

# America

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## From Pages To Pixels

JON M. SWEENEY



Voting  
And Holiness  
NICHOLAS P. CAFARDI

Catholics at Work 4  
AGNES NIXON

# OF MANY THINGS

I write this from Jogues Retreat, an 18-bedroom 19th-century summer mansion, donated to be a Jesuit villa by the Chauncey Stillman family, that sits on a hilltop at Cornwall-on-Hudson. For the past 35 years, I have come here to think, pray, read, swim, write and take long walks up Storm King Mountain, beloved by painters of the Hudson River School. When the clouds rumble in, the lightning zips across the horizon and the thunder cracks and bangs, the mountain earns its name.

I bike north to Newburgh, where George Washington kept headquarters during the Revolution, or I hike through the Black Rock Forest to dip into one of its reservoirs or down to the Hudson waterfront, now clean enough for a plunge. West Point is right around the bend. Gen. David Petraeus grew up here. Recently he told ABC's "Nightline" that Afghanistan is "making progress." He could not say, "We're winning."

I brought with me books on the New Testament, the Eucharist and Malcolm X. The day's papers remind me that his daughter Malika Shabazz, one of twins born months after he died, has been arrested for identity theft.

A deer and her fawn prance across the front lawn. The line of wild turkeys, with their regal strut, has not yet appeared. One day in the woods behind the pool, I came face to face with a buck a few feet away. We sized one another up; this was his property, he seemed to say, as well as ours.

I awoke one morning with the bell-baritone voice of Franklin D. Roosevelt in my ears: "a date that will live in infamy...suddenly and deliberately attacked...." I had heard those words and that voice on Dec. 8, 1941. Now a public radio station was offering five F.D.R. CD's to donors. "Play these records in your car," the host exclaimed, and "you will weep." I was already in tears. How blessed I was to be born with a president I could respect, whose programs and prose lifted the poor

instead of shifting money and power to the rich.

In May 1976 I came here to write an article on the U.S. bicentennial for *Commonweal* and the British journal *The Month*, with the title "The Feel for Being American." Growing up in Trenton, N.J., I had four helps to "feel American": my father's World War I medals; the gold stars in neighbors' windows during World War II; the image of Washington crossing the Delaware; and F.D.R. himself, who defined the role of the presidency as moral leadership. I wondered how we could celebrate the bicentennial with the lingering tragedies of the assassinations, the embarrassments of the bombing of Hanoi and Cambodia; the slaughters at My Lai, Kent State and Attica and the smell of Watergate. I turned to literature, to Emerson and Thoreau, to tell us who we are. To whom do we turn today?

"Our greatest primary task is to put the people to work," F.D.R. said. Today we spend a million dollars a year to keep one soldier in Afghanistan, but we cannot fund a public works program for the 9 percent of Americans who are unemployed.

On the last day of my retreat, I hiked up the east side of Storm King to a Hudson River overlook to gaze out over one of the most stunning vistas in the nation. Below a train chugs north along the shore. On the water, boat owners gripe that since 9/11, Homeland Security checks have interrupted the bliss of sunny summer afternoons. Farther north at Hyde Park, N.Y., the estate right next door to my old Jesuit novitiate of St. Andrew-on-Hudson, where I once cut the grass over the grave of Teilhard de Chardin, rest two other graves. There lie the bones of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. His voice still rings: "With un-bounding determination...we shall gain the inevitable triumph. So help us God." **RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J.**

# America

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Julia Sosa

106 West 56th Street  
New York, NY 10019-3803

Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596

E-mail: [america@americamagazine.org](mailto:america@americamagazine.org);  
[letters@americamagazine.org](mailto:letters@americamagazine.org)

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### Acting in Good Faith

In a pluralistic world, how can Christians best share the Gospel with people of other faith traditions? To begin, today's evangelizers should understand the difference between proselytizing—attempting to convert individuals using coercion or force—and evangelization. Helpful guidelines can be found in a new document titled *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*, which was issued jointly on June 28 by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance.

The result of five years' work by more than 40 experts, *Witness* offers guiding principles for evangelization, stressing the need for respect and warning against the use of deception or coercion. The document states that Christians should avoid arrogance and condescension when in dialogue with people of other faiths and with one another, and they should recognize that the decision to change one's religion is not an easy one. Those considering conversion should be offered sufficient time for reflection. In addition, the document states that Christians are called not only to recognize the good in all religions but to speak out against the actions of governments that deny religious freedom for people of any faith. All people must have the freedom to worship as they see fit.

The drafters have, perhaps, learned from their churches' historical mistakes. Each Christian group has at times used coercion or rejected the religious freedoms of the others, said the Rev. James Massa, executive director of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. But these methods are never effective for evangelization. "It is the nature of faith that it be a free response," Father Massa said. "A coerced faith is not faith."

### Lasting Institutions

June 16 was I.B.M.'s 100th birthday. It celebrated with a four-page advertising supplement in some newspapers that led with the headline, "Nearly all the companies our grandparents admired have disappeared." Bad luck and poor choices led to some failures. But in most cases the failure came about because leaders were unable both to manage for today and to build for tomorrow.

I.B.M.'s founder, Thomas J. Watson Sr., built a corporate culture on basic beliefs and values that outlived him. This culture did not simply redo what he had done; it institutionalized why the organization exists: "Getting to the essential truths of what makes you you."

The church does not suffer the same questions of survival.

We believe that the founder is still with us, of course, and we try to live and to teach his essential truths. Still, our leadership has to deal with frequent crises and with major cultural shifts. To succeed it can learn, as I.B.M. has done, to keep moving into the future with a patient eye on the long term. And it can learn another lesson: "It's not just about what you create. It's also about what you choose to leave behind. Every institution, by its nature, favors the ideas, products and services that made it successful. Leadership often requires shedding emotional attachment to that heritage."

As church leadership confronts great loss of membership and great deficit of credibility, what can it leave behind? Clerical privilege? Latin sounds and structures? Denunciation and condemnation? Exclusion and control?

I.B.M. has learned that "a profitable idea can come from many sources." Can the church accept that a prophetic idea, Gospel-inspired and Spirit-filled, can also be so born?

### A Men's World

A new book, *Unwanted Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls and the Consequences of a World Full of Men*, by Mara Hvistendahl (Public Affairs), has awakened the public to a social policy in China, India and other countries that has forced a radical shift in the world's population balance: a decrease in live births of girls. Under China's one-child laws, for example, there is pressure in favor of male children, who can become future breadwinners and have higher social status.

Since the late 1970s, 163 million female babies have been aborted by families seeking a male heir. If nature is allowed to take its course, 105 boys are born for every 100 girls. Following human intervention, today India has 112 boys for every 100 girls. China has 121. Female empowerment, with the majority of women choosing to bear sons, has led to even more sex selection. An aimless population of young males is coming of age with not enough women available for each to marry. Societies in which men substantially outnumber women are unstable and violent. Unmarried men accumulate in the lower classes. Crime waves follow.

Does not this situation refute the absolutist feminist argument for abortion: that the only norm is the "mother's choice"? By this norm, she and/or her family are free to kill the child merely for being a girl. How can society allow that? If women have the same rights as men and if social order requires a balanced sex ratio, the law should intervene to protect the child—both as a young woman and as a human being.

# The War Next Door

Urban gun battles drive schoolchildren to the floors of their classrooms and entire villages into flight; noncombatants die in the crossfire; others, unfortunate enough to cross paths with pitiless irregulars, are hacked to death or beheaded. The national economy falters because of the rising chaos and uncertainty. Tensions rise along the border of a neighboring nation as some seek to escape the violence any way they can.

This is not a description of a social meltdown occurring in faraway North Africa. This is the meltdown occurring in North America, at your doorstep. Mexico, a major economic and political partner of the United States, is entering the fifth year of a deadly struggle between the U.S.-subsidized forces of law and order and the ruthless armies of drug cartels and crime syndicates. The violence has claimed the lives of almost 40,000 people, and each week it seems to cross a new threshold of depravity. Not too long ago the discovery of a mass slaying in the Mexican State of Tamaulipas, south of the border near El Paso, Tex., caused shock on both sides of the border. Such reports have become all too regular.

This year has witnessed the advent of a new kind of carnage as gangs—apparently in cahoots with regional immigration and security figures—set up roadblocks to intercept and hold for ransom migrants from southern Mexico and Central America heading north to the United States. The migrants are hoping to find work and a better life. Instead they face kidnapping and death on the highway or forced recruitment as cannon fodder for the drug cartels.

At the heart of the war itself, of course, is the apparently insatiable appetite in the United States for the illicit drugs produced in or trafficked through Mexico. Ninety percent of the cocaine consumed in the United States now passes through Mexico. Human trafficking into the United States has been another lucrative business for Mexican criminals. But the clandestine trade flows in both directions. Sustaining the violence has been a dependable flow of small arms and military-grade weapons from the United States into Mexico.

