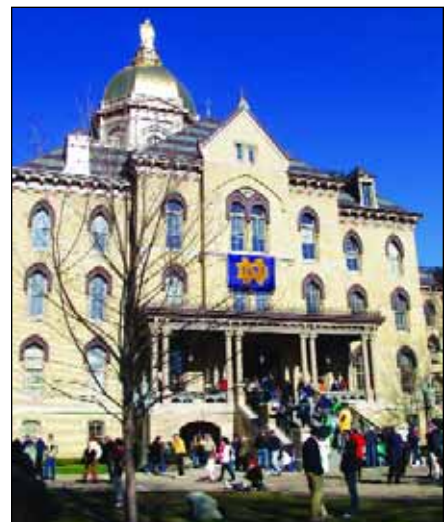
Other Catholic intellectuals have expressed their concerns, and have defended their institution's decisions. "We don't see a conflict with our Catholic identity if we have a speaker on campus who may have views that are in conflict with Catholic teachings," said Kristine Maloney, a spokeswoman for the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. "We consider the contributions the speaker has made to society as a whole, and that doesn't necessarily mean we endorse all of their positions or views. We're committed to a Jesuit tradition, which doesn't suppress educational issues and intellectual debate," she said.

Patricia McGuire, president of Trinity Washington University, argued that Catholics have long struggled to make their colleges and universities the widely respected institutions that they are and not simply the agents of parochial concerns. "The diminishment of the idea of the university by [some critics] betrays two centuries of

intellectual advancement and real leadership by Catholic higher education in this nation," McGuire said.

David M. O'Connell, the Vincentian priest who is president of The Catholic University of America, said, however, that while Catholic educators should not fear views or positions contrary to Catholic teachings, they should be respectful of the church's moral values. "We should be concerned when legitimate educational activity about such matters becomes advocacy or the perception of it," Father O'Connell said. "Positions contrary to the church are not, cannot and should not be presented as equally valid to what the church holds or teaches on our Catholic campuses."

Giving voice to a similar concern, Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark, N.J., said, "We cannot justify such actions, and the [U.S.] bishops have stated so clearly and strongly." He cited the U.S. bishops' 2004 document,



"The Dome" at Notre Dame

"Catholics in Political Life," which states that "the Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles."

## Scholars: Promote Religious Freedom

A group of scholars has urged U.S. religious communities to persuade President Barack Obama that the promotion of international religious freedom is vital to national security. During a panel discussion at Georgetown University on April 15, there was agreement among the panelists that the U.S. State Department has underused the International Religious Freedom Act, a 1998 law that was intended to promote religious freedom as a foreign policy of the United States. "There is this erroneous notion that it's unconstitutional if we are talking to religious leaders around the world," said Thomas F. Farr, a professor of religion and international affairs. For decades the State Department has operated on the philosophy that religion must be kept out of U.S. diplomatic policy, Farr said.

## Richardson Honored in Rome



**Bill Richardson and Pope Benedict XVI**

After making what he described as "the most difficult decision in my political life," Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico was given a front-row seat at a papal audience and saw Rome's Colosseum lit up in honor of his state. Governor Richardson signed a bill on March 18 abolishing the death penalty in New Mexico. Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan of Santa Fe said he introduced the governor to Pope Benedict, saying, "Holy Father, this is our gover-

## NEWS BRIEFS

Archbishop Lawrence Saldanha of Lahore has written to Pakistan's president expressing concern over a regulation that allows **Islamic law to be implemented** in northwestern Pakistan. "We note with sorrow that your government has failed to take stock of the concerns of civil society," he said. • By proposing to allow the use of **federal funds for stem-cell research** on embryos, the National Institutes of Health opens "a new chapter in divorcing biomedical research from its necessary ethical foundation," said Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia on April 21. • The Catholic bishops of New York State called for the defeat of legislation proposed by New York Gov. David A. Paterson on April 16 that would permit **same-sex marriages**. • U.S. Catholics are generally **optimistic about their church**, according to the 2009 LeMoyné-Zogby Contemporary Catholic Trends survey released in April. Close to three-fourths of those responding said they were at least somewhat optimistic about the church's future: 36 percent said they were very optimistic; and 37 percent were somewhat optimistic. • The Benedictine priest **Stanley L. Jaki**, a Hungarian-born author, physicist, philosopher and theologian, died on April 7 in Madrid. He was 84.

nor and he just repealed the death penalty." The archbishop added, "And the pope nodded very happily in agreement." Richardson, a Democrat and a Catholic, had been a supporter of the death penalty; he also supports legalized abortion and embryonic stem-cell research, which the church opposes. Archbishop Sheehan said, "We were able to help him understand our opposition to the death penalty and he did indeed change his view and signed the law. One thing at a time." The archbishop pointed out that it was not the Vatican or the Catholic Church that was officially honoring Richardson, but the Catholic lay Community of Sant'Egidio.

## Vatican Objects to Remarks on Israel

The Vatican has criticized Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's

recent remarks about Israel at a U.N. conference on racism as "extremist and unacceptable" and said the comments promote an atmosphere of conflict. At the same time, Vatican officials, including Pope Benedict XVI, emphasized the importance of participation in the conference, which was being boycotted by the United States and several other Western countries. Ahmadinejad told conference participants April 20 that Israel had "resorted to military aggression to make an entire nation homeless under the pretext of Jewish suffering" and had established a "totally racist government in the occupied Palestine." His comments prompted a temporary walkout by dozens of diplomats. The Vatican spokesman, Federico Lombardi, S.J., said "The Holy See deplores the use of this United Nations forum for the adoption of political positions of an extremist and offensive nature against any state."



MARGARET SILF



## Rock and Sand

**T**he water babies class was proceeding noisily. I watched my little granddaughter splashing around happily with her dad. Neither holy Scripture nor world economics was at the forefront of my mind. I was just intrigued by the fact that it is possible to teach very young children to swim, because actually they already know how and have not yet learned about fear.

The teacher did a little exercise with them that is worth reflecting on. In the middle of the pool was an inflatable platform. Each child in turn was invited to clamber up onto it. Clinging to their parent's hand, they then staggered across it, discovering how wobbly the whole contraption really was. At the other side they then flopped back into the water. All this to the accompaniment of nursery rhymes, of course.

I noticed, first, how eagerly the children climbed up onto the island refuge in the middle of the pool and how quickly they realized that it was not as solid as it looked; then how they fell back into the water and discovered that it really would hold them up. I thought of Jesus' words about the house built on rock and the house built on sand—wise guidance. But what if the things we think are rock turn out to be sand, and what we might dismiss as sand turns out, after all, to be rock? Those children thought the inflatable island was a rock. They soon found out how unstable it was and that the water was a more reliable support. Jesus, of course, constantly

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MARGARET SILF lives in Staffordshire, England. Her latest books are *Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living* and *The Gift of Prayer*.

warned us that we cannot trust our own estimation of what is solid and what is not. Things are definitely not always what they seem.

Never in my lifetime have we been so brutally reminded of this as in the present economic downturn. The first indicator of the slide into recession in the United Kingdom came two years ago with the fall of the financial institution Northern Rock. Many people had built their houses on that particular rock. It turned to sand beneath their feet. Now the rock of market forces is turning to quicksand all around the globe. We have stored up treasure for ourselves in barns where the moths of irresponsible lending and the rust of unregulated profiteering have gotten in and destroyed it.

As I watched those little children in the pool, I asked myself: "Why are they able to let themselves plunge into the water so fearlessly and risk its depths?" The answer was obvious. Each of them was close to a loving parent, who was only waiting to catch them, hold them, embrace them, praise and encourage them. Not one of them had yet experienced any reason to move through the world with anything but perfect trust. It would be easy simply to draw the conclusion that all we need to do is trust God as we flounder in the quicksand of recession. That may be easily said, especially on a Sunday morning, but not so easily trusted when Monday comes. Those children trusted their parents because they had never had cause to doubt that trust. Most of us, sadly, cannot say that about life. The

words "trust in God" have to go way beyond the creedal statements; otherwise faith becomes little more than an inflatable island. We feel the wobbles, in spite of what we profess.

The God who was holding those children safe was not coming down from heaven on a pink cloud but was holding them through the arms of their parents. And that, perhaps, is the secret of how we actually allow God's

love and rock-like solidity to become incarnate in our very unstable world. We are called, challenged and empowered to extend this kind of loving hold to each other. God has no arms but ours in which to hold God's people.

The challenge of our day is not just economic but spiritual. Can we be

to others the rock of love, trust and support that Jesus models for us? It sounds as flimsy and unlikely as the ripples on the pool, but in the end it is the water, not the artificial platform, that provides the buoyancy.

God asks us to provide that base of trust for each other in our everyday dealings—to be a ripple on the ocean of God's love. It is not an esoteric mystery. How to do it is clearly spelled out for us in the life and death of Jesus. It is not something to be left solely to our governments. The potential for personal trustworthiness lies within each of us. We are simply asked to let it grow and show. And historically, there is no more opportune time to discover the power of mutual trust, support and love than when our man-made platforms are sinking.

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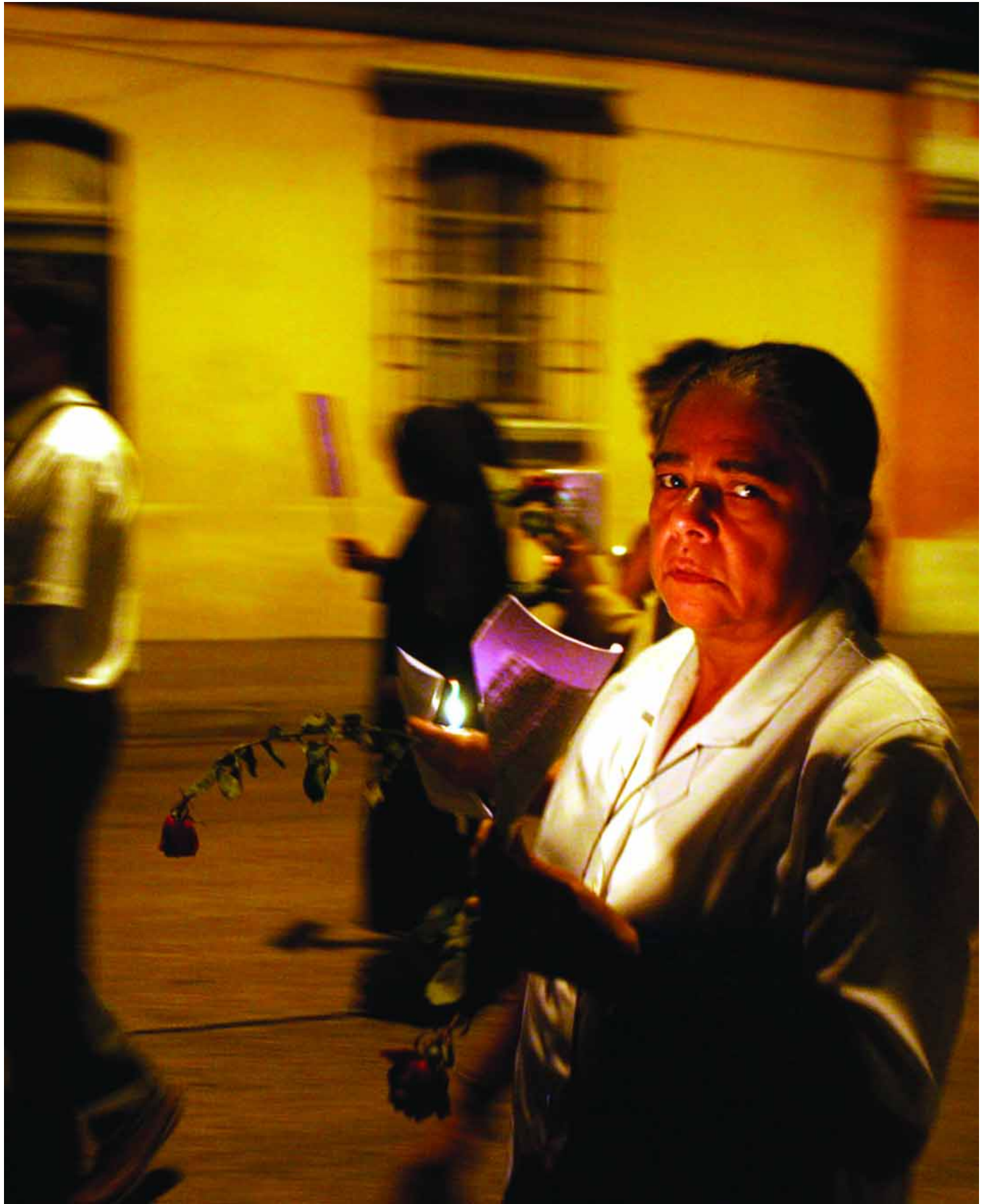


PHOTO: CNS/REUTERS



JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION IN THE  
AFTERMATH OF ATROCITIES

# Lessons in Mercy

BY DANIEL PHILPOTT

**T**hree tales about bishops find their setting in what may be called our “age of peacebuilding” in the church and the world. The work of Archbishop John Baptist Odama of Uganda, Bishop Juan Gerardi of Guatemala and Bishop Carlos Belo of East Timor has been part of a global wave of efforts to deal with past injustices in order to build peace and stability. These efforts take place in the wake of a third wave of democratization that has brought an end to dictatorships in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa and East Asia; after the end of civil wars in locales as diverse as Yugoslavia and Mozambique, El Salvador and Cambodia; and in the aftermath of interventions by the United States and NATO in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo.

On July 14, 2002, donning full episcopal regalia, Archbishop John Baptist Odama traipsed through the bush of Northern Uganda with a delegation of religious leaders to visit the hide-out of Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army, whose war of two decades against the Ugandan government has resulted in over 200,000 deaths and the abduction of thousands of children who were then forced into combat. Odama’s diplomatic safari helped to elicit peace negotiations with the L.R.A. The archbishop advocates reconciliation, opposing the International Criminal Court’s indictments of war criminals and instead urging Ugandans to forgive perpetrators—even Kony—and to practice traditional *mato oput* rit-

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DANIEL PHILPOTT, *an associate professor in the department of political science and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, is currently writing a book to be titled Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation.*

uals of reconciliation that can help reintegrate soldiers into civilian communities.

Another bishop who advocated reconciliation, Juan Gerardi of Guatemala, was bludgeoned to death by army officers in the garage of his home in Guatemala City on April 26, 1998. Gerardi's murder came two days after he had delivered the report of the Recovery of Historical Memory Project, which he had launched in 1995 to bring exposure to and healing from the atrocities committed during Guatemala's generation-long civil war. Remhi was unique among the globe's truth-recovery efforts for its personalist approach to taking testimony, involving several hundred *animadores*, or volunteers, who fanned out across the countryside to hear the stories of ordinary peasants and to offer them spiritual and psychological support.

A third bishop, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Carlos Belo of East Timor, stressed judicial accountability for human rights violators, particularly for Indonesian army generals who committed atrocities against Timorese civilians during Indonesia's long occupation between 1975 and 1999. But Belo has also spoken for reconciliation, which East Timor has pursued through community justice panels that combine truth-telling by victims with apologies and community service that aim to reintegrate perpetrators of atrocities back into their societies.

As each bishop's story attests, the age of peacebuilding is fraught with contentious questions about justice. Should top war criminals be granted amnesty in order to secure a peace agreement or a transition to democracy? Is amnesty for them ever justifiable? Should victims forgive them? May leaders apologize on behalf of nations? Do representatives of past generations merit reparations? Who owes them? Beneath all these is the question: Of what does justice consist in the wake of its massive despoliation?

### Teaching Reconciliation

Over 30 truth commissions have been established in recent decades. Two international tribunals and a permanent International Criminal Court have been erected. Trials in national courts, laws to disqualify perpetrators from holding office, reparations, apologies, museums, monuments, acts of forgiveness, traditional tribal rituals and civil society

**Page 10. Guatemalans march April 26 during a candlelight vigil for deceased Auxiliary Bishop Juan Gerardi of Guatemala City.**

initiatives for reconciliation and trauma healing have combined in an unprecedented entrepreneurship of social repair.

*Nunca mas!* ("Never again!") is the dominant answer to the question of justice within the community of human rights activists and international lawyers. The prosecution of human rights violators and war criminals is their chief demand; the International Criminal Court is their signature accomplishment; the blanket granting of amnesty common in Latin America during the 1980s is their chief nightmare.

Their natural partners are Western governments and the United Nations, for whom peacebuilding has meant building regimes based on human rights, democracy, free markets and the rule of law.

Other voices, though, have articulated an alternative approach: reconciliation. They come disproportionately

from religious communities and include the likes of Bishops Odama, Gerardi and Belo. Though they usually embrace human rights and sometimes punishment also, these voices advocate a far more holistic restoration of right relationships, one that addresses the wide range of wounds that human rights violations and war crimes inflict and that involves a far wider set of practices for healing these wounds.

It is only natural that the Catholic Church would take an interest in reconciliation. At the source and summit of Christian life is the Eucharist, the sacramental re-enactment of the event through which sin, evil and death are defeated and friendship with God and justice are restored. Is not peacebuilding an imitation of just this transformation? And does not a global wave of societies struggling to restore justice make the present moment a propitious one for the church to offer a teaching on social reconciliation, just as it has offered teachings on war, economic development and democracy in past encyclicals?

The foundations of such a teaching can be found in the life and writings of Pope John Paul II. Living under Nazism and Communism in Poland taught him the need for reconciliation and led him to a personal devotion to mercy. He made it the subject of his second encyclical, *Rich in Mercy* (*Dives in Misericordia*, 1980), which he ended with the striking declaration that forgiveness and reconciliation could be practiced in politics, not just in personal relationships or in the confessional. He developed this teaching in subsequent addresses for the World Day of Peace, culminating in 2002, when, just after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he supplemented Pope Paul VI's famous dictum, "no

## A global wave of societies struggling to restore justice makes the present moment a propitious one for the church to offer a teaching on social reconciliation.

peace without justice,” with the phrase “no justice without forgiveness.” Pope Benedict XVI affirmed his own commitment to this teaching in part by taking a papal name reminiscent of Pope Benedict XV, who gave strong witness to reconciliation during and after the First World War.

### Building on New Foundations

Now the task is to construct on this foundation an ethic that can address the dilemmas of dealing with the past to which the age of peacebuilding has given rise. Such an ethic might claim that reconciliation is itself a concept of justice. That claim will sound strange to Western ears accustomed to thinking of justice strictly in terms of rights, punishment and the distribution of wealth. But in biblical texts, justice means a comprehensive right relationship among the members of a community and God. Reconciliation, which appears often as a concept in the letters of Paul, means restoration to a state of right relationship and thus to a state of justice. Strong resonances of this meaning can be found in Second Isaiah, which uses justice to describe God’s holistic restoration of Israel, ultimately through a messianic suffering servant.

Closely related is the biblical notion of peace (*shalom* or *irene*), which connotes a holistic condition of right relationship and of justice. One other biblical concept is essential and may be thought of as reconciliation’s animating virtue: mercy. As Pope John Paul II described it in *Rich in Mercy*, mercy is “manifested in its true and proper aspect when it restores to value, promotes and draws good from all the forms of evil existing in the world and in man,” a broad, transformational virtue that resembles reconciliation.

Reconciliation as justice, peace and mercy—how are these concepts manifested in the politics of recovering societies? Through a portfolio of six practices that together address a wide range of wounds that political injustices inflict and that, if left unhealed, beget hatred, revenge and further injustices.

### Six Ways to Reconciliation and Justice

In the first of these practices the social teachings of the church converge most closely with the commitments of the human rights community: building socially just institutions based on the rule of law, human rights and a commitment to economic justice. The relationships between citizens and states that these institutions embody are the very goal of reconciliation in the political realm and should not be compromised by other aspects of reconciliation. Such was the message of the South African black theologians who wrote the *Kairos Document* in 1985 against fellow church leaders who called for reconciliation while too feebly opposing apartheid.

But human rights and the rule of law are not enough,

given the numerous wounds of injustice. One such wound is the loneliness and isolation that victims experience when their suffering is unrecognized by the community, a redoubling of the violation itself, as the South African political philosopher André du Toit has argued.

Acknowledgment, the second practice of reconciliation, imitates the God who hears the cry of the poor and remembers the suffering of his people. In the political realm it is accomplished most thoroughly by truth commissions, but also by public burials, monuments, museums and the rewriting of textbooks. Acknowledgment is at its best when it is most personal, as modeled by the *animadores* of Guatemala’s Remhi.

The third practice, reparations, also involves a bestowal upon victims by the state, but here it involves material payment. While reparations can only partially alleviate economic loss, their deeper purpose is, like that of acknowledgment, a symbolic recognition by the political community of victims’ suffering.

A fourth practice, punishment, may seem out of place in an ethic of reconciliation. Debates worldwide pit reconciliation against retribution and punishment against mercy, but it need not be so. From a Catholic perspective, punishment is a practice that restores *shalom*. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* affirms its purpose as “on the one hand, encouraging the reinsertion of the condemned



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person into society; on the other, fostering a justice that reconciles, a justice capable of restoring harmony in social relationships disrupted by the criminal act committed." For the masterminds of war crimes, only long-term imprisonment can communicate the gravity of their offense. Other criminal combatants, however, might be integrated back into their communities through restorative public forums like those Bishop Belo advocated in East Timor. Incompatible with just punishment are amnesties, which abandon restoration altogether; only when demonstrably necessary for a peace agreement ought they to be adopted.

Public apology, the fifth practice, is becoming more common around the globe. It involves the repentance of perpetrators and sometimes also a head of state speaking on the state's behalf. Following the demise of the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, for instance, Chile's President Patricio Aylwin, who is a Catholic, issued a national apology to thousands of Pinochet's torture victims with great healing effect.

Forgiveness is the sixth and crowning practice. It is also the most dramatic, for it is initiated by the victim, who not only relinquishes his or her own claim against a perpetrator but exercises a constructive will toward restored relationship. Theologically, forgiveness is a participation in God's

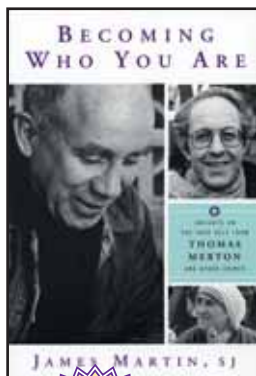
own redemption of the world—a world that includes the perpetrators of atrocities—through the cross. Politically, it can be restorative, sometimes dramatically so. Eugene de Kock, South Africa's most brutal enforcer of apartheid, came to repent of his past after being forgiven by the wife of an anti-apartheid activist whom he had murdered. The Catholic Church has encouraged victims to forgive in many locales, including El Salvador, Chile, Northern Ireland, Guatemala, East Timor, Uganda and Poland.

### ON THE WEB

From the archives, Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., on the mercy of John Paul II. [americamagazine.org/pages](http://americamagazine.org/pages)

These six practices can work together, each aiming to heal a different dimension of woundedness, each exercising mercy toward the restoration of peace, thus bringing about a greater degree of justice. In politics, the practices will always be incomplete: compromised by the powerful, hampered by differences over the meaning of justice, burdened by their sheer complexity and weakened by political institutions that have been destroyed and only partially rebuilt. This partiality, too, contains a theological dimension: original sin is also a component of a Catholic ethic of reconciliation. But faith, especially when guided by the Spirit and lived as a participation in God's redemptive action, wins victories too. Even in politics there are moments when, in the words of the Irish poet Seamus Heaney, "hope and history rhyme." **A**

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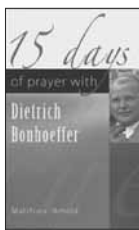
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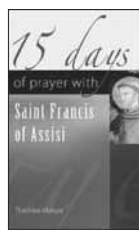


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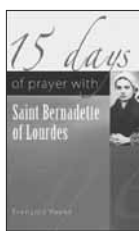


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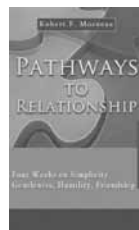


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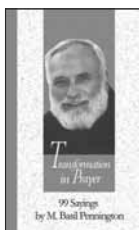
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# Liberia's Trials

The challenge of forging a lasting peace

BY JOHN PERRY

**A**fter a 14-year civil war in which more than 300,000 people lost their lives and a third of those who survived became refugees or were displaced, the Republic of Liberia is attempting to come to terms with its painful past through its Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Modeled on a similar and successful program in South Africa, such commissions have been attempted throughout the world and are now being established in Canada and Kenya. A key question concerning Liberia is whether something more will follow the commission and, if so, what that should be.

The specific question is whether a war crimes tribunal will be established either within Liberia or under the auspices of the International Criminal Court at The Hague to deal with some of the grave human rights abuses revealed by the testimony of survivors at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. If nothing more were to follow and if an amnesty were granted, it would have to be partial, because the most serious war crimes and crimes against humanity would be subject to international jurisprudence and prosecution.

In the first part of its final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission states that during the civil war there occurred "egregious" domestic crimes, "gross" violations of human rights and "serious" violations of humanitarian law perpetrated by unnamed individuals. With respect to various militia factions and military units involved, it distinguishes between "significant violator groups" and "less significant violator groups." Among the last individuals to testify before the commission was President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who admitted initial sympathy with Charles

Taylor and his rebel party, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, but then said, "I have absolutely not supported any warring faction and none of them can say I supported them."