Despite occasional high profile successes like the recent arrest of Jesús Enrique Rejón Aguilar, a leader of the brutal Los Zetas cartel, Mexico's drug war is not going well. Although that may appear obvious to average Mexicans, it is less clear to Mexico's President Felipe Calderón, who began the war in 2006 and appears determined to see it through to some kind of conclusion. He is guardedly supported in this

grim effort by Mexico's bishops, who affirm the aims of the drug war—to the point of describing the violence engendered by the war as “inevitable”—even as they criticize its tactics and priorities.

President Calderón's options are neither many nor appealing. Declaring “victory” and unilaterally beginning a ceasefire carries its own risks. It could mean giving the already well-armed and brazen drug gangs time to rebuild and modernize their stockpiles. They might expand their recruiting campaigns and further extend their corrupting reach into regional governments and even the military itself.

But a cease-fire could produce a lull in the violence, presuming that the drug gangs would return to a prior observance of noncombatant immunity, and allow Mexico a national respite to recover from its losses, consolidate its forces and concentrate its efforts on reconstituting the security and government institutions that have failed so demonstrably. There is no point in taking an army to war when that army cannot be trusted to do the job or even to maintain the integrity of its forces in the face of the taunting and temptations of its enemy. The war itself has become a force of degradation not only for the Mexican military and security forces, but for the rule of law in Mexico. A recent report from the U.S. State Department said the war had not produced “relevant results,” but had taken “a significant toll on human rights.” The report concludes that “impunity and corruption at all levels of government are still pervasive.”

Ultimately it may not matter what President Calderón decides to do; there are some matters he cannot control. For Mexico to prosecute this drug war successfully, policy across the border has to change. The United States must confront its own drug problem more creatively, transferring funds from enforcement and interdiction to so-called demand-reduction, “soft” strategies that include treatment and relapse prevention for drug abusers as well as drug awareness and prevention programs. It must restore commonsense gun control policies, and, finally, it must produce a comprehensive immigration reform that includes temporary work provisions for unskilled labor from Mexico and Central America. If progress can be made north of the border in these key areas, Mexicans, exhausted by this war, can have reason to hope they may someday be able to declare a real victory against the drug cartels.



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

MEXICO

## Electoral Tribunal Sanctions Mexico City Archdiocese

**M**exico's electoral tribunal has ordered the Interior Ministry to sanction the Archdiocese of Mexico City for comments urging Catholics not to vote for political parties that promote liberalized abortion laws and same-sex marriage. The Mexican bishops' conference and the Mexico City archdiocesan spokesman, the Rev. Hugo Valdemar Romero—also named in the ruling—have questioned the legality of the order. “According to the [tribunal] judges, a citizen's critical opinion of a political party for its immoral, criminal and destructive actions toward the family and its values is an attack against the democratic life of our country,” Father Valdemar said at a press conference on July 3, two days after the tribunal's ruling. “Such a proposition is not only a judicial contradiction, but borders on the ridiculous.”

The Rev. Manuel Corral, spokesman for the bishops' conference, called the ruling “an insult” and said it was delivered in a way that seemed to say: “so that you'll learn.” It remains uncertain if the tribunal, a five-judge panel akin to the U.S. Supreme Court with exclusive jurisdiction over electoral matters, has the authority to

order the Interior Ministry to act. Armando Martínez Gómez, president of the College of Catholic Lawyers of Mexico, said the case

would be appealed. He acknowledged that it might take years to settle it.

The ruling highlights lingering church-state tensions in Mexico,



SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

## Bishops Respond to New York Vote, Look to Future Battles

**T**he New York State Senate passed a measure formalizing same-sex marriage 33 to 29 in an evening vote on June 24, and Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat and a Catholic, signed it into law later that night. Unless it is delayed by legal challenges, the new law will take effect in late July. New York would then become the sixth state in the nation to permit same-sex marriage, which is currently legal in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, in addition to the District of Columbia. The New York bill, entitled the Marriage Equality Act, dictates that “a marriage that is otherwise valid

shall be valid regardless of whether the parties to the marriage are of the same or different sex.” The bill also directs that all other laws dealing with marriage or gender-specific subjects be reinterpreted to include two persons of the same sex who have obtained a marriage license.

In their response to the new law, the New York State bishops said that the true definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman “cannot change, though we realize that our beliefs about the nature of marriage will continue to be ridiculed and that some will even now attempt to enact government sanctions against churches

and religious organizations that preach these timeless truths.” Meanwhile, despite what they called a “sad moment in our state's history,” the bishops will continue to work with Governor Cuomo and the legislature on behalf of the poor and vulnerable, the unborn and Catholic school parents, among others, said Dennis Poust, director of communications for the New York State Catholic Conference. “We can't afford to cut off relations with legislators or with the governor because we have other fights to fight,” he said. “There are many more issues of grave concern to us. So we'll just get up and brush ourselves off and continue on.”

On July 1 the U.S. Department of Justice filed a brief challenging the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as the legal union of one man and one



where prelates traditionally have avoided giving opinions on political matters or directly criticizing political parties and politicians. The electoral

tribunal cited the need to keep church and state separate as the reason for its ruling.

Constancio Carrasco, an electoral tribunal judge, wrote in the ruling: “What is being defended is the secular state. This is the constitutional right that is being protected through various actions described in the Law of Religions, which has as its common objective protecting the secularism of the state.”

The case against Father Valdemar and the archdiocese, lodged by the leftist Democratic Revolution Party (in Spanish, the Partido de la Revolución Democrática, or P.R.D.), has generated legal confusion as it has bounced among the country’s electoral institute, electoral tribunal and Interior Ministry. The P.R.D., which governs Mexico City, made its complaint after Father Valdemar criticized the party and a Supreme

Court ruling last August that declared a local law permitting same-sex marriage and the adoption of children by same-sex couples to be constitutional.

Both the electoral institute, which referees all partisan political activities and organizes elections, and the Interior Ministry have said the case is not theirs to adjudicate. The electoral institute, after being ordered to review the case by the electoral tribunal, ruled that Valdemar had violated the country’s electoral code but absolved the Archdiocese of Mexico City.

In its ruling on July 1, the electoral tribunal found both Father Valdemar and the archdiocese in violation of the electoral code, which, the judges said, conforms to the Religious Associations Law. The Interior Ministry is responsible for regulating the country’s religious associations.

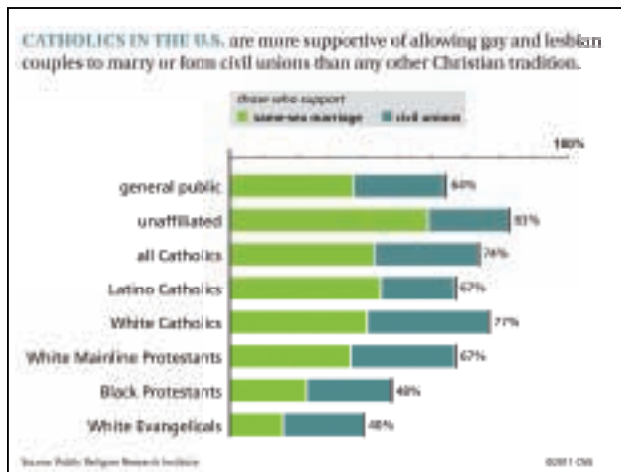
woman. In the coming months, the issue of same-sex marriage will also emerge in various court challenges to Proposition 8, the 2008 California referendum restricting marriage to D.O.M.A.’s definition. In November, residents of the state of Minnesota will be voting on a referendum on the legal

status of same-sex unions and the definition of marriage.

While the New York legislature included language that offered some protection to religious organizations—exemptions made public only in the last hours before the vote—its actual legal effect will have to be scrutinized. The last-minute amendment to the legislation exempts from liability members of the clergy who decline to perform same-sex weddings and protects any employee “being managed, directed or supervised by or in conjunction with a religious corporation, benevolent order or a not-for-prof-

it corporation.” It also says failure to provide same-sex ceremonies would not “result in any state or local government action to penalize, withhold benefits, or discriminate against such religious corporation, benevolent order, a not-for-profit corporation operated, supervised or controlled by a religious corporation.”

Bishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, said: “Marriage is a fundamental good that must be protected in every circumstance. Exemptions of any kind never justify redefining marriage.” Bishop Cordileone said marriage as an institution “affirms the vital and unique importance to children of receiving care from both their mother and father together.... Making mar-





riage law indifferent to the absence of either sex creates an institutional and cultural crisis with generational ramifications yet to be seen.”