Catholics in Liberia, including their three bishops, have argued that both amnesty and a juridical process should follow the work of the truth commission. In 2004 the Catholic Bishops Conference of Liberia, in their statement *Liberia at the Crossroads: Hopes and Challenges*, called for a war crimes tribunal to deal with the "culture of impunity" that is "so



**A young rebel of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy carries a weapon in a church yard in Monrovia in August 2003.**

PHOTO: REUTERS

**JOHN PERRY, S.J.**, an associate professor of religious studies at the University of Manitoba, Canada, is currently doing research in peace studies and residing at Holy Family Parish in Monrovia, Liberia.

pervasive in our national life" (No. 11). More recently the bishops' conference has issued a clarification, explaining that while they fully support the truth commission, they reject a war crimes tribunal.

It is easy to see why the hope of reconciliation would be attractive to the bishops and many others who long for national unity after so many years of internecine violence. The truth commission process offers Liberians an opportunity to review in detail their dark history between 1980, when a violent coup led by Samuel Doe and a small group of soldiers toppled the elected government of William Tolbert, and 2003, when the Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed in Ghana after 14 previously unsuccessful attempts by the West African community to end the war and stabilize the region. Ordinary people have listened attentively to the hearings on radio, visited the commission Web site, read about it in the newspapers or attended the hearings in person. Hearings usually are open to the public. A novel feature of Liberia's reconciliation process is that the commission traveled to the United States and took testimony in Minneapolis from Liberians who had fled the fighting by emigrating to the United States.

### Flagrant Impunity

While vivid, painful and tearful truth from victims was voiced often at the hearings, the truth was carefully nuanced and partial from the lips of the warlords who chose to testify. They expressed very little remorse, let alone contrition. Behind their caution lurked the specter of eventual legal jeopardy. All had made use of child soldiers during the civil war, and the present trial in The Hague of the Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga precisely and solely for this crime has reportedly troubled them greatly.

With the notable exception of the Taylors, father and son—the former on trial since 2006 in The Hague at the Special War Crimes Court for Sierra Leone, the latter sentenced in a Miami court in October 2008 to 90 years in prison—the warlords and other combatants have given the word "impunity" new meaning. They have not retired to private life but have taken prominent places in the community. Prince Yormie Johnson, the head of the breakaway faction of Charles Taylor's National People's Front of Liberia and allegedly the murderer of Samuel Doe in 1990, has been elected to the Liberian Senate. He has publicly warned Liberians that there will be trouble if anyone tries to arrest him. Alhaji Kromah of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (Ulimo-K), has a teaching posi-

tion at the University of Liberia. Edwin Snowe Jr., a son-in-law of Charles Taylor and formerly a key minister in his government of "Greater Liberia," is an elected member of the House of Representatives and was formerly House speaker. Combatants, especially former child soldiers, have been offered special educational opportunities not available to other Liberians who suffered at their hands.

Whether the Special Criminal Court for Sierra Leone could be expanded to include Liberia and then to issue further indictments for war crimes is not known.

### When Justice Threatens Unity

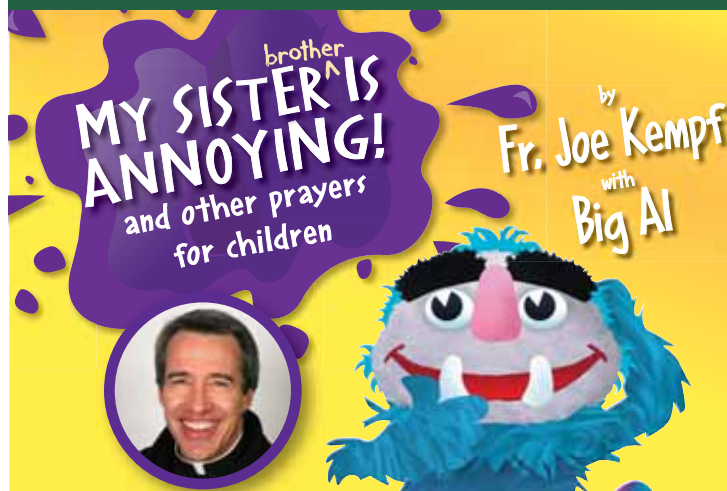
The most important argument against a recommendation to the government that a war crimes court be established within the Republic of Liberia is the fear that this would further harm national unity. Among the 16 ethnic communities in Liberia, four were both targets of human rights abuses and perpetrators in response. The Gio and

Mano tribal brothers and sisters of Thomas Quiwonkpa, who was accused of treason by Samuel Doe, suffered genocide-like retaliation over many years by soldiers loyal to Doe who belong to the Krahn and Mandingo communities. Many members of Charles Taylor's armed militia belonged to the Gio and Mano; over time they took their revenge on the Krahns and Mandingos. If members of these four communities were indicted for war crimes or crimes against humanity, the concern is that they would perceive it as unjust scapegoating. Many Mandingos, who are Muslim, are already disaffected because they have not yet been able to recover their homes in Nimba County, which they abandoned to the Gios during the war. Indictments by a war crimes court would make matters worse for them.

Catholic social teaching prefers the "transformative justice" approach of the truth commission, without ruling out the "retributive justice" of a war crimes tribunal. The Second Vatican Council's "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" called peace an "enterprise of justice" and said that while the church "points out the authentic and noble meaning of peace and condemns the frightfulness of war, the Council wishes passionately to summon Christians to cooperate, under the help of Christ the author of peace, with all men in securing among themselves a peace based on justice and love and in setting up the instruments of peace"(No. 77). What is not clear is whether Liberia can achieve long-term "peace based on justice" without making use of judicial processes as "instruments of peace." **A**

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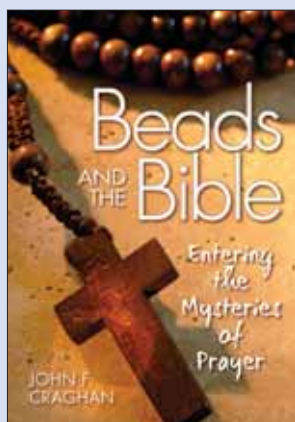
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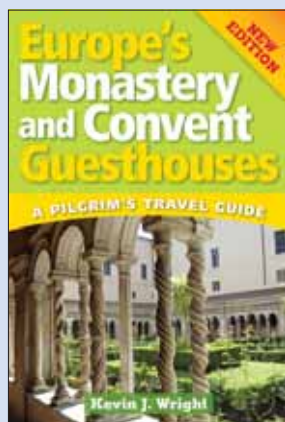
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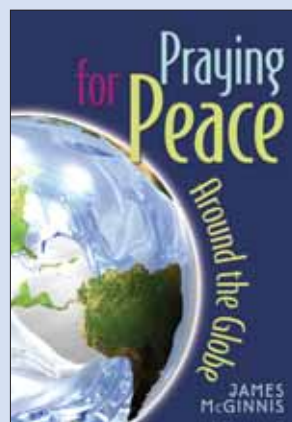
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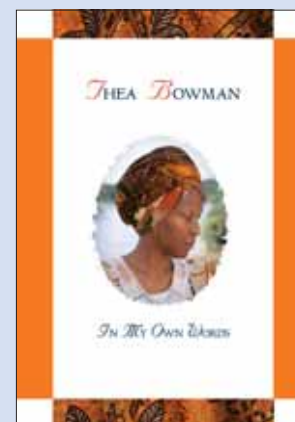
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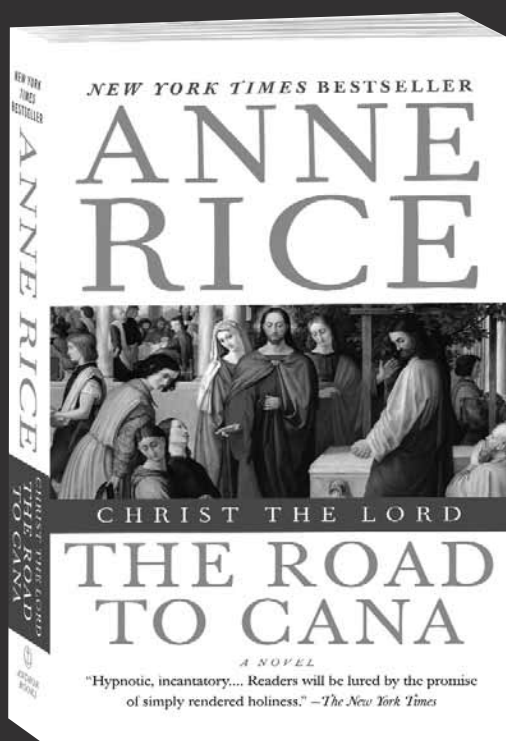
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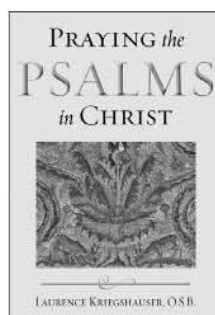
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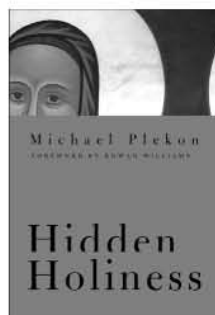
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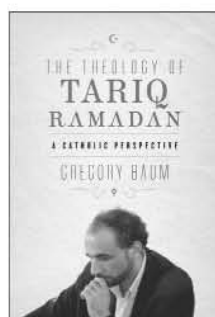
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# Soulful Leadership

Desmond Tutu's quest for unity

BY MARGARET BENEFIEL

**T**wenty-first-century leaders are rewarded for their drive, decisiveness, productivity and long work hours. But what happens to the leader's soul? Too often it shrivels and dies, harming both the leader and the organization the leader serves. This does not have to be the norm for leaders. This article focuses on one leader, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who nurtured and led from his soul amid one of the most challenging leadership tasks of the 20th century: healing the South African nation after apartheid. After apartheid ended in South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was named in December 1995 to be head of the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. South Africa had struggled to come to terms with how it would bring to justice perpetrators of crimes under the old regime. Retributive justice (punishing perpetrators through the courts) was not only too costly for the financially strapped country, but would also result in winners and losers, and could easily backfire. Blanket amnesty, on the other hand, would leave the victims unacknowledged, in effect victimizing them again. How was the country to move forward? South Africa had achieved independence. How could the country's leaders persevere to the end and bring about a stable government after so much turmoil?

Leaders who choose the path of

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**Archbishop Desmond Tutu dances off the stage after speaking at a pro-Tibet rally in San Francisco, Calif., April 8, 2008.**

leading with soul and manage to stay on track must eventually face the question of whether they will persevere to the end. The further the leader goes on the path of soul, the higher the stakes. Among other things, the soulful leader must learn to break the cycle of violence that arises in virtually all human institutions, whether nations, organizations or families. The question for leaders is not whether they will encounter violence but how they will encounter it. Leaders who want to persevere to the end, leading with soul, to bring about deep and lasting transformation must eventually face violence and their own response to it. Addressing violence soulfully requires seeing both victims and perpetrators with compassion,

standing with the courage to interrupt the violence and opening the space for forgiveness that can create relationships that fill the void left by violence. To illustrate these principles, this article will focus on the story of Desmond Tutu, emeritus archbishop of the Anglican Church in South Africa.

## Seeing With Compassion

Breaking the cycle of violence begins with seeing compassionately, with the eyes of the heart. Through compassion, violence is transformed.

For Desmond Tutu, seeing compassionately grows out of prayer. It was prayer that undergirded his work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, just as prayer had under-

PHOTO: REUTERS/MARIO ANZUONI

girded his ministry before that. As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began to work toward uniting a divided country, Desmond Tutu turned to God for strength and guidance. Only through frequent, regular prayer was Tutu able to regard everyone, both victims and perpetrators, with compassion. "I wouldn't have survived without fairly substantial chunks of quiet and meditation," the archbishop declares emphatically. "The demands that are made on one almost always seem to be beyond one's natural capacities. There would be many times when the problems, the crises we were facing seemed about to overwhelm us. There's no way in which you could have confronted these in your own strength."

In addition to his own prayer, Tutu has called on others to pray for him, especially in times of great need:

It is such a good thing to know at those times that you are part of a wonderful communion, a wonderful body, and there are those who are far more holy than you who are able to worship God with a depth of feeling and fervor which you are not feeling at all, which you are not experiencing. And you are borne on this current of worship and adoration, and all you need to do is throw yourself into the stream and you are carried.... When we started with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, I wrote to the secretary-general of the Anglican consultative council and asked him if he could please put this request to the religious communities of our church around the world, to say, "please pray for this enterprise."

By establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa chose a third way, distinct from both retributive justice and blanket

amnesty. By inviting perpetrators to apply for amnesty in exchange for full disclosure of their crimes, South Africa chose restorative justice, a justice of forgiveness and reconciliation. Leaders of the commission had to learn to see with compassion as they carried out their difficult work. Over the course of 18 months, the commission heard case after case, listening to victims as well as to perpetrators. Tutu says:

We in the commission were quite appalled at the depth of depravity to which human beings could sink.... We had to distinguish between the deed and the perpetrator, between the sinner and the sin, to hate and condemn the sin while being filled with compassion for the sinner.

Tutu found himself stretched to offer compassion to perpetrators on both sides, and his heart grew larger in the process.

### **Interrupting the Cycle**

On numerous occasions, Desmond Tutu interrupted the cycle of violence in South Africa—during his service on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and at other times. On Sept. 6, 1989, for example, when apartheid was still in full force, peaceful protests were held in South Africa to boycott a racist election. Aiming indiscriminately, state security forces shot and killed 20 people, including children standing in their own yards. Upon receiving the news, Tutu ran into the chapel of his Cape Town residence, crying and beseeching God, "How could you let this happen?" It would have been easy to respond in fear, allowing the government to continue its intimidation of the country's blacks or, conversely, to respond with hostility, joining those who called for armed resistance. Desmond Tutu chose neither.

When the archbishop emerged from his prayer, he announced that

there would be a peaceful protest march. "It seemed like God was saying that the response was to call for a protest march," he subsequently reflected. The march held on Sept. 13, which drew 30,000 people, was the first in a series of major protests that, in Tutu's words, "marked the beginning of the end for apartheid." In announcing, "We won't stand for this violence," while at the same time making the statement peacefully, the protesters were able to interrupt the country's cycle of violence. Less than five months later, on Feb. 2, 1990, Prime Minister F. W. de Klerk announced the end of apartheid.

Archbishop Tutu interrupted the cycle of violence on another occasion, when security forces killed 38 people in Sebokeng, a black township, in 1990. Word of the massacre came to him during a meeting with his synod of bishops at a conference center in Lesotho. He left the meeting to cry and pray in the chapel, and then, feeling directed by God, returned to the bishops. Reflecting on the event later, he recounted urging the bishops to "suspend our meeting, which had never happened before, and go [to Sebokeng]. And the bishops, all of them, unanimously agreed. We put aside our whole agenda, and went."

The bishops left Lesotho for Sebokeng early the next morning, celebrated the Eucharist in a local church when they arrived and then toured Sebokeng, visiting the injured and the bereaved. While the bishops were speaking with a crowd of young people gathered in the streets, a convoy of Casspirs (armored police vehicles with tear gas and machine guns) appeared. John Cleary of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported what he observed:

I heard the archbishop say, "Let us pray." Then the noise of the vehicles stopped. The crowd went quiet. There was no sound

from the Casspirs, no sound of tear gas canisters. So I looked around and there, behind me, were the Anglican bishops of Southern Africa—black, white, coloured, old, young—standing between the crowd and the Casspirs, with their arms outstretched. In that moment, I understood a little about what the Christian vision for a new South Africa cost people. I'd never witnessed that sort of courage before.

The bishops of southern Africa succeeded in interrupting the cycle of violence before it escalated even further in Sebokeng township.

### **Forgiveness**

Breaking the cycle of violence also includes forgiving. Once the cycle is interrupted through openhearted invitation and apology, the circle of transformation is completed by forgiveness.

Forgiveness formed the backbone of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As leader of the commission, unflinchingly facing the truth of the horrors propagated by and on South Africa's people, Desmond Tutu also prayed to forgive.

The commission was structured to facilitate forgiveness by 1) setting a fixed term of two years for its operation, 2) collecting statements and 3) holding public hearings. The two-year fixed term was chosen so that those who desired amnesty would have ample time to apply for it and so that the process would have a clear ending, with no unfinished business left for the new government. The commission organized trained people to collect statements throughout the country, collecting 20,000 victim statements in all, more than had ever been collected in similar processes elsewhere. Public hearings were set up in districts across the country, both urban and rural, in such venues as town halls, civic centers and churches. Because of the mammoth outpouring of

response to the call for victims' statements, only about one victim in 10 received a public hearing. Those who did not receive a public hearing were assured by the commission that their written statements would be taken just as seriously as the statements of those who testified publicly.

The commission heard from both sides, both victims of the white apartheid government and victims of rebel forces. Tutu found himself inspired to forgive by the victims who forgave. "Mercifully and wonderfully, as I listened to these stories of victims I marveled at their magnanimity, that after so much suffering, instead of lusting for revenge, they had this extraordinary willingness to forgive."

The commission also opened itself to applications for amnesty from perpetrators on both sides. Many exhibited courage, providing full disclosure of their misdeeds. Brian Mitchell, a police captain, asked for forgiveness from a devastated rural community where his orders had resulted in the killing of 11 innocent people, mostly women and children. He asked the commission to arrange for him to visit the community, and expressed his desire to be involved in its reconstruction. Desmond Tutu described Mitchell's visit to the community:

It could have gone badly wrong. It was a difficult and tense meeting at the beginning, with everybody a little awkward and the community understandably hostile.... The atmosphere began to change, to ease, after a while. While one or two of the victims were still not too keen to forgive him, the majority were glad he had come, and by the time he left things had improved so much that they were waving him goodbye quite warmly.

Through forgiveness, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission saw time and time again how the cycle of

violence could be broken and the circle of transformation completed.

### **Staying Centered**

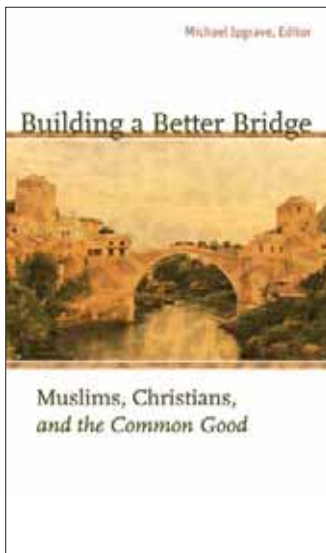
Even if it never comes to blows or bullets, leaders must invariably face their own inner violence and that of the people around them when anger fuels action and reaction. The natural response in those situations is to fight or flee, but soulful leaders may create a constructive third way out of the conflict. This is accomplished by not taking sides but by staying centered while thoughtfully inserting themselves into the conflict, intervening by being a reflective or prayerful presence. The goal of this intervention is not to dampen or smother the conflict, but to break the cycle by which violent conflicts naturally escalate. This opens the way for forgiveness, respect and shared values, what Abraham Lincoln called the "better angels of our nature," to rise in the conflicting parties, encouraging them to seek creative solutions together.

Being in the center of conflict, whether physical, emotional or intellectual, takes its toll in stress, fear and despair. Leaders faced with violence, whether bullying, threats or dominating behavior, need to draw on their deepest spiritual resources to stay centered in these situations and rely on their everyday spiritual practices to restore them from the virtual or literal blows they absorb in the name of love. These resources allow them to persevere from a centered place and to lead by the example of their perseverance.

Persevering to the end, as the stakes on the path of leading with soul get higher, requires that leaders learn to break the cycle of violence. Desmond Tutu learned to see compassionately, to interrupt the cycle and to forgive. These three essential components work, as he discovered, in venues large and small. Once every leader learns how to do this, the ultimate goal becomes attainable. **A**



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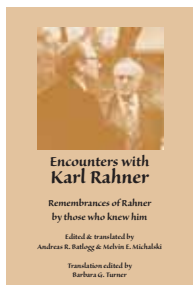
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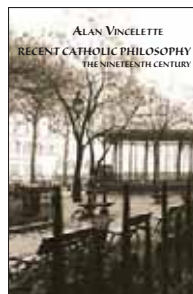


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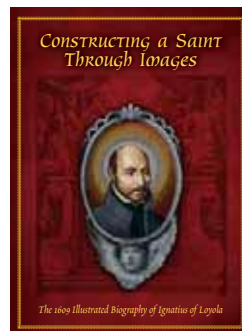
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2009 is the 400th anniversary of the publication of the *Vita beati patris Ignatii Loiolae*. For the occasion Saint Joseph's University Press has produced *Constructing a Saint Through Images*, which includes a facsimile edition, with English translation of the captions by James P. M. Walsh, S.J., and an introduction by John W. O'Malley, S.J., entitled "The Many Lives of Ignatius of Loyola, Future Saint."

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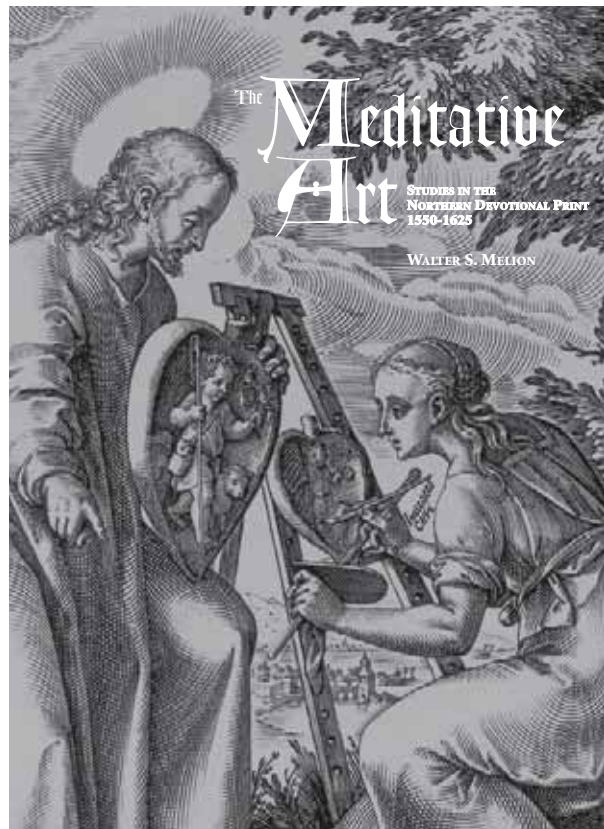
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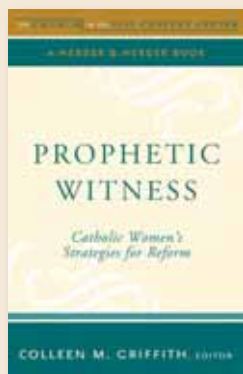
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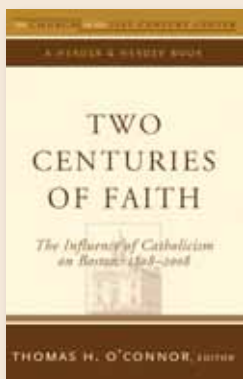
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SPRING BOOKS | PETER HEINEGG

## A ROCKY START

### BEYOND THE REVOLUTION

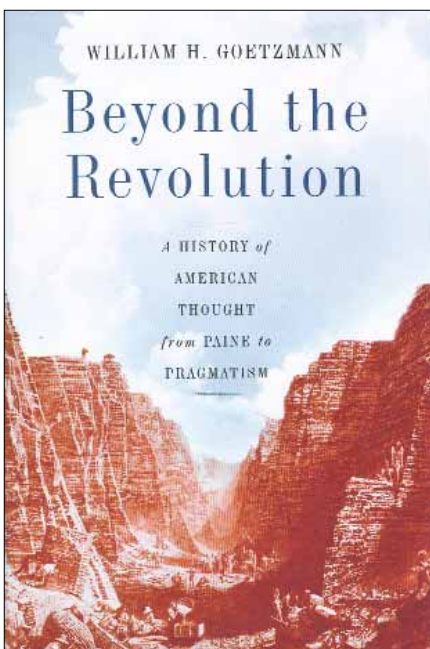
#### A History of American Thought From Paine to Pragmatism

By William H. Goetzmann  
Basic Books. 480p \$35  
ISBN 9780465004959

Professor William Goetzmann has had a long and distinguished career at Yale University and the University of Texas, Austin, going all the way back to 1966, when he won the Pulitzer Prize for *Exploration and Empire*. The score of books he has written or co-authored have concentrated on the American West, so this popular review of intellectual history might seem to mark a new departure (as he ends his eighth decade). But Goetzmann's home base has always been the 19th century, a period that witnessed the nation's greatest geographical and intellectual voyages of discovery; and that is mainly what he deals with here. The results are uneven; but this wide-ranging, generous survey provides an extraordinary amount of food for thought.

In Goetzmann's account of American civilization, American "thinkers" were rarely professional philosophers. They were politicians and statesmen, agitators and reformers, clerics and heretics, poets and novelists, dreamers and cranks, most of them too busy with a country in the making to develop any organized system or European-style ideology. They were, often in the best sense, amateurs; and their lives had more than academic interest. The inevitable question—one we are still groping with today—is, how well did they succeed? Goetzmann's all-but-inevitable answer is, they won some and they lost some.