## Children Casualties In Libya

In Misrata, Libya, 15-year-old Mohammed Majeed had grown so accustomed to the war raging around him that he lost his fear of the ordnance scattered on the ground in his neighborhood. One day in April, he found a rifle grenade and carried it inside. The next day, as he played with it, it exploded in his hand. Mohammed lost four fingers, becoming another Misrata child wounded by unexploded ordnance. Adult residents also collect the ordnance and set up displays of war paraphernalia. “I understand the sentiment behind the [monuments], but it’s like the worst-case scenario in a course on explosive ordnance disposal,” said Fred Pavey, a British member of the Christian ACT Alliance humanitarian mine action team. Mohammed’s father says people are learning from the mistakes of others. “Because of what happened to my son, most of the children of our neighborhood are now afraid of these things,” he said. “Kids are very bored in Libya, but they get bombs instead of toys from Qaddafi. He has destroyed everything.”

## Burma: Conflict Creates New Refugees

Fighting continues in the civil war that is affecting the north of Myanmar, where the Burmese military and guerrillas of the Kachin Independent Army are battling throughout Kachin State. A source from the Catholic Diocese of Banmaw claimed that the Burmese government “does nothing to help civilian refugees. Among the 20,000

## NEWS BRIEFS

Pope Benedict opened a new Vatican Internet news portal with the **first-ever papal tweet** on June 28: “Dear Friends, I just launched News.va. Praised be our Lord Jesus Christ!” • In Matamoros, Mex., the Rev. Marco Antonio Duran Romero, 48, was killed on July 2, caught in the **crossfire between drug cartel gunmen** and the military. • On July 2 and 3, **Muslim militants in Nigeria** launched a series of attacks that killed at least 10 people, and new clashes were reported between Christian and Muslim groups in the central city of Jos. • The **Vatican condemned the ordination** of the Rev. Paul Lei Shiyin as bishop of Leshan, China, after it was conducted on June 29 without a papal mandate. • In a letter published on June 30 in *Nature*, **ethicists and lawyers** have urged the European Court of Justice not to allow the patenting of technologies that use human embryos. • The Institute of the **Sisters of Mercy of the Americas**, the largest women’s religious order in the United States, met in Chicago and elected a new leadership team with Patricia McDermott, R.S.M., as president. • On July 2 the Vatican reported a **budget surplus** of \$13.1 million for 2010, the first surplus in four years.



refugees, many are dying from disease and hunger, while the military threatens anyone who tries to help them.” The local church has taken steps to set up refugee camps in the diocese. In the diocese of Banmaw, Caritas—the only humanitarian agency at work in the area—is providing food and medicine for at least two of the camps. In the Diocese of Myiktyina, Caritas has set up the St. Joseph Refugee Camp, which cares for 158 refugees, mostly children and young people.

## Putting Trafficking Out of Business

A coalition of religious investors wants officials at 27 major U.S. companies to look deeper into the role human trafficking may play in the operation of their firms. The investors, who are members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and include

about 80 Catholic religious congregations and health care providers, are asking companies like Costco, American Airlines and Kohl’s to stop doing business with suppliers who violate basic human rights and to train employees to recognize trafficked people in their midst. The I.C.C.R. correspondence, in the form of an investor statement, offers an explanation of the prevalence of human trafficking in various industries, describes in detail legislative steps taken to control it and outlines actions the coalition wants the companies to take in order to end demand for what is widely considered modern-day slavery. The statement, sent to clothing, food, travel and tourism, agricultural, technology and retail firms, was timed to coincide with the release of the 2011 Trafficking in Persons report by the State Department.

From CNS and other sources.





# Which World Do We See?

**O**n a beautiful summer evening I took our children to their first outdoor family movie night. I was just noting how well-behaved they were, when an indignant bellow—“NO!”—interrupted the program. Uh-oh. I knew that big voice in a small person’s body. Our 2-year-old daughter, in her footie pajamas, had marched herself up to the big screen and was facing down the film’s celluloid villain.

In “Tangled,” Disney’s version of the Rapunzel story, the antagonist explains that the brutal world forced the villain to imprison Rapunzel for security reasons, to protect her because the world was a bad and cruel place. Our daughter was having none of it. “No! That’s not true!” she cried. “The world is *not* bad. The world is....” She opened her arms wide and pointed at the peaceful tableau of families and friends sharing blankets, pillows, picnics and popcorn on the lawn. “The world has....” Her big emotions soon swamped her smaller vocabulary, and she abruptly concluded her impassioned soliloquy with “grass! Green grass!” She nodded and rested her case, secure in her conviction that a world thick with lush, green grass and people breaking bread together could only be a good and grace-filled place.

Which world do we see? Is life nasty, brutish and short, justifying or even requiring bad behavior in order to secure our own survival, or are peace, love and community possible?

It is not just an academic question. Lives depend on it. How can people

build peace who have never known peace? At St. John’s Seminary in Los Angeles, a young seminarian from the Democratic Republic of Congo told me he had known only conflict in the D.R.C. and had never experienced peace until he came to Los Angeles. He wanted to believe that peace was possible for his country, but he could not imagine it.

His comments mirrored those made by a Department of Defense official in Washington, D.C. We were discussing prospects for reconciliation in Afghanistan when he reeled in frustration, saying: “It is impossible. We ought to stop talking about it and instead focus on things that could possibly be achieved.”

Peacebuilders know a key factor in constructing sustainable peace in communities seared by violence is moral imagination. The peacebuilding scholar and practitioner John Paul Lederach asks in his book *Moral Imagination*, “How do we transcend the cycles of violence that bewitch our human communities while still living in them? Transcending violence is forged by the capacity to generate, mobilize and build moral imagination...requiring the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies.”

The Catholic Church has many assets in peacebuilding, highlighted in a new book titled *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*. Many of these themes were examined in a conference in Rome on June 30 on “The Future of Catholic

Peacebuilding.”

Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, emphasized the church’s commitment to building peace, while representatives from Caritas Internationalis, Pax Christi, Catholic Relief Services, Sant’Egidio and the Catholic Peacebuilding Network spoke of the rich work of Catholic organizations in conflict areas.

Operating for over 2,000 years, reaching into every country on earth, the church has a lot of “bandwidth.” The practical, functional and institutional capacities the church can apply to building peace are important.

Yet underpinning all these practical assets are the church’s greatest

Is life  
nasty,  
brutish  
and short,  
or are peace  
and love  
possible?

gifts: principles that nourish and sustain moral imagination and communities under siege and people who make those principles manifest. Too often our governments aim low in building peace, seeing in the world, like the Disney villain, only a set of bad choices among lesser evils. Catholic peacebuilders see a different world, where communion, peace and love are possible. In our sacraments of Communion and reconciliation, our beliefs in a relational, risen God and our institutional structures that seek to make real these relationships of local and global church, of the body of Christ, we regularly exercise moral muscles for a moral imagination the world needs. Imagining peace in war-torn areas is a challenging but crucial first step in realizing peace.

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE is a fellow at the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.



PHOTO: REUTERS/ADAM HUNGER

Voting booths in Somersworth, N.H., on Nov. 4, 2008.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR FAITHFUL VOTING

# Keep Holy Election Day

BY NICHOLAS P. CAFARDI

**W**hen Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize, a reporter, cameras rolling, asked her if she was a holy person. She looked right at him and said, “It’s my job to be holy. It’s your job to be holy, too. Why do you think God put us on this earth?”

We were made to be holy. It is our job to be holy in everything that we do, including when we vote. How can we be holy when we vote? How can we transcend this world, which is what holiness calls for, and at the same time remain immanent, be a part of this world—which is what voting is all about? We know we can do it because our faith teaches that the Lord whom we worship is himself both a transcendent God and an incarnate human, and he asked us to follow him.

### How Would Jesus Vote?

On a very basic level, we know that holiness requires the imitation of Christ, day in and day out. What is the mind and heart of Jesus, and what does it require me to do in these circumstances? That prayerful conversation with Jesus is essential to holiness.

What does it mean to be holy? We know Jesus’ answer: “Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul and your whole mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus defines holiness in terms of love. If you want to be holier still, “Sell all your goods, give the money to the poor and come follow me.” This is completely selfless love.

A first characteristic of holiness in the voting process is that it does not think that there are easy and readily apparent answers to complex political questions. This does not mean that complex issues should para-

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**NICHOLAS P. CAFARDI** is dean emeritus and professor of law at Duquesne University School of Law. This article is derived from a volume of essays by Catholic authors, *Voting and Holiness: A Catholic Guide to Participation in the Political Process*, which will be published later this year by Paulist Press.



lyze us or lead us to believe that every answer is equally correct. That is not the case. It does mean that we have to strive to be holy in discerning those answers.

Holiness requires us to inform our consciences in weighing complex political choices. As our bishops have said, "Conscience is the voice of God resounding in the human heart, revealing the truth to us and calling us to do what is good while shunning what is evil." Or, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it: "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right."

So consciences must be informed. Untethered feelings are not conscience. Conscience is based on truth—the Scripture, the church's traditions and teachings, the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All of these we are obliged to apply to moral choices like voting.