Our nation's independent beginnings had a strong utopian streak. Whether Christian, like the Pilgrims, or Enlightenment-secular, like Tom Paine, the nation's idealists confronted that



most seductive of opportunities, a fresh start. They could draw upon centuries of sadder-but-wiser Old World experience as they inscribed what looked like a splendid *tabula rasa*. But because they aimed so high, their failures, notably in the manifold injustices visited upon Indians, blacks, women (and, not incidentally, Catholics and other groups), strike us as all the more depressing.

Other American dreams, such as the intoxicated vistas of Manifest Destiny or the pastoral-chivalric fantasies of the antebellum South, played out in ways that proved to be both brutal and bloody. And American workers may have had the ever-moving frontier as an escape hatch from their misery, but American capitalists were not necessari-

ly any less exploitative than their European brethren. (Had he pushed his timeline into the 20th century, Goetzmann would have had to deal with the gross environmental destruction caused by the supposedly glorious winning of the West: the annihilation of the buffalo, the draining of the Colorado River, the Dust Bowl and so on.)

So Americans stumbled onward, if not always upward. The fact that despite everything, both then and now, the country never did lose its peculiar power of attraction over oppressed people everywhere would seem to be an enormous plus. But while Goetzmann concludes his story with reflections on the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia, his account reaches its high point with the Civil War, which may have fused the centrifugal chunks of the Union into one nation at last (Lincoln stands out as Goetzmann's grandest figure), but at an unspeakable price that we are all still paying. If World War I gave the lie to European myths of progress, didn't the Civil War suggest, among other things, a catastrophic American intellectual bankruptcy?

And then there is the cultural scene. Pioneers, by definition, do not have much time for the arts; and until the American Renaissance, most of our literature could be rated, if not dismissed, as derivative and provincial. By contrast, the work of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, Whitman and Dickinson (and, later on, Mark Twain) was in many ways world-class, but the optimistic elements in Transcendentalism took a terrible beating as the century progressed. And even with *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby Dick* (a commercial failure) and *Leaves of Grass*, how good, really, is American literature when measured against the English Romantics and the Victorians or the continental giants, from Goethe to

Flaubert to Tolstoy? In any event, the purely philosophical fields of America were initially bare, if not sterile. Goetzmann reminds us that until the emergence of James, Dewey & Co., the country's favorite thinkers belonged to the Scottish "Common Sense" school, men like Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart and Adam Ferguson, whom nobody nowadays would mistake for outstanding minds. Democracy, as any glance at pop culture will show, feels comfortable with bland mediocrity, as opposed to, say, unsettling creativity.

These are only a few of the nagging questions that Goetzmann has raised—and furnished documentation for addressing. No doubt he was right not to bother with footnotes (the vast conventional bibliography on this subject, from F. O. Matthiessen to Louis Menand, is already bristling with them); but he might have also skipped the potted plot summaries. His writing is lumpy at times; and he makes some factual errors, such as twice misdating the 19th Amendment by six years and call-

ing Longfellow, not Whitman, the "good grey poet."

But such blemishes aside, Goetzmann prompts us to wonder, for the thousandth time, who are we, anyway? And this is not just nationalistic narcissism. Unlike most of the places we first came from, America can watch its entire history beneath the bright light of biography, journalism and, even, before too long, the camera. It is all—a lot of it, at least—down in black and white, unlike the British Constitution or the origins of Stonehenge. So we can, and must, ask what kind of country has leaders as different as Thomas Jefferson and John C. Calhoun, cultural heroes as different as Andrew Jackson and Frederick Douglass, and novelists as different as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry James. For a nation sometimes taken to be simple-minded, we are actually rather complicated.

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PETER HEINEGG, a frequent reviewer, is a professor of English at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.

## ANGELA O'DONNELL LOVE'S PROOF

### EVIDENCE

#### Poems

By Mary Oliver  
Beacon. 88p \$23  
ISBN 9780807097441

For nearly 50 years, Mary Oliver has been falling in love with the world and writing poems that invite readers to fall in love right along with her. *Evidence*, the Pulitzer Prize-winner's 19th book of poetry, offers a bountiful collection of 46 new poems, many of which explore terrain featured in her earlier books: the beauty of nature, the miracle of life and the search for a language capable of communicating these mysteries. However, in this volume, as the title would suggest, the poet pays particu-

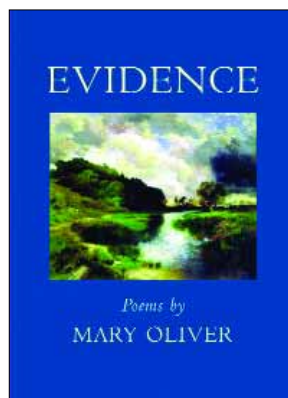
lar attention to matters of meaning and attempts to divine what the material world can teach us about the truths that lie beyond it.

That the world has meaning is the bedrock upon which all of Oliver's work rests, but she has long been hesitant to claim certain knowledge of what that meaning might be: "Truly, we live with mysteries too marvelous/ to be understood.... Let me keep my distance, always/ from those who think they have the answers" ("Mysteries, Yes"). The world speaks to us, but its messages are multivalent and many. What the wolf teaches is differ-

ent from the constant call of the Clarion River or the message of the moon's quiet light. Evidence is less an argument for a system of scientific, philosophical or theological belief than a showing forth of examples, in all their splendor and particularity, of the victory of being over nothingness, of the goodness of creation and of the pulse of love that beats unceasingly at the heart of the universe.

Accordingly, one might read *Evidence* as a compendium of testimonials. Oliver draws on a number of genres and traditions to craft a varied collection of poems that function as prayers, psalms, paens and parables. Included among these are three long pieces that read almost as homilies, openly engaging ultimate questions ("To Begin With, the Sweet Grass," "Evidence" and "At the River Clarion"). Each of these poems, delivered in a voice that conveys both authority and wonderment reminiscent of Oliver's poetic mentor, Walt Whitman, attempts to marry perception with understanding, to connect what we love with what we believe. The third piece in this trilogy addresses the mystery that lies at the center of her quest for evidence—the presence of God. The voice of the river speaks to the poet—in much the same way the sea whispers to Whitman the secret linkage of love and death in

"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"—teaching her hard truths about God: "If God exists he isn't just butter and good luck./ He's also the tick that killed my wonderful dog Luke." God is no more containable nor tame than the creation: "Said the river: imagine everything you can imagine, then keep going." Oliver's poem, for all of its "doubts" and "hesitations," finally concludes with an act of faith: "I pray for the desperate



earth/ I pray for the desperate world.”

Indeed, *Evidence* is full of such acts and affirmations of faith, some of them explicitly Christian. In “Spring” the poet describes the ever-renewing season as a manifestation of Christ, “the Lord” who “was once young/ and will never in fact be old./ ...who goes off/ down the green path,/ carrying his sandals and singing?” Similarly, in the Lenten poem, “First Days in San Miguel de Allende,” the speaker marvels at the passion of Mexican Catholics for “the flagellated Christ,” whom they carry along “the sun flashed road” and acknowledges the thirst for God she shares with them. More often than not, however, Oliver looks beyond the language and traditions of any particular institutional religion for evidence of God, including these as part of a broader, more universal search.

*Evidence* is as much about the play of language as it is about the work of seeking truth. Keenly aware of the voices from the past that have shaped her own, Oliver frequently nods to her predecessors (most often Wordsworth and Frost, as well as Whitman). In “A Lesson from James Wright,” she invokes the name of another poetic mentor:

*If James Wright  
could put in his book of poems  
a blank page*

*dedicated to “the Horse David  
Who Ate One of My Poems,” I am  
ready  
to follow him along*

*the sweet path he cut  
through the dryness  
and suggest that you sit now*

*very quietly  
in some lovely wild place, and listen  
to the silence.*

Wright suggests that his missing



**“At Aquinas I developed  
the competence —  
and the confidence —  
to speak to lay leadership  
of our responsibilities as  
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poem is no less a poem for having been eaten, and offers his dedication, conveying the story of the poem's disappearance as a worthy substitute. Oliver affirms this equivalence and goes a step further, asserting that the inexpressible silence that lies outside her book of poems constitutes poetry as well, a poetry composed not of words but of the world's own music. This is the poem spoken, paradoxically, by the speechless wolf, the River Clarion, the shining moon. Here she replicates Wright's charming literary jest with absolute seriousness. At the conclusion of the poem she states simply, unabashedly, confidently: "And I say

that this, too/ is a poem."

Well into her sixth decade of writing, Oliver is still stretching the boundaries of the art she has dedicated a lifetime to learning and of the craft she strives to master. *Evidence* attests to an artist operating at the height of her powers. Like the green earth she has praised for most of her 74 years, Mary Oliver continues to break into blossom.

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ANGELA O'DONNELL teaches English, creative writing and Catholic studies at Fordham University in New York City, where she is associate director of the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies.

THOMAS J. SHELLEY

## THE OLDEST LIVING INSTITUTION

### KEEPERS OF THE KEYS OF HEAVEN

#### A History of the Papacy

By Roger Collins  
Basic Books. 576p \$35  
ISBN 9870465011957

One may question the need for a new one-volume history of the papacy so soon after Eamon Duffy's widely acclaimed *Saints and Sinners* (1997), but Roger Collins's book can stand on its own merits. Although *Keepers of the Keys of Heaven* lacks Duffy's literary panache, it is a well-researched and eminently readable account of the history of the oldest living institution in the Western world. The author's spartan prose, reminiscent of the style of J. N. D. Kelly's classic *Oxford Dictionary of the Popes*, enables him to condense an enormous amount of information into 550 pages, including 39 pages of endnotes.

A seasoned historian, author of several books on medieval Europe and research fellow at the University of Edinburgh, Collins consistently demonstrates an evenhanded approach to the most controversial issues in papal histo-

ry. An unusual and welcome feature of this book is the author's penchant for interlacing his narrative with a running evaluation of his sources, inviting the reader to share his own role as scholarly detective.

This technique also enables Collins to explain the complicated and not necessarily deleterious role of forged documents in the early centuries of papal history. Unaware of their tainted origins, later generations often accepted these forgeries in good faith and used them as the basis for church reform. For example, the golden age that Leo IX and his advisors attempted to restore in the 11th century was largely an illusion concocted from spurious sources, but it led to one of the great reform movements in church history.

Collins has a keen eye for the apposite quotation that suggests a contemporary reference. Bernard of Clairvaux offered a succinct definition of collegial-

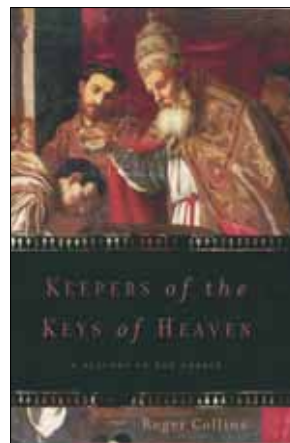
ity when he told his former pupil, Pope Eugenius III, that the pope was "not the lord of the bishops, but one of them." He also warned Eugenius that one of his cardinals was surrounding himself with handsome young men and showering them with favors. Contemporary enthusiasm for the election of bishops may be tempered by the realization that bishops were often chosen from the upper classes because of the social prestige that they brought to the office.

Collins is instructive in tracing the persistent influence of the Roman senatorial class on the papacy as well as the development of the new Roman Senate, the College of Cardinals, including the curious office of the Cardinal Nephew, which was filled by several scapegraces and at least one saint, Charles Borromeo. The author's fascination with the etiquette of the papal court adds a human dimension to the evolution of a divine institution. Since the time of Gregory the Great, popes have called themselves "the servant of the ser-

vants of God," but this did not prevent 17th-century pontiffs from requiring visitors to kiss their foot (bishops were allowed to kiss their knee) and prescribing that letters to the pope should conclude with the phrase, "Most humbly, I kiss your holiness's holiest feet."

Collins provides revealing and ironic glimpses of the foibles of some of the better known pontiffs.

Innocent III, an accomplished canonist, decided to settle a complicated and interminable legal case himself and got it wrong. Another impatient pope, Sixtus V, issued his own definitive edition of the Vulgate, only to have it withdrawn by his successor because it was full of errors. On his deathbed the irascible Barberini pope, Urban VIII (Galileo's nemesis), unleashed a torrent of barnyard imprecations against dis-



senting Venetians that cannot be quoted in a family magazine. The vocabulary of Benedict XIV, the author of the standard work on the canonization of saints, was so coarse that it was likened to that of a trooper.

Although Collins devotes almost a fifth of his book to the last two centuries, the coverage of this period sometimes seems thin and hurried, if only because the landscape is so crowded and the sources are so abundant. There is no mention of the modern liturgical movement, the rise of Christian democracy in Western Europe after World War II, the *nouvelle théologie* and, more surprisingly, the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on Religious Liberty" and "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions." The reference to Baltimore as the primatial see of the United States is also ambiguous. Although Baltimore was the first American diocese, on three separate occasions in an age of creeping ultramontanism, Rome rejected the request of the American bishops to give the archbishop the title of primate.

Collins maintains his evenhanded treatment of the pontiffs right up to the present. It seems unlikely that any new evidence will alter his assessment of Pius XII as "a good Vatican diplomat rather than a natural leader of men in time of crisis." While recognizing the many merits of John Paul II's pontificate, he wonders how many of the achievements of Vatican II have survived and how many have been reversed. He remains guardedly optimistic about Benedict XVI, noting the end of the cult of personality in the papacy and (more questionably) a greater receptivity to episcopal collegiality.

No one can possibly be an expert on the 2,000-year history of any institution, but Collins has done the second best thing. He has used a comprehensive array of the best primary and secondary sources to produce a surefooted précis of papal history that deserves a place on the shelf next to Duffy and Kelly.

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

for this month. I was immediately struck by the overall similarity of the two stories. In each, a decent, kind person, in the midst of an ordinary life (so, all right, Greg Mortenson was living a rather less conventional life than most of us), has an accidental adventure that radically changes the course of that life. The first adventure sets off a string of other adventures that engage each of the protagonists with the people in far-off lands. But Mortenson's book documents the emergence and development of a proactive citizen of the world, working hard to affect the common good, the "ideal American" as many have described him. Lacey's, on the other hand, tells the story of how she became not only a citizen of the world, but also a more intimate friend of God, discovered in the tense, painful experiences of the world's conflicts.

Lacey's narrative voice is engaging and personal but not intrusive. She reveals enough of herself to give her story its proper personal texture, but her tone is often ironic, and her style is understated. She has the wisdom to let the refugees' stories speak for themselves and, indeed, 19 pages of her modest text are the narrative of Gabriel, a Sudanese refugee who dictated his own account to Lacey. When she does tell a very personal story, it is self-deprecatingly comic, or important

for the wisdom she gleaned from the experience, and often both. I shall remember her chapter on spiders for a very long time. In it, she exposes her hatred of spiders, a hatred she freely admits is irrational and excessive, through a number of stories involving spiders of almost mythic proportions. The reader is with her all the way and quite ready to acquit her of any fault. Then she

MARIE ANNE MAYESKI

## IN DIVINE COMPANY

### THIS FLOWING TOWARD ME

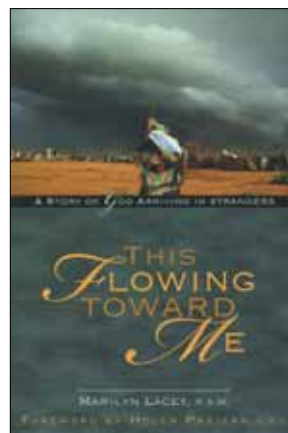
#### A Story of God Arriving in Strangers

By Marilyn Lacey, R.S.M.  
Ave Maria Press. 224p \$15.95  
ISBN 9781594711978

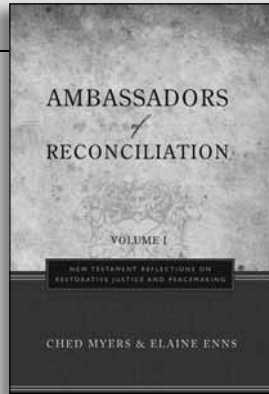
Sister Marilyn Lacey's account of her journey to and through the experience of working with refugees can be read, first of all, as an adventure story. It is her own adventure but also that of the many refugees she meets, told with a simple directness that engages the reader from the outset. Like all good adventure stories, it begins with action: an urgent call for volunteers, to

which Sister Marilyn responds out of genuine helpfulness, to be sure, but also out of hunger for a little excitement to break up the dullness of an administrative work day. From that small action, which fell like a seed into a receptive heart, all the subsequent adventures flowed.

As luck, or Divine Providence, would have it, I finished *This Flowing Toward Me* and, almost immediately, began *Three Cups of Tea*, my book club's selection



## Peacemaking

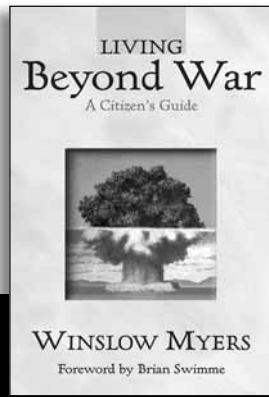


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explains how her spider phobia has made her more understanding of other people’s fears, those that generate even more dangerous hatreds than hers for arachnids. Nonetheless, that is not her last thought. “Still, one thing is sure: When I get to heaven, if God has eight legs, I am in very big trouble.”

This observation leads to the heart of Lacey’s book. Her understanding of God has clearly been formed by the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, whose narratives reveal that God is to be discovered in the concrete history of very particular lives. This is an incarnational sense of history and leads Lacey to enter her own life deeply, to reflect on its very particularity, confident that God will be present to her there. Although the interior journey raises painful questions about God and suffering, questions that lose none of their urgency from being both perennial and universal, she perseveres in her effort to understand. And she arrives at the Mystery that always confirms, always confounds.

Lacey does not attempt to domesticate the Mystery. Although she does not write about the inadequacy of language to capture the experience of God, that truth is revealed in her method of reflection, in the way she resorts to the poets and to the wisdom literature of all the known religious traditions. For her, no one poet’s metaphor, no single religious story, can capture how thoroughly and mysteriously God is other. Lacey will not be surprised to find something in God that is akin to those eight legs—troubled maybe, but not surprised. But it is not just the otherness of God that she struggles to capture, that she discovers in her own life. It is the mysterious divine dynamism, God always present in a divine flowing toward her that requires only that she attend, that she let herself be swept up in divine love. This becomes so central to her experience that it stands as the title of her book.

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This is a slender volume, but I would suggest the reader not read it too quickly. Its 198 pages are divided into 12 chapters, an ideal structure for a programmatic, meditative reading. For the most part, each chapter has a narrative, often an interweaving of Lacey's experiences with the scriptural story, and a thoughtful selection of the wisdom of others—poets, saints and seers. They are designed to stimulate thoughtful reflection on one's own life—a process that requires time as well as prayerfulness. Lacey makes no

condemnations; she utters no diatribes. Her few criticisms are directed at her own lack of understanding. But the thoughtful reader will find her conscience pricked even as she seeks to attend to the God present in her own life. As this book is all about transcendence and transformation, it makes good spiritual reading not only in the Easter season but any time.

**MARIE ANNE MAYESKI** is a professor of historical theology at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, and author of *Women at the Table* (Liturgical Press).

JOSEPH CUNNEEN

## A SOLITARY LIFE

### A SAINT ON DEATH ROW

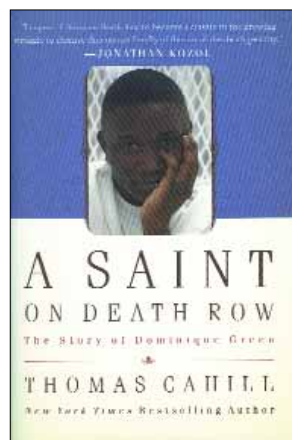
#### The Story of Dominique Green

By Thomas Cahill  
Doubleday. 160p \$18.95  
ISBN 9780385520195

Thomas Cahill has interrupted his series on “the hinges of history” to present an inspiring example of human development on death row. Dominique Green, a young black man who grew up on the streets of Houston, was cared for by his mother for a few brief years before she fell victim to drugs and violence. Partly to support his younger brothers, he began to sell drugs regularly. When he was 18, Dominique and three others took part in an armed robbery during which Andrew Lastrapes, an African-American truck driver, was shot dead. The white man who was part of the group was never punished; two African-Americans got prison sentences. Charged with capital murder, Dominique was convicted in 1993 and executed by lethal injection in 2004.

Cahill shows us the indifference of

the young man's lawyers and the callousness and incompetence of Texas criminal justice. More important, he helps us see how Dominique grew intellectually and spiritually under the eye of death. He not only trained himself in the intricacies of law, but read Archbishop Desmond Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness* and communicated its spirit to fellow prisoners awaiting execution.



In his effort to reach out and make friends, Dominique wrote letters to editors, including one published in an Italian paper in 1995. This came to the attention of a young female member of the community of Sant' Egidio, a dynamic Italian (now international) group that grew out of the student protests in the 1960s

and tried to follow Jesus' command to love our neighbor. The young woman could offer friendship only from afar, but others in the community became interested, and an older member engaged a retired Chicago lawyer, Sheila Murphy, to work on his defense team. During a book tour in 2003, Cahill met

Murphy; learning that he was going to Houston, she said, “Then you can visit Dominique.”

So impressed was Cahill by the prisoner's intelligence and commitment that he resolved to write Dominique's story. He even contacted Archbishop Tutu and convinced him to interrupt a U.S. book tour to visit the prisoner in jail. Afterward, the archbishop said Mass and spoke about Dominique at a well-publicized dinner in a nearby Episcopal church.

Dominique was not initially disposed to open up to visitors. But Sheila Murphy, his new assistant counsel, ignoring law school advice, began talking about her husband and two children only a little older than Dominique. He was fascinated to find “a mother who had an easy relationship with her grown children, full of humor, elasticity, love and...pleasure.” Dominique began to talk of his own family experiences: his concern for his brothers, his beloved paternal grandmother who had died when he was nine.

Confidence was established; soon Sheila's son Patrick was enjoying visits with the prisoner, and her law clerk, Andrew Lofthouse, three years younger than Dominique, began a friendship based on honesty and humor. Dominique told him, “Being in here has made me the person I've always wanted to be.”

Dominique shared his growing knowledge of legal strategy with fellow prisoners, but the football pools he created offered a more widely shared pleasure. He also developed a sprawling manuscript of prisoners' writing, which he typed himself. His own essay ended, “I never had anyone in my life to teach me how to be me. That was something I had to take the time to discover on my own, and it was a hell of an experience.” The book also includes Dominique's account of encounters with older inmates, “More Than Just a Rosary,” a 2004 essay published in *The National Catholic Reporter*.



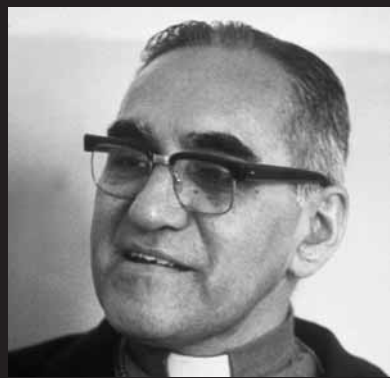
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Despite requests for a stay of execution, supported by the wife and two sons of Andrew Lastrapes, Dominique's execution drew near. Cahill, in Prague visiting his son, wrote his friend, thanking him and retranslating a prayer from the Book of Wisdom. On the prisoner's last day he was visited by Jessica

Tanksley, his longtime sweetheart, about to get her medical degree in the Dominican Republic. At the end, Dominique thanked Sheila Murphy, who was overwrought, and reassured others watching in a room facing the execution room. He even seemed aware that there were thousands praying for him at that moment in an all-night vigil

**ON THE WEB**

Justin Catanoso talks about his book, *My Cousin, The Saint*.  
[americamagazine.org/podcast](http://americamagazine.org/podcast)

organized by Sant'Egidio at the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere. What he could not know then was that his ashes would be brought to Rome and be placed in the shadow of that basilica.

A sobering and moving book, *A Saint on Death Row* highlights as well other instances of legal incompetence

—or worse—in connection with Texas murder trials. It is important reading for everyone concerned with the issue of capital punishment and flawed judicial systems.

**JOSEPH CUNNEEN** *was the founder and longtime editor of the ecumenical quarterly Cross Currents.*

JOHN A. COLEMAN

**WHERE DOES IT END?**

**CRUEL AND UNUSUAL**

**The Culture of Punishment in America**

By Anne-Marie Cusac  
Yale Univ. Press. 336p \$27.50  
ISBN 9780300111743

This is a book about police, television and God. It argues that punishment has changed in the past 35 years. Penalties are harsher, sentences longer, prisons more crowded. The United States, home to 5 percent of the world's population, houses 25 percent of the world's prisoners—the highest rate in the world. Seven million Americans are either in prison or on parole (most of them for nonviolent crimes). Only 19 percent of all crimes involve violence.

Anne-Marie Cusac, a professor in the Department of Communication at Roosevelt University, in Schaumburg, Ill., posits a continuum between changing attitudes toward the punish-

ment of prisoners and other issues, like corporal punishment of children. She also correlates theories of punishment to ideas about what humans are—whether they are essentially good, evil or something in between.