### No Easy Answers

Because holiness is not a matter of readily apparent answers to complex political questions, we cannot use our church as a political question-and-answer machine. When the scribes and the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus into a political debate about Roman power, he, knowing there was no good answer, refused to offer a specific response. Instead, he said, "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's; and to God what is God's."

It is a good lesson. When the church has made openly partisan political choices in the recent past—that is, when it has acted more like Caesar than Christ—it has been as often wrong as it has been right. The consequences have led us away from holiness, away from the imitation of Christ.

The church has to preach, even when that preaching has a political aspect to it, as many moral issues today do. But in holiness, when our sacred pastors speak to the morality of an issue, they should not choose political sides. The church must leave the political answer, the "how" of solving political problems, even when those political problems have a moral component, to the informed consciences of the laity. Political strategy is not a question of holiness or even of faith. It is a question of effective political means, not simply political ends. And here the church cannot speak in specifics.

It follows then that the church cannot legally or morally tell us which candidates to vote for. We may on occasion vote in a referendum on a specific issue: We want a new sales tax or not; we want to revise our state constitution to say something or not. Those are single-issue votes, and their moral value is perhaps more susceptible to discernment than when we are choosing among candidates for public office.

In the 2007 edition of *Faithful Citizenship*, the guide to Catholic participation in the political process the U.S. bish-

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ops publish every four years, the bishops write about the single-issue voter: "A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or racism, if the voter's intent is to support that position. In such cases, a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil" (No. 34).

If you accept the premise that a candidate takes a position in favor of outright evil and that the only reason the Catholic voter chooses that candidate is in order to advance that evil, then the bishops' conclusion follows: the Catholic voter has done something terribly wrong. But how likely is the prospect that a voter chooses a candidate for one reason only, and that reason an evil one?

Normally the basis on which we choose one candidate over another is multifaceted, just as life is multifaceted. We weigh the candidates against each other, evaluating their character as well as their stances on particular issues, agreeing with some of the candidate's positions, perhaps not agreeing on others, but preferring one candidate over another after weighing complex alternatives.

### Watch Your Language

Holiness does not let us demonize the other, those candidates we do not like, those people on the other side of a political issue with whom we disagree. True, Jesus called some of his opponents "whitened sepulchres" and used some other choice phrases, but he had to be extremely agitated to do that. It was not typical of the Lord, who said more than once, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," who rarely demanded but almost always suggested and who forgave his murderers from his cross.

Holiness should lead us to question the tactic of condemnatory labels that are used in the political process. Many labels are particularly troubling, but let me use one as an example. I do not know anyone who belongs to the "party of death," that is, someone who honestly as a matter of political choice prefers death to life, who joins a political party because that party sees death as a social good to be pursued. It is an ugly phrase and it should be used only in situations where it applies, which is almost never. This does not mean that a criticism of the "culture of death" is inappropriate, but on the list of "life issues," like abortion, racial discrimination, contraception, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, capital punishment, unjust war, divorce, lack of chastity and lack of marital fidelity, no one political party has it all right or all wrong.

As believing Catholics, it may be difficult for us to accept that some people do not agree with our church's teachings on life issues. But the people who disagree with us are not, simply because of that fact, supporters of death. And demonizing them is not holiness. The use of such inexact, deprecating terms coarsens the political dialogue and creates situ-

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ations in which some people consider it acceptable to do things like carry guns to political rallies or even kill those who disagree with us because, after all, they belong to the party of death. Jesus would weep. He specifically said, "God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved."

## Faith, Not Coercion

Holiness does not seek to control others, to take away their free will, their rights of conscience. We can seek to persuade them, to convince them; but holiness does not disrespect the religious and civil liberties of others. Our church used to teach that error had no rights; and that may, as a philosophical proposition, still be true today in the abstract. But rights inhere in people, not in propositions, and people are never abstract. People in error have rights, rights that Catholics, especially Catholics seeking to be holy in the political process, cannot ignore. In doubt, we bring faith, not coercion. And we bring faith primarily by example, by our respect for those who disagree with us, who do not share our faith or our values or our conclusions. "Truth can be only proposed. It cannot be imposed without violating the sanctity of the individual person and subverting the truth itself," as one of our bishops has said.

This is the classic dilemma for U.S. Catholics. We are committed to religious principles that we hold to be absolute truths. But we are also committed to our Constitution, which not only guarantees our freedom to hold and practice these beliefs but also guarantees to others the right to disagree with those beliefs.

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## Voting With Freedom and Holiness

In sum, holiness does not lead us to think that there are easy or readily apparent answers to complex political issues; it does not make our church into a political answer machine; it does not let us demonize the other; it does not let itself become a tool used to control others.

Where does that bring us? To a final proposition: This world is imperfect and imperfectable. The kingdom is here and not yet here. The transcendent interacts with the immanent, but the immanent endures. Holiness understands this and puts up with it. This is perhaps the devil's greatest tool: He has brought us to a place in our politics where the only choice is a Hobson's choice, where no matter what we do, there is a risk of being wrong. We either

participate in a political process that allows wrong choices—some might even say immoral choices—or we withdraw from our democracy. Trying to control someone with a morality they do not perceive is not holiness. It certainly is not reflective of the Lord who calls but never compels, the Lord who said, "Take the log out of your eye before you tell your brother to remove the splinter from his."

Human freedom, given us by our Creator, is the proper intermediary of holiness. In the political process holiness endures actions by political society that might be wrong, perhaps even evil, because to do otherwise requires that we violate the consciences and the God-given freedom of others.

Be wary of anyone who claims to know exactly what political choices God wants you to make. Our pastors can tell us the ethical and moral principles that should govern human behavior; they can tell us the values that should be defended; and we must learn from them on these matters in order to inform our own consciences. We also have an obligation to look at Scripture, the teachings and traditions of the church, the people of God, over the centuries. And we need to pray, to ask the Spirit for guidance. None of this can be dodged. You cannot be holy in voting if you fail to do these things.

But once your conscience is properly formed, then, to paraphrase St. Augustine's saying, "Love and do what you will," I would say, "Love"—which means to be holy—"and vote how you will." **A**

**ON THE WEB**  
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# All God's Children

Stories of sin and redemption

BY AGNES NIXON

I grew up in Nashville, Tenn., in an Irish-Catholic enclave, at a time when Catholics made up less than 1 percent of the population and the whole state was one diocese. I am the fourth generation of women in my family to go to the St. Cecilia Dominican Academy, started before the Civil War. I loved the nuns. They also taught in the parish school. Sister Jane Dominic, my second grade teacher, and I stayed friends until she died at 94.

My parents separated when I was just 3 months old. Our household included my mother and four maiden aunts, all of whom worked as bookkeepers. Later, when I married and had four children in five years, I was working already and simply continued to do so. Everybody says I blazed a trail as a wife, mother and working woman, but to me work was just what women did. My husband, Robert, was very supportive and helped a great deal. It was important to me to raise my children as Catholics, but not to force them, because that is the best way to lose them.

I wanted to become a writer. I studied writing first at St. Mary's College in South Bend and then at Northwestern University. My father, whose business was the manufacture of burial garments, disapproved. "You're not a writer," he told me and insisted that I take over his business. To set me straight, he asked a friend to introduce me to a real writer, Irna Phillips, the woman who created the serial drama. I had just graduated, so I took along the one script I had written. Ms. Phillips read the whole thing aloud, then asked me to come work for her. A year later I moved to New York, where I had never been before, praying, "God, don't dump me now."

Television was really getting started, with such shows as *The "Philco Television Playhouse," "Playhouse 90," "Robert Montgomery Presents"* and the "Hallmark Hall of Fame." I wrote for most of those nighttime shows.

After I married, Procter and Gamble asked me to write

for a show they owned, "The Guiding Light." A few years later, I took over as head writer from Irna Phillips.

## Justice and Empathy

I worked hard to become a good writer. What interested me was justice. I tried to get the audience to sympathize even with the wrongdoer.

When I grew up in a racist South, it hurt me to see distinguished African-American people walk past me to stand in the back of the bus. That does something to a person. I was not sitting in that bus thinking, I am going to create a television show about the horrors of racism. But I wrote a sequence in "The Guiding Light" in which one of the main characters, an actress named Julie, was ill and became friends with her nurse, who was black. When Julie went home, I wrote the script so that the nurse went to visit her, not wearing her uniform, and knocked on the front door. The sponsor objected. "You should never have done that," the sponsor said about the scene. "They don't want it either." "Who are they?" I asked, knowing whom they meant. After that episode ran, one Atlanta storekeeper took Procter & Gamble products off the shelf.

To me racism was a vital story. I was not consciously listening to my faith; I just found racism shockingly unjust.