Some chapters review the severity of early punishments in colonial times. In the 19th century Benjamin Rush and the Quakers tried to reform the American punitive system. Rush opposed corporal punishment for children, all public floggings and capital punishment. He argued they tended to “de-sensitize” people. For Rush, the human heart is never wholly corrupt. He worked for what became the American “penitentiary” system. Solitary confinement, silence and work were designed to lead to reform of the prisoners. Often enough, though, they generated madness.

In one of her constant indictments of religion, Cusac argues: “Physical punishments of the sort that involve

intentional pain tend to have religious sources.... Punishments that focus on individual liberty (or lack of it) and internal transformation, in contrast, have their source in the Enlightenment and liberal religious philosophy.” Cusac is persuasive in showing that throughout American history, punishment methods have never stayed put in the places with which we generally associate them—in cells with criminals. Cusac claims there has been a kind of “punishment creep.” She notes that restraining devices designed for prisons (e.g., restraint chairs, taser guns) are more and more employed in schools.

To be sure, my hair stood on edge when I read Cusac’s accounts of right-wing religious groups championing “holy hitting” of willful children (to beat the devil out of them) and the link between strong support for physical chastisement of children and other cruel punishments, such as the death penalty or the new panoply of sophisticated, often cruel and dangerous, electronic restraining devices like stun belts or stun guns. In a somewhat lurid chapter, entitled “Flogging for Jesus,” Cusac recounts children’s deaths and serious injuries as a result of these disciplinary practices. Actually, she makes more of this right-wing Christian corporal punishment than I consider justified, drawing a parallel to America’s current mania for cruel and unusual punishments, even for child perpetrators of violent crimes.

In the 19th and early 20th century, progressive reformers believed in the rehabilitation of criminals. They linked crime to malevolent environments of poverty. Such reformers invented probation, parole and the indeterminate sentence. They championed the separation of juvenile offend-

ers. Sometime in the mid 1970s, however, the idea that prisoners are capable of rehabilitation came to be rejected. Rehabilitation ceased to be one of the explicit goals of the prison system.

In an intriguing chapter on popular culture, Cusac shows how much television and newspapers exaggerate crime.



Police dramas over-emphasize successful arrest rates and violent crimes. They instill fear of criminals as somehow being intractable and endowed with congenital “criminal minds.” She notes how in the period from 1993 to 1996, when the nation’s murder rate declined 20 percent, the number of murder

stories reported on prime time news shows on ABC, NBC and CBS rose by 721 percent!

Readers may find difficult to digest the author’s claim that the myriad cop shows on television are secretly following a Christian narrative, representing a “pollution and purification” ritual. “The idea that Christianity is punitive and it is this characteristic—more than forgiveness and love—that marks this dominant genre of American television is not likely to be a popular idea among Christians who prefer their religion in its more kindly forms. It might also come as an unpleasant surprise to non-Christian fans of cop shows.” As if secularists are all imbued


with Enlightenment philosophy or incapable of championing torture or cruel punishment on their own, without some secret recourse to a crypto-Christian code of vengeance!

In places, Cusac knows better. She acknowledges that Quakers, Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J., Unitarians and Chuck Colson’s evangelical Prison Fellowship have worked for more humane punishment. But she is intent on showing a pernicious Christian cultural code, impervious to reason, that lies deep in the American psyche about punishment. Sociologists like me would demand more concrete survey data about attitudes concerning punishment and be less open to the kind of anecdotal evidence and rhetorical analysis that drives Cusac’s book. It is too bad that such an otherwise intriguing book is marred by this *idée fixe*.

I recommend her final chapters on how some United States jails anticipated Abu Ghraib (in the use of dogs, forcing prisoners to wear women’s underwear, creating circumstances in which they soil themselves and the resort to hoods and electric wires for restraint). Without question, American punishment has become quite cruel and unusual. But I doubt that its provenance can be so singly traced to underlying religious beliefs.

JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J., a sociologist, is associate pastor of St. Ignatius Church in San Francisco, Calif.

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## RIGHTEOUS AMONG WOMEN

*Dan Golden's 'Irena's Vow': A review and an interview*

When my friends and I discussed this year's Academy Awards, I frequently expressed my lack of enthusiasm for the Best Picture winner, "Slumdog Millionaire." While I admitted that it was beautifully filmed and cleverly structured, I could not buy the amazing coincidences that connected every question with a traumatic event in the young man's life, as well as the similarly incredible escapes from the mortally dangerous circumstances that led him to his beloved. The only rationale for such a tall tale comes in the final shot, which displays the words: "It is written." Destiny rules.

Then I saw the new Broadway play, "Irena's Vow." It tells an equally incred-

ible but true story of a young Polish Catholic woman, Irena Gut Opdyke, who, while forced to work as a housekeeper for an S.S. officer, Major Eduard Rugemer, managed to hide a dozen Jews in the basement of the officer's house. Her ingenious methods of keeping the people hidden, fed and cared for are especially tested when one of the women in hiding becomes pregnant.

While several refugees urge the woman to abort the child for their own safety, Irena reveals that after she had stood by watching helplessly as Nazi

soldiers brutally slaughtered dozens of men, women and children, she vowed that she would save any life whenever she had the power to do so. During the baby's delivery, Irena drowns out the mother's screams by playing Wagner full blast on the major's phonograph.

She finds similar ways of keeping the child's cries from being heard upstairs. The near-discoveries and the

various ruses to keep the Jews' presence a secret for two years, as Irena herself admits to the audience, "would be farcical if they weren't about life and death."

The playwright, Dan Gordon, whom I recently interviewed, is convinced of the presence of a "divine hand" in the narrative, a design or a plan that matches the "Slumdog"

### ON THE WEB

More culture reviews, including an appraisal of the Kindle 2. [americamagazine.org/culture](http://americamagazine.org/culture)



Tovah Feldshuh (kneeling) in "Irena's Vow"

PHOTO: CAROL ROSEGG

belief in what is “written.” Gordon has evidence to support his theory. While the play ends with the release of Irena and her Jewish friends when the Russians drive the Germans out of their town, the subsequent twists in her fortunes only heighten the sense of destiny that shaped the rest of Irena’s days. As the Germans were driven out, Irena was arrested by the Russians as a partisan and sentenced to a labor camp in Siberia.

However, the very Jews who had hidden in the S.S. officer’s basement managed to smuggle her out of the local prison camp. A United Nations High Commissioner, visiting the camp, heard her story and arranged her transfer to the United States, where she worked in New York City for several years. By another sheer coincidence, Irena and the U.N. official met a few years later in New York, married and moved to Southern California, where she spent the rest of her life until her death in 2003. Her name now appears next to Oskar Schindler’s on the wall in Jerusalem that honors the “Righteous Among the Nations,” the title given to Gentiles who risked their lives to aid and save Jews during the Holocaust.

Gordon, whose credits include the screenplays for “The Hurricane” and “Wyatt Earp,” the stage adaptations of “Rain Man” and “Terms of Endearment,” as well as several novels, was captivated by Irena’s story when, again by happy coincidence, he heard her being interviewed on his car radio almost 10 years ago. When he met Irena, he found her to be “totally at peace with herself, wise and even fun” with a “pixie-ish” sense of humor. He discovered that she avoided bitterness about the past and had, in fact, not talked about her experiences for almost 30 years. Only when she answered the telephone one day from a high school student who was taking a survey on the question of whether the Holocaust had really happened

did she decide that it was time to tell her story, especially to children, for whom she felt a special responsibility.

The current production, which had a successful run last year Off-Broadway, stars the award-winning actress Tovah Feldshuh, who first appears onstage as the 80-year-old Irena telling her story to a group of high school students. After a few minutes, she is transformed into a 20-year-old in the service of Major R u g e m e r (Thomas Ryan). Throughout the rest of the play’s 90 minutes she interacts with her employer, other Nazi officers and her Jewish charges, with an o c c a s i o n a l address or side-remark to the audience, never leaving the stage as her character careens from crisis to crisis in a battle of wits and physical daring.

G o r d o n describes Ms. Feldshuh as “a force of nature” in her portrayal of a woman who refuses to lose hope throughout one of the most horrible events in history. Thomas Ryan presents Major Rugemer as a mixture of Germanic discipline and the all-too-human loneliness that accompanies an authoritarian existence. The rest of the characters in the play, unfortunately, tend to fall into the stereotypes of the Jewish victims or the Nazi masochists, paling in compar-

ison with the rich characterization of Irena and the major.

At the end of the performance I attended, the audience gave a prolonged standing ovation. I suspect that this play will live on well beyond Broadway in a film version that is being considered, as well as in many

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When you leave, don’t bump into the door.  
Keep your teeth in a bowl by your bedside.  
During morning walks, don’t look back.  
Avoid the sun. Drink when you are happy  
but not when you are strained. In the fall  
and winter, when it’s raining, swallow your pills.  
And in spring, when the flowers open, be sure  
to sniff the poppies. If you waste your money  
spend it on wine, tobacco, and high-mountain trout.  
Avoid spoiled fruit and get rid of your books!

LEONARD CIRINO

LEONARD CIRINO is editor and publisher of Pygmy Forest Press and author of *Ululations: Poems 2006* (Cervená Barva Press, 2008).

regional theaters around the country. As a historical record of the horrors of the Nazi regime, it joins the stories of Anne Frank, Oskar Schindler, Elie Wiesel and others. As a testimony to the power of the human spirit and, indeed, of spirituality itself, it delivers a timeless message.

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

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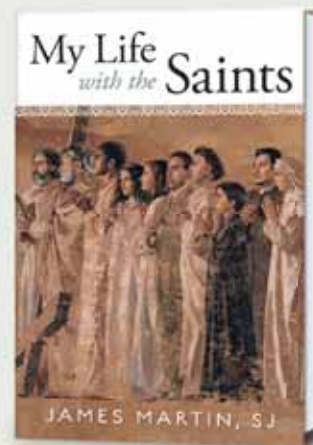
  
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## LETTERS

### Amazing Grace

Thanks to Frank Moan, S.J., for his reflections on prayer (“Finally, God’s Voice,” 2/9). It takes courage to punch through the veneers of doctrine and dogma and arrive at a place and time that is infused with God. Moan speaks to the sterility of words that can so easily bind us up and lock us in. Fortunately for him, belated grace has morphed into amazing grace. Well done!

BILL WHALEN  
*Olympia, Wash.*

### Smoke Signals

Humility is a good thing, and the article in your 100th Anniversary issue by James T. Keane, S.J. (“Oops!” 4/13) detailing some of the errors in judgment made in **America’s** past gave me a whole new view of your magazine.

The photo of suffragettes marching in 1912 also lifted my spirits. The daughters and granddaughters of those women have also marched for women’s issues in the recent past and have accomplished much to advance women’s rights. We are not the delicate flowers that were once kept at home.

And past editors must have been

smoking something to back Idi Amin and publish Ezra Pound.

NADINE GALLO  
*Hadley, Mass.*

### Oops!

We Salesians were delighted with the article by George M. Anderson, S.J., on Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez, S.D.B., and world poverty (“Advocate for the World’s Poorest,” 3/30). We do regret, however, that **America** never seems to remember that the cardinal is one of our Salesian confreres—not even an S.D.B. after his name!

MICHAEL MENDEL, S.D.B.  
*New Rochelle, N.Y.*

### Teaching Virtue

The issues of prudence, excess and public service raised in “Generation S” and the Of Many Things column by Drew Christiansen, S.J., in the issue of March 2 remind us of the need for ethics classes for all college students. We remember when most colleges and universities did not require an ethics class for M.B.A. students—and these are the greedy business executives who have brought down the economy of the entire world. They still do not seem stricken by conscience or repentant.

Ethics courses in all our colleges

and universities could prepare the members of Generation S for lives of prudence and service for the common good.

(REV.) JOHN F. CAIN  
*Spencer, Iowa*

### Such a Fuss

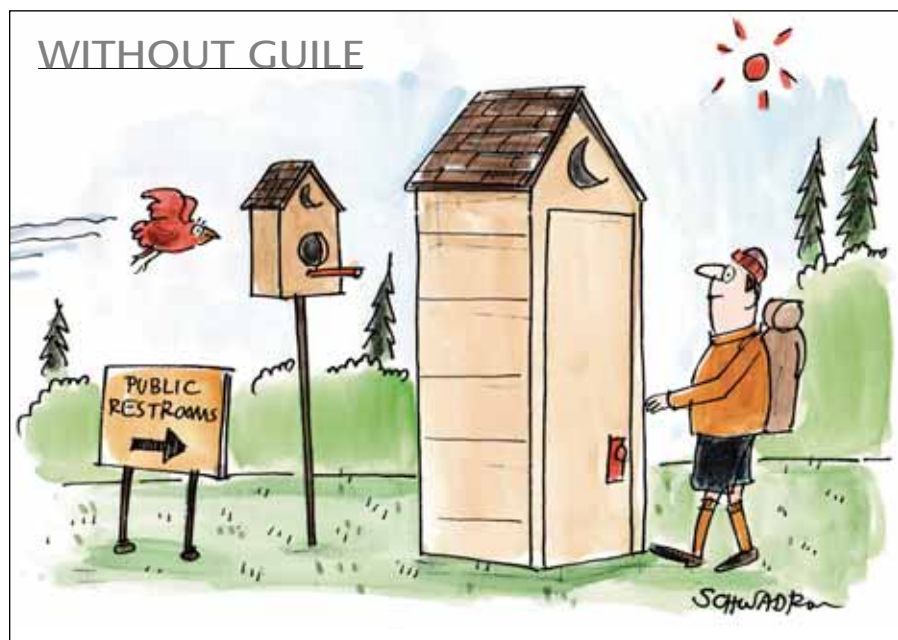
Thank you to John F. Kavanaugh, S.J., for his reflections on the controversy over President Obama’s upcoming visit to the University of Notre Dame (“Outrages,” 4/13 online edition). We north of your border here in Canada scratch our heads when we see such a fuss. Yes, we have our disagreements—some significant—but I thought the age of mindless confrontation had passed.