Later, I had a friend with uterine cancer. In memory of her, I wanted to promote the Pap smear test as a means of discovering and curing uterine cancer, but both the sponsor and the network said no. "Guiding Light," they explained, "is an entertainment show. We have scheduled times for public service programs." But those times were early Sunday morning when everyone was asleep or at church. So I showed them how the theme could be developed,

and they said, "Okay, but don't say cancer, don't say uterus and don't say hysterectomy." I wrote scenes explaining how the doctor would tell the character she had cancer and so on. It was a success. A gynecologist told me he saw so many women he had not seen in years that he asked them, "What are you doing back in my office?" They said, "Well, I watch this soap opera...."

In 1967 I created my own show, "One Life to Live," on

### ON THE WEB

Highlights from  
Agnes Nixon's career.  
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AGNES NIXON, a television writer and producer, is the creator of "All My Children" and "One Life to Live." In 2010 she won the Daytime Emmys Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

ABC. I wanted to cover the social issues, and the network trusted me to do it in good taste. By 1968 there was the “black is beautiful” movement. On the show we ran the story of Carla Gray, a light-skinned African-American who passed as a white person. The point was to help the audience examine their prejudices. So for five months the viewers thought Carla was a white young actress engaged to a white doctor. As the months passed, Carla had to have an operation. While in the hospital, she fell in love with a black resident, which led to a kiss.

Then I got a letter from a man in Seattle, Wash., who said: I want to protest that black resident kissing that white girl. But I am getting confused. If she turns out to be black, I want to protest her kissing that white doctor.

I created “All My Children” in 1970. The Vietnam war was very controversial, so the network asked only one thing: to present a hawk’s viewpoint as well as a dove’s. I agreed. If you don’t have a hawk on, you are not being fair. And if the hawks turn the television off, you have no chance of getting a message across. My aim was to make people understand their opponents’ opinion.

That point was brought home to me years ago at a summer television seminar in Aspen, Colo. Saul Alinsky, one of the speakers, said, “When I sit down to negotiate with the heads of companies, I make sure not to bring out the baby pictures, because you say, ‘Here is my kid,’ and the guy sitting across says, ‘Here is a picture of mine,’ and you can’t negotiate anymore; you’ve become friends.” That hit home more than any direct religious teaching: You have to bring out the baby pictures before a hawk can ever understand a dove or vice versa.

A writer has to make the viewers empathize and say, “There, but for the grace of God, go I.” I am fascinated by how people live, and I like to dramatize why people do the things they do, even the wrong things. What makes stories interesting is that people do the wrong things for the right reasons. They mean to do well, but people are fallible. Real life and drama overlap. My writing is about sin and redemption. On the social issues, whether the Vietnam War or abortion or racism, I never thought I could change the way most people felt. I just wanted to show the unfairness of it,



the inequality, the injustice. When we ran a yearlong story about child abuse, the network persuaded affiliate stations to run a ribbon across the bottom of the screen, informing abusers where they could get help anonymously. The results were amazing: many people who watched it stopped mistreating their children.

For me the most important factor in serial writing is the ensemble effort of our creative family: writers, producers, directors and all the talented people behind the camera. We are a family. A sense of respect and camaraderie and sharing the responsibility, as well as the pleasures and benefits, is key. No one person can write an hourlong show 260 times a year. **A**



# Staying Power

What keeps women in the church?

BY CYNTHIA REVILLE PEABODY

**M**ore and more I think the time is long past due for us Catholic women to have a conversation among ourselves about what keeps us in the church and what we can pass on to our younger sisters in faith. I am not suggesting a confrontation, mind you—since confrontations are exhausting and often end in divisive misunderstanding—but a conversation.

I envision an informal, global conversation made up of many, many smaller discussions that cross generational lines, cultural boundaries and dogmatic fences. We can tweet it, blog it, e-mail it, write it, Skype it or just sit down together over a pot of tea—lots of different pots of tea. The important thing is that we talk and listen to one another with open minds and hearts.

My work on religious environmentalism and eco-justice has afforded me an opportunity to meet many wise, strong and committed Catholic women. I am no longer shy about asking them, “Why do you stay?” And I am no longer surprised when they jump at the chance to talk about the muddled mess of feelings they have toward the church. Love, betrayal, commitment, tradition, shame, anger, compassion—what do we make of all this?

Aileen O’Donoghue, a friend and colleague, summed it up best when she said to me, “Sometimes being a Catholic woman is just so lonely.”

Last year, at an event on Catholic feminist theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, I

was particularly struck by how much women need to nurture and bolster one another. Four young Catholic



scholars gave a presentation on the book *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology*, edited by Susan Abraham and Elena Procaro-Foley (2009). The presenters’ scholarship was creative, exciting and insightful, but I was saddened when one of the contributing authors expressed “complete despair” about the place of women in the church. She felt that women had once again been relegated to meeting in dark church basements and one another’s living rooms.

I am not as despairing. If women are in the church basement, it is because that is where we women feed the ever-growing number of hungry people in our neighborhoods and set up cots for the homeless to spend a

safe, warm night. If we are in each other’s living rooms, it is because we are trying to figure out how to fund our efforts to give sanctuary to immigrants. We rock boarder babies and sit at the bedside of dying people. We are ardent peacekeepers and peacemakers, respected scholars and teachers. Our work honors the tradition of Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa and Sister Dorothy Stang. We are very busy doing the hard, dirty work of creation in the largest sense of the word.

Perhaps becoming more aware of each other’s work could instill a pride powerful enough to dispel despair and keep more of us in the faith. Certainly sharing each other’s exhaustion, exhilaration and confusion is more necessary now than ever.

No Catholic woman I know has any hope that the Vatican will acknowledge our efforts anytime soon. A few weeks ago, I was discussing this problem with a young Catholic colleague who lamented that “staying in” was getting harder. She believes that a whole new order of church is in the offing and wants to be part of that evolution. The institution, she said, starved by human constructs that deny the fresh air of the Spirit, will suffocate and die; but the Spirit will continue to breathe the air of life and community into all those who are devoted to building the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

I took this idea to other Catholic women whom I respect and admire. Every woman I spoke to affirmed that her faithful work is in and for the once vital, now hidden “church of the people,” that is, a spiritually, intellectually and materially generous church that

CYNTHIA REVILLE PEABODY is director of the Center for the Study of Science and Religion at The Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York City.

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recognizes God in every human being. Most of the women agreed that at some point we would return to being a church of the people, but few of them believed it would be anytime soon.

We long for a church that is honest and humble enough to admit to mistakes and misunderstandings but strong enough to work through difficulties and disagreements without alienating or isolating one another.

Mother Teresa has counseled: "Holiness is not a luxury for the few; it is not for some people. It is meant for you and me, for all of us. It is a simple duty because if we learn to love, we learn to be holy."

In her book *There Is a Season*, Joan Chittister, O.S.B., writes about the merits of being what she calls a spiritual rebuilder: "Rebuilders are those who take what other people only talk about and make it the next generation's reality. These are the superstars of the long haul.... They give up prestige and money and being the Peter Pans of the public arena for the long, hard struggle of turning their personal little worlds on their tiny axles. They build the new world right in the heart of the old." Chittister acknowledges, "Their lot is too often, too plainly a lonely one." She is right.

Rebuilders are what the Jesuit theologian Walter Burghardt refers to as "ministers on the margin." But I do not think we women have to stand on the margins isolated and alone.

We owe it to ourselves, to the women who lived the social gospel before us, to our daughters, granddaughters, students, patients and friends (and to many men, of course) to join together in the struggle to make sense of our relationship with the Catholic Church. We can continually rebuild each other as we are rebuilding the church we long for. Let us make a point of asking each other, "Why do you stay?" And then let us listen without judgment or cynicism and with compassion and understanding. **A**

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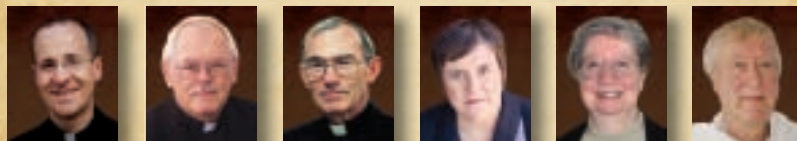


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# BOOKS & CULTURE

IDEAS | JON M. SWEENEY

## FROM PAGES TO PIXELS

*Will texts and tweets replace reading?*

A depressing set of figures came to my attention the other day from the 2010 *Kids & Family Reading Report*, a survey of 1,045 American households that was con-

ducting. Just when print publishers (including the magazine and newspaper industries) are hanging on to the physical book by a thread, we hear that young people think texting equals

reading? Mine, too. Sometimes I feel the need to raid the baggy jean pockets of teenagers everywhere, steal their cell-phones and organize phone-burnings for the sake of God and country. But in truth, my first stumbling response to this factoid was to post it on my Facebook page.