To insult the holder of the highest office in your nation with an “uninvite” is hardly a constructive way to engage others in the conversation that is necessary if any change is to take place. Obama also stands for so much that reflects Gospel values. We have to keep perspective.

BRIAN MASSIE, S.J.  
*Winnipeg, Canada*

### Honoring the Good

John F. Kavanaugh, S.J. (“Outrages,” 4/13 online edition), presented a well-reasoned and realistic commentary on the recent firestorm over the invitation to President Obama from the University of Notre Dame to speak at its commencement ceremony. Obama had called for a national discussion about abortion in his book *The Audacity of Hope*. I am disappointed that he did not allow for that discussion to take place before he made a number of decisions after he took office, but this hardly makes him the Antichrist.



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What about Obama's compassion for the poor, his aversion to conducting unjust wars, his desire to care for the health of all Americans, his reaching out to the leaders of the world to call for justice and to share the world's riches of food, water and natural resources? Does all of this count for nothing? Can we not honor these good things he does and continue to encourage him to re-examine some of his stances?

ROBERT KILLOREN  
*Gabanna, Ohio*

### **Straight Talk**

I enjoyed the article by Timothy Radcliffe, O.P. ("The Shape of the Church to Come," 4/13), and particularly valued his approach of looking to where and how the Catholic Church can make the greatest contribution to future times.

But I think it is a misrepresentation to portray Jesus as essentially a "conversational" man. In many situations, Jesus was uncompromisingly apodictical, as when he said, "I am the way, the truth and the life" or "If your hand or foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away."

JOHN MCCARTHY  
*Weston, Mass.*

### **Global Vision**

Re "The Shape of the Church to Come" by Timothy Radcliffe, O.P. (4/13): Since I was a young teenage girl, I have considered myself a progressive Catholic. But, as Radcliffe notes, viewing oneself as part of a traditionalist/progressive dichotomy is polarizing and wounding to the church, and is counterproductive at this point.

There is far too much "circling of the wagons" going on today, and it only leads to the exclusion of others. Surely God loves all his/her children. How could it be otherwise? What parent does not love all of his/her children? What parent does not give each of his or her children chance after chance?

What parent would not reach out to a child who may have rejected one route to heaven to choose another?

Perhaps an appropriate image for the shape of the church to come is a "Hoberman Sphere," which expands and collapses around a core center. With God in the center and all of humanity on the circumference, we can come closer to God only by coming closer to others; and coming closer to others brings us closer to God.

The exclusionary view of "I'm saved, you're not" just sends us all on our different ways—outward!

PAT BENNETT  
*Summit, N.J.*

### **Cent'Anni!**

Congratulations to **America** on 100 years of publication, and thank you for the magnificent banquet for mind, heart and soul that you have offered for

a century. The centennial issue (4/13) contains a treasure trove of articles. The writings of Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J. ("An Earthy Christology"), never fail to surprise, delight and call us to God with her eloquence and graciousness of expression, and the article by Timothy Radcliffe, O.P. ("The Shape of the Church to Come") excites us with the positive possibilities for our church during a time when judgmental fundamentalism seems to be on the rise. He presents a big, big picture and encourages us with a profoundly hopeful view of the future.

Also, the passionate and personal article on vocation by Helen Prejean, C.S.J., ("Ride the Current") would be an inspiration for anyone at any point in one's life. Thank you 100 times.

ELAINE TANNESSEN  
*Woodinville, Wash.*

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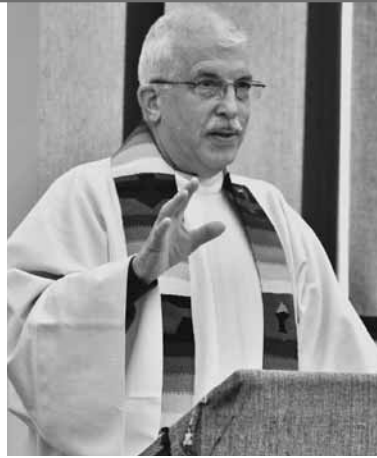
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We would like to thank those readers, benefactors and friends, who kindly sent us both greetings and gifts for our centennial celebration. We are also grateful to all who attended the Mass and reception on April 18 in New York City, and to Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the main celebrant, and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the homilist.



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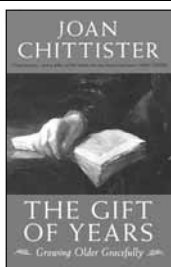
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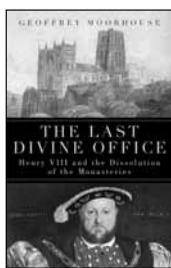
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# Already Pruned

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*“Remain in me as I remain in you” (Jn 15:4)*

I am not much of a gardener. As a city-dweller, I am lucky if I can keep a few houseplants alive. What is especially difficult for me is to prune parts of a plant that still have life in them, even if they are scraggly and have stopped flowering. I have no problem clipping off parts that are clearly dead, but it is hard to bring myself to trim off something still living.

In today’s Gospel Jesus speaks of the Father as a vintner who prunes branches that are bearing fruit so that they will produce even more. There is a strong emphasis on “bearing fruit”; the expression occurs five times in the passage. It speaks not only of the fecundity in our relationship with God, but also of missionary outreach and of interdependence with the other branches on the vine.

The image of God as a vine grower and Israel as the vineyard is a familiar one in the Scriptures (for example, Is 5:1-7; 27:2-5; Jer 2:21; Ps 80:8-18). Most often the metaphor is used to express God’s disappointment in the lack of yield from a vine so tenderly planted and nurtured. In the Gospel of John, this is not the case. The disciples Jesus is addressing in this Last Supper scene are “already pruned” so that they will bear more fruit. Branches that do not bear fruit are taken away.

BARBARA E. REID, O.P., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill.

There is a word play between the verb *airei*, “takes away,” and its compound *kathairei*, “prunes.” Moreover, there are verbal echoes of other parts of Jesus’ farewell discourse at the supper and the passion narrative. The imperative form of the verb *airei* is found in the cry of the people who call for Jesus’ crucifixion, “*aron*,” “Away with him!” (19:15). The adjectival form of the verb *kathairei*, which literally means “to make clean,” occurs in the footwashing scene (13:10-11), where Jesus assures the disciples they are clean (*katharoi*).

Pruning then is another Johannine metaphor for the passion. It is akin to the image in Jn 12:24, where Jesus speaks of the seed that must fall to the ground and die in order to bear much fruit. The emphasis is on the life that sprouts forth from the dying and the pruning. Expert gardeners know that the place to prune is, paradoxically, where the nodes are bursting with life.

From pruning, the stress in the Gospel shifts to the importance of the branch remaining united to the vine in order to bear fruit. A branch cannot bear fruit on its own; cut off from the vine, it withers and dies and then is good only for kindling. That remaining or abiding in Jesus is crucial for disciples is evident in that the verb *menein*, “to abide,” occurs eight times in these eight verses. This mutual

indwelling has been spoken of since the opening chapter of the Gospel, where the first question asked by the initial two disciples is, “Where are you staying?” (*meneis*) (1:38). Another important moment is when the Samaritans ask Jesus to stay (*menein*) with them (4:40). In the Bread of Life Discourse, Jesus tells his followers, “those who eat my flesh and drink my blood, abide [*menei*] in me and I in them” (6:56). True disciples abide in Jesus’ word (8:31) and Jesus’ words remain in the disciples (15:7). When Jesus tells his disciples he is going to prepare a dwelling place for them (14:2), it becomes clear that the “abiding place” is not a geographical locale, but is Jesus himself (14:6), where also the Father makes his home (14:23) along with the Spirit (14:17).

How can we insure that we are



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Ask Christ to prune in you whatever impedes your “bearing much fruit.”
- Spend some quiet time today enjoying simply dwelling with the Triune One who makes a home in you.
- Give thanks for the Word and the Eucharist, through which we abide in Christ and Christ in us.

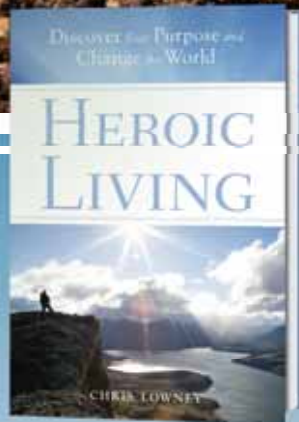
abiding in Christ and he in us? In the second reading, 1 Jn 3:24 gives a simple formula: “Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.” The writer also spells out what it means to keep the commandments: “We should believe in the name of...Jesus Christ and love one another just as he commanded us” (1 Jn 3:23).

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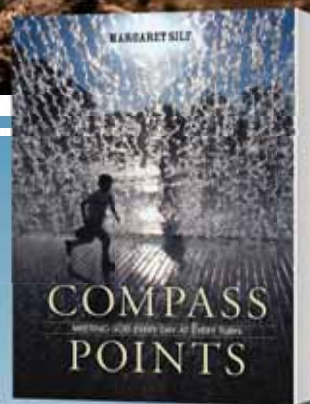
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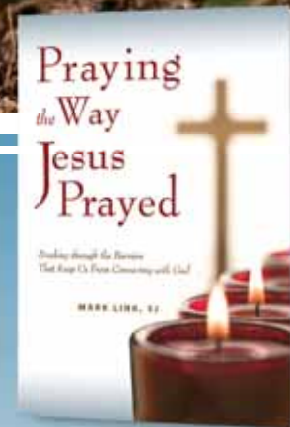
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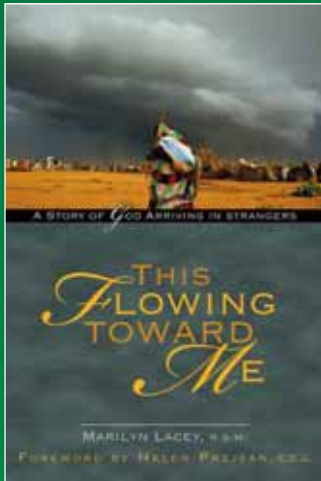
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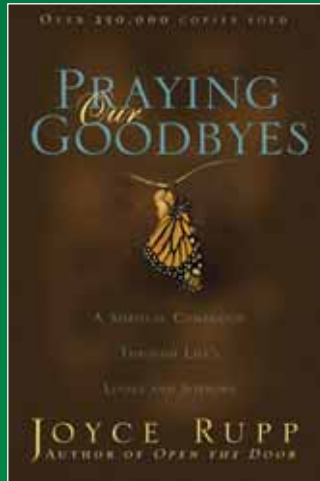
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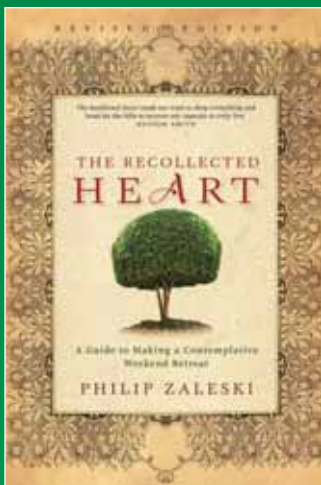
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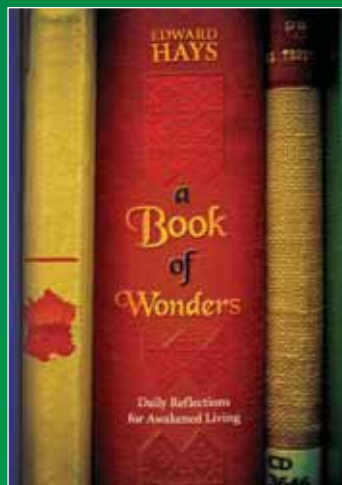
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