I realize this is more than a little self-contradictory—using social media to express dismay over the popularity of social media. But on my Facebook post I imagined how the world of literature and letters would be different if some of the writers from whom I have learned so much had texted and tweeted rather than written, read and talked to one another. I imagined this text message from Thomas Merton to Denise Levertov: “Luv yr new bk hun! :)”

### The Collected Postings?

Since I have recently read collections of letters by Graham Greene and Ted Hughes, I have also begun to imagine a future in which books of letters are no longer published. Will there be collections of e-mail messages, Facebook postings and tweets? I can imagine what a sample might look like, even if written

by a great novelist or poet. The editor of such a volume might identify the source and date of the communication of each entry, “Sent from the author’s TweetDeck on Dec. 3, 2009, at 1:20 a.m.” Then the tweet: “Endless revisions these days on my Jesus book. My editor is making me crazy!” You can’t say much in 140 characters or fewer.

That is part of the problem. As reading is redefined to be less and less,

ducted by the Harrison Group for Scholastic Inc., the publisher of the Harry Potter series. According to the survey, 25 percent of children between the ages of 9 and 17 say that texting with their friends counts as “reading.” I am a writer and editor who works in book publishing, and physical books have been a large part of my life for at least 25 years. So that bit of information could not look worse to my print-

reading. This isn’t about preferring to read Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s new novel on your iPhone or iPad. This is about doing away with reading altogether.

When you think of the allure of reading, does your mind immediately return to the marvelous experiences you have had with books, and to the ideas, characters, places and situations you have experienced through read-



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/GOLDEN PIXELS LLC



shorter and shorter, ideas must necessarily become smaller too. Who has the time or energy to reflect as people once did? But new media is only making it harder by creating such easy and interesting entertainments.

Hugh of St. Victor, a 12th-century churchman, spoke of the value of “reading toward wisdom.” I suspect that most if not all of the readers of *America* still do quite a lot of that. But it is becoming more difficult, isn't it? The philosopher and priest Ivan Illich wrote nearly 20 years ago, “The screen, the medium, and ‘communication’ have surreptitiously replaced the page, letters, and reading” (see *In the Vineyard of the Text*). Illich knew where things were headed.

Some of us read more than others, but what concerns me most is who is reading most. Among them would be, for example, the most fundamentalist of religionists—Jewish, Muslim and Christian—who still read in the old style. In the ultra-Orthodox yeshivas in Brooklyn and Israel there are men who read all day. In Israel, these scholars are paid by the Israeli government to study rather than enter the work force. They dedicate their lives to *Chochmah, Binah, Da'at*—Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge. Similarly, a fundamentalist Muslim is invariably a man who studies ancient texts, interpretations, ideas and knowledge for many hours every day. He carries books with him when he travels. And the fundamentalist Christian, likewise, knows her catechism, canons, Bible, commentaries, languages and ideas better than most of her more progressive peers.

The written word has moved from pages to pixels. That is value neutral. Take another look at the figures from the 2010 study: 25 percent of young people call texting “reading.” Forty years ago, 25 percent of young people between the ages of 9 and 17 surely thought, as I did, that staring at a cereal box in the morning while chewing



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breakfast counted as “reading.” The fact is, whether 40 years ago or last year, more than half of American households do not buy a single book in a year. That is the way it has long been. Now households are not buying a single e-book, either. One could say there is just as much hope for the future now as a generation ago.

### A Reading Migration

In what are called newly enhanced books, you can click on video, audio and other bits of content as you read. That is value neutral, too. But an inevitable result of all of this creativity is a corresponding lack of concentration. It is harder to focus on any one thing. That too might be value neutral, except that those of us on the religious left, in an embrace of the world, might allow new technologies to steer us further and further away from the sort of reading that results in wisdom and knowledge.

The problem is less that a portion of the population does not read books or thinks that texting is akin to reading Ilich and Adichie. Rather, the problem is that those who read are being lured by gadgetry to read less and less. Social media divide our attention or, more precisely, cater to our already-divided attention.

Like millions of others, I have written at a computer keyboard since college. Already, behavioral scientists are examining whether brains like mine have changed as a result of moving from pen and pencil to typewriter to electronic keyboard. I “think” with my fingers now, when I used to think while writing in longhand. Split-second moments of improvisation are nearly impossible for me with a pen now. In my hand, a pen plods. Pens settle into ink. But the fingers that generate pixels can quickly move, think, correct and communicate.

As we stopped expressing our knowledge of God, self and the world with pen on paper, we lost something

in the transition, including the skills of memory and study that characterized previous generations. What we have gained in gathering and synthesizing information is often a matter of appearances only—as those who consult Wikipedia for the facts for which one used to scour libraries will attest. Our ability to present findings and narrative quickly has increased astronomically. Perhaps that is knowledge, but it is not wisdom.

What will we lose in the next tran-

sition? As we tweet and hyperlink, will we sustain the focused concentration required for real discovery?

Half of the young people surveyed who said texting was the same thing as reading also said that they “read

books in order to help figure out who I am and who I can become.” Let’s hope that there is still time.

---

**JON M. SWEENEY** *lives in Vermont. He is the author of Verily, Verily: The KJV—400 Years of Influence and Beauty (Zondervan).*

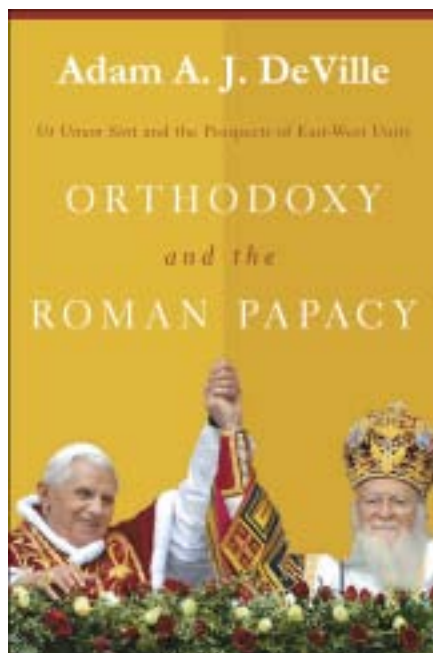
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Maurice Timothy Reidy reviews  
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## BOOKS | JOHN BORELLI

# GETTING TO ONE



### ORTHODOXY AND THE ROMAN PAPACY *Ut Unum Sint and the Prospects of East-West Unity*

By Adam A. J. De Ville  
University of Notre Dame Press. 280p  
\$38

The schism between the Eastern and Western churches resulted from ecclesiastical, not doctrinal causes. Historians usually identify this rup-

ture with the mutual anathemas instigated in 1054 by Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius of Constantinople.

Subsequent developments contributed to a millennium of estrangement. Not least were: the sack of Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade; rejection in Byzantine territories of the Council of Florence’s formula of reunion prior to the fall of the eastern empire to the Ottoman Turks in 1453; the effort, known disparagingly as uniatism, to incorporate communities of Orthodox Christians into the Catholic Church beginning around 1596; and the declaration of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870.

Only in the mid-20th century did Patriarch Athenagoras I and Pope Paul VI begin a true reversal, typified by their consigning of the mutual anathemas to oblivion on Dec. 7, 1965, as the the Second Vatican Council drew to a close. Though ongoing theological dialogue began in North America in September 1965, a joint international commission for dialogue did not convene until 1980. The

North American dialogue encouraged a second commission, a bishops' dialogue in 1981; both have produced over 30 official statements. The international commission meets less regularly and has produced six statements.

In a clarification published in English in 1988, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, suggested that "with the Orthodox, the Catholic Church need not necessarily insist on acceptance of the dogmas of the second millennium [including Vatican I]...the latter after all only unfolded what was already there in principle in the time of the undivided Church" (*Church, Ecumenism and Politics* [New York: Crossroad, 1988]). Complicating matters, however, in the first edition of the Vatican yearbook (*Annuario Pontificio 2006*) after he became pope, Pope Benedict chose to drop Patriarch of the West from the list of his official titles. It is the principal designation through which the Orthodox could relate their ecclesias-

tical offices to the papacy. Meeting at Georgetown University last October, the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation reiterated that "the root obstacle" preventing East-West unity is "the role that the bishop of Rome plays in the worldwide Catholic communion."

Enter now Adam A. J. DeVille—assistant professor of theology at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Ind.—with a scholarly study of this obstacle, purposely focusing on the patriarchal office in the church and proposing its restoration and extension in the Western church as a step toward reunion.

DeVille seizes on the concluding paragraphs of John Paul II's monumental encyclical on ecumenism, "That All May Be One" ("Ut Unum Sint," 1995), to begin his work by examining in detail the papal invitation to discussion with ecumenical partners on the role of the papacy in service to the unity of the church.

The heart of DeVille's book comes, however, in the third chapter, where he takes up the controversial dropping of the title Patriarch of the West in 2006; and after examining principal Orthodox reactions, he begins a timely proposal for "a serious and substantial reconfiguration of the papacy so that the papal and patriarchal roles are much more differentiated."

DeVille amasses considerable theological opinion, historical information and church teaching. The notes alone account for nearly a third of the pages, and the notes and bibliography together make up 40 percent of the contents. The book's strengths are its contemporary focus on a topic of considerable ecumenical importance and its scholarly attention to the rich diversity of views and developments with regard to the patriarchal office vis-à-vis the papacy. DeVille's contribution is his thoroughgoing accumulation of fact and opinion in a contemporary ecumenical context. In doing so he informs

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readers about the depth and breadth of efforts by so many currently dedicated to restoring East-West unity in the church. His concluding two chapters argue for his detailed proposal for restoring and extending the patriarchal office in the Catholic Church.

Though DeVille's work provides an up-to-date resource on Orthodox Christianity and the papacy, there are a few shortcomings. While there is a helpful synthesis at the conclusion to a chapter on recent Orthodox positions on the papacy, no such synthesis comes at the conclusion of the next chapter about Catholic positions regarding a renewed Roman patriarchate. Even so, readers must decide the weight of each of the multitude of opinions, in both chapters, a task that DeVille could have made easier by putting the contributors in some helpful order. The survey of Eastern patriarchates concludes with a summary but could have included suggestions of strengths and weaknesses with the patriarchal office. The author gives insufficient attention to official dialogues, which have carefully reached agreement according to plan so as to address the papacy on the firm footing of consensus. In short, amid all this interesting information, one must ask, What is truly decisive for reconciling the papacy with the Orthodox Church?

There are imprecisions. The strength and core of "That All May Be One" are not its concluding invitation to dialogue on the papal service of unity, though this is clearly DeVille's view, but its endorsement of the method and achievements of ecumenical dialogue and its suggestions for future tasks. It is not in keeping with the scope and substance of Vatican II to identify, as DeVille does, the "Decree on Ecumenism" as its greatest fruit.

In at least one place, DeVille reports that Benedict XVI "abolished" the title Patriarch of the West. In fact, the pope only renounced the title.

Later DeVille shows from history that a pope acting alone cannot abolish this title, which has been in use for centuries, and suggests that the renunciation might be and should be only a temporary one.

Three major questions remain after DeVille's elaborate suggestions for restoring and expanding the office of patriarch with six continental patriarchates in the West, each with full (inclusive) and with permanent (administrative) synods. Does the Catholic Church today truly need such additional layers of hierarchical structure when lay participation even in diocesan structures remains undeveloped? How will regional synods ensure better gover-

nance of the church when episcopal conferences seem weaker than ever and Paul VI's vision for the permanent synod of bishops remains unrealized? Finally, even if these proposals were enacted and met with significant accommodation in the Orthodox Church after a successful great and holy synod similar to Vatican II, would longstanding objections by the Orthodox to the exercise of universal juridical authority by the pope be any closer to resolution?

---

**JOHN BORELLI**, *special assistant for interreligious initiatives to the President of Georgetown University, staffed Orthodox-Catholic relations for eight of his 16 years of service at the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.*

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## KELLY CHERRY DEAR NEW YORKER

### ELIZABETH BISHOP AND THE NEW YORKER The Complete Correspondence

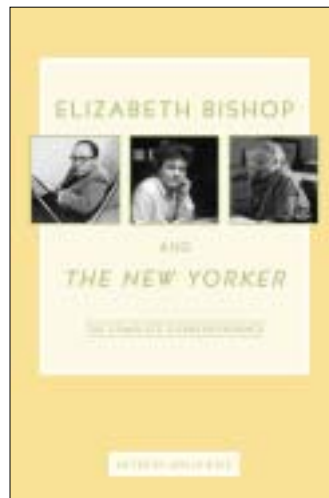
Edited by Joelle Biele  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 496p \$35

Elizabeth Bishop (1911-79) was a poet laureate (then called "consultant in poetry") of the United States, a winner of the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award, and for 17 years a resident of Brazil, which allowed her to keep her distance from the "lit biz" while staying in close touch with The New Yorker and selected literary friends. As a poet and onetime copy editor, I read every word of this book, including all the

footnotes describing in detail who made what change in which line in which poem.

It is hard to know who else might be interested in this volume. Scholars, I suppose. From the letters collected in this volume, scholars might glean the poet's travel plans, living arrangements, financial concerns, illnesses, her reluctance to publish too soon and her importance to other poets; but surely this information, most of it not terribly consequential, appears elsewhere.

I suspect the real reason for this book's existence is a desire on the part of people with a vested interest in Elizabeth Bishop's literary standing to



add bulk to a significant, exact and lovely but fairly slender body of work.

Bishop was certainly a very fine poet, well regarded by literary types and institutions. Was she a great poet? It is still too soon to say. There are at least two good reasons for allowing a century or two to come and go before answering that question. One is that art must be seen separately from its creator before it can be seen accurately. The other is that even after an artist has departed our world, there remain friends, colleagues and students who have every reason to promote and polish said artist's reputation. The New Yorker published many of her poems. Farrar, Straus and Giroux has published Bishop's poetry collections.

A lengthy and entertaining introduction by Joelle Biele, who compiled this volume, explains that "the kind of commentary [Bishop's editors at The New Yorker] provide their writers is unparalleled in American literary history." That may be true, though I don't know how it is to be proved. The New Yorker indeed flattered, cajoled, comforted and aided Bishop, who could be needy and demanding—but also adventurous and self-critical. I am not saying that Bishop did not deserve such adulation, only that the kowtowing can seem embarrassingly overdone—encountered all at once, anyway—at least until we can bring a disinterested eye and ear to the work.

Bishop and Katherine White, who soon became her editor, progressed from formal salutations and farewells to expressions of affection and first names. Yet we learn from the book that White was Bishop's "self-described 'whipping boy,'" and by the end Bishop seems almost to be epistolarily avoiding White. When the poet Howard Moss becomes her editor, a welcome note of humor lightens the tone of the letters and lifted this reader's spirits.

Moss described his job as an editor modestly and insightfully thus:

My most important function is to spot irrelevance, that point when an idea, or motif, or a tone wanders off course. An irrelevance is not a leap of the imagination, but an editor has to be very careful in discriminating between them, because sometimes, it is the very stuff we read poetry for—the surprising elevation, the rug pulled out from under our feet, the illumination by a second reference, another subject....

Bishop held one of The New Yorker's fabled "first look" contracts, according to which she received, in addition to the fees for her work, an annual payment with cost-of-living adjustment. She was a careful curator of her own work, wanting to see it in only the most prestigious places—Partisan Review and The New Republic were on her list—but she lived off a small inheritance and was constantly obliged to reckon her income against expenses. Of course most writers do that, even without trust funds or first-look contracts.

And on occasion she would forgo the contract in order to be able to send work elsewhere if she did not think The New Yorker would take it.

She was not naïve about the literary world. From connections she made in college at Bryn Mawr—Marianne Moore got Bishop her start—to friendships with James Merrill, Robert Lowell, Frank Bidart and many other celebrated poets and writers, she was the star around whom other planets revolved. Showered with prizes and honors, by the time she won the National Book Award for *The Complete Poems* she was blasé enough, or wise enough, to write to Moss that "[t]hese things are nice here, because they make a big impression—unfortunately you and I know too much about them." "Here" was Brazil. Her love for Brazil is evident in her letters, but there is not much about the women she lived with or her inner self. Nor would we expect there to be; her relationship with The New Yorker was professional, as was she in the conduct of her career and in her observant, subtle, nonconfessional poetry.

---

KELLY CHERRY is poet laureate of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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**America** 



# LETTERS

## Facts About Drinking

The editorial “How Old Is Old Enough?” (5/30) ignored the facts on why lowering the drinking age is a dangerous and irresponsible proposal. Moving the age to 18 is popular with lawyers seeking to reduce college liability for the more than 1,800 deaths, 100,000 rapes and 700,000 assaults that occur each year to college students as a result of drinking, but let’s not kid ourselves that it will solve the problem.

Underage drinking is a health issue at its origin; the brain is still developing through the mid-20s, making it likely that young people will take risks, including drinking, and that such use will impair judgment, increase risky behavior, interfere with brain development and increase the risk of addiction. Second, in two thirds of the cases college drinkers began drinking in high school or earlier. Third, new research shows that providing opportunities for teens to drink actually increases their alcohol use. Lowering the drinking age will change none of these facts.

What will make a difference is a strong and consistent no-use messages from parents, starting at an early age, a health care profession that responds to the problem and a change in the culture of drinking and drug use on campus.

SUSAN E. FOSTER  
National Center on Addiction  
and Substance Abuse  
New York, N.Y.

## Raise the Killing Age

Thank you for your editorial “How Old Is Old Enough?” and for raising questions about the legal drinking age in the United States and suggesting changes without pretending that there are easy answers. What has bothered me for some time is that we trust 18-year-olds to kill humans we have labeled “enemies” but do not trust those same teens to consume a glass of

wine or a pint of ale. It might be wiser to lower the drinking age and raise the killing age.

DENNIS OKHOLM  
Azusa, Calif.

## No One Will Tell Them

I was not surprised to read in the review by John Coleman, S.J., of *A Faith of Their Own*, by Lisa D. Pearce and Melinda Lundquist Denton’s (6/20), that children get some of their faith from their parents. This proves that those who think young people should be allowed to explore for themselves and find their own way to God are way off base. Despite some of the study’s findings, it seems to me there must be a close correlation between attending Mass and receiving the sacraments and prayer. Our children are educated mostly by Hollywood, their peers and pagan professors. No wonder they have no concept of deadly sin. The Hollywood elites and culture leaders—mostly if-it-feels-good-and-no-one-is-hurt-it-must-be-O.K.

relativists—do not believe strongly in the reality of evil. My sense is that teenagers stray because the antireligious messages overwhelm those in favor, and their questions are not adequately answered if they ask.

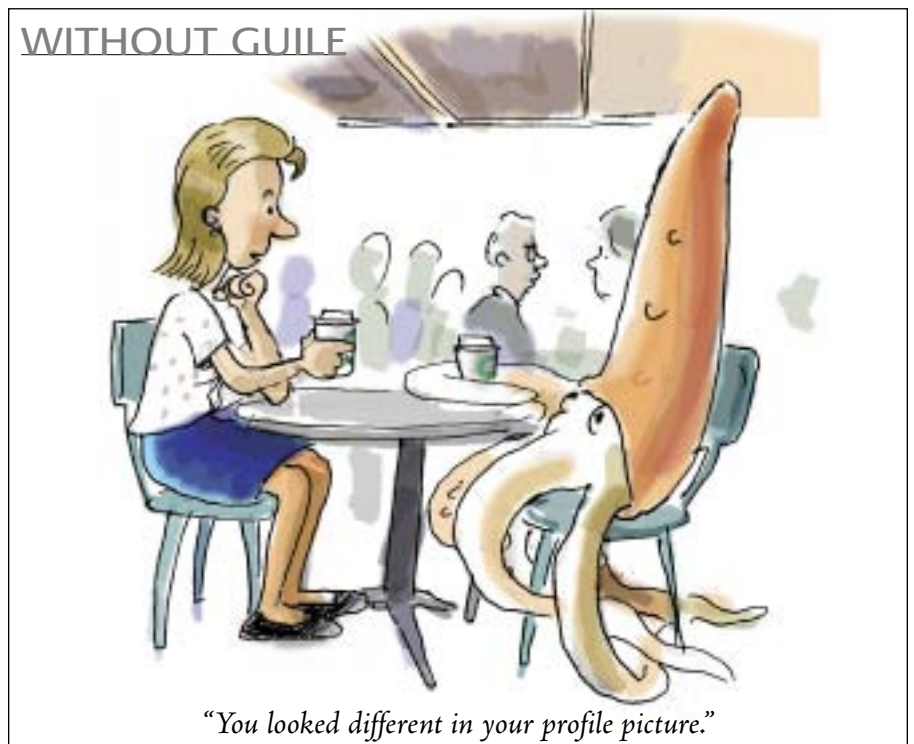
DON ROBERTO  
San Leandro, Calif.

## What About Sex And Sainthood?

I agree with the nominations for sainthood made by James Martin, S.J., in *Of Many Things* (5/16), but did the Vatican show great support for Archbishop Oscar Romero even at the time of his funeral? Wasn’t John Paul II suspicious of Romero’s connection to liberation theology? Did Rome ever consider Romero a martyr? Sadly, I suspect it saw him as too involved with politics, just as our administration regarded the murdered women missionaries in El Salvador.

Again, I agree with Father Martin, but almost all those he named are religious or clergy. Are there married folk

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being overlooked at the beatifications who could serve as role models for those of us not committed to celibacy? Can't Catholicism find great holiness in those who relish the expression of sexual love?

ANDY GALLIGAN  
Tracy, Calif.

### How Could He Say That?

As an Episcopal priest, long edified by your good magazine and an admirer of the books of James Martin, S.J., I was astonished to read in his *Of Many Things* (5/16) that despite minor flaws, Pope John Paul II was a holy man. He was pope during the initial disclosure of the clergy sexual abuse scandal, but he turned a deaf ear to all the clamor around him. Bishops in this country petitioned him to remove guilty priests but to no avail. Some Vatican officials urged him to attend to this explosive issue, but without result. How many lives were destroyed by this indifference? In Gary Will's

term, "This was classic Papal Sin."

This is not, as Father Martin would have it, a matter of disagreement over some issues. It is a giant failure of moral responsibility. Then again, I've never understood the process of making someone a saint. In the New Testament, all Christians are saints, of course, including sinners (1 Cor 1:2).

(REV.) WALTER W. WHITE  
Vineyard Haven, Mass.

### Marching Backwards

As Peter Steinfelds says in "Voice Lessons" (5/30), anything George Weigel proposes needs to be taken seriously, because so many resonate with his conclusions as the church continues its drift toward re-establishing itself as a fortress. It has to, since it alone stands as a bastion of truth, integrity and faithfulness to God. That would be great, but we are a church of sinners!

The security this offers is appealing to the apparently growing number of church members who require certitude and control in their lives. Steinfelds's take on whether the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops diminishes local bishops' authority and freedom may not be provable. It won't matter much if present trends within the church continue.

National conferences have lost their effectiveness since the undoing of the Second Vatican Council became the top priority of the pope and the Roman Curia, and they sought a return to centralized authority. Each bishop is autonomous now and need not agree with a national conference decision or any challenges to his authority as local shepherd. He need only be subservient to Rome.

And so, reform of the reform of liturgy will continue. It won't be long before the Tridentine Mass is the accepted norm. In other areas, theological and moral dissent will result in

being silenced, removed or excommunicated. The ongoing crucifixion of Jesus in the world outside the church will soon be experienced within as well.

MARCH FRANCESCHINI, O.S.M.  
Denver, Colo.

### What's the Real Priority?

Despite the John Jay Report discussed in Kathleen McChesney's "What Caused The Crisis?" (6/6), with its "repeated emphasis on problems of isolation and loneliness as contributors to the crisis," it says celibacy is not a factor in priests' abuse of children. Where's the logic? Whether isolated by situation or by choice, lonely priests with "intimacy deficits" might find it easier to seek an affective connection with children than with adults; and sexuality is part of human affectivity. Married priests, however, are likely to find normal, healthy intimacy and sexual fulfillment.

But Jesus did not rule that priests be celibate. About a thousand years after Jesus' ascension church leaders mandated celibacy for all Western-rite priests. Why should the magisterium require more of its priests than Jesus did?

Pope St. Pius X promoted frequent holy Communion. But millions of people hungry for the Eucharist live 100 miles from a celibate priest! What would Jesus do? Why not trust the Holy Spirit to provide enough priests, whether called to celibacy or marriage? Is the mission of the church to bring Jesus in the Eucharist to all Catholics or to preserve priestly celibacy?

DAVID B. CONNER  
Macon, Ga.

**Correction:** Errors in "Outward Bound," by James T. Keane, S.J. (6/20), have been corrected in the text published on America's Web site: [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).

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# Surprised by Joy

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), JULY 24, 2011

Readings: 1 Kgs 3:5-12; Ps 119:57-130; Rom 8:28-30; Mt 13:44-52

*“Out of joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (Mt 13:44)*

What would make you most happy? If given the chance, would you ask for an understanding heart, as Solomon did in today’s first reading and which the disciples claim to have at the end of today’s Gospel? Is happiness something to be sought, or does it find you? There is no end to how-to books and Web sites that tout surefire steps to achieve happiness. The American novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, however, reminds us that “happiness is like a butterfly, which, when pursued, is just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.”

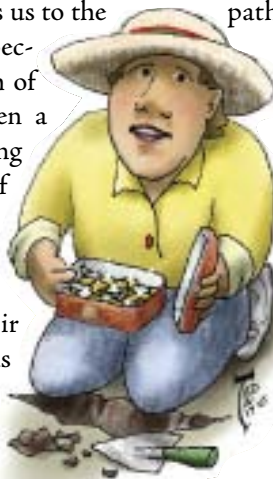
Today’s Gospel offers three short parables about how one attains not only happiness but the even deeper gift of lasting joy. In the first instance, a person unexpectedly finds buried treasure. Perhaps he is digging a well or a hole for a fence post, when suddenly he strikes a hoard of coins left behind by a previous owner who, for some reason, was unable to reclaim it. The digger is likely a poor peasant, a hired day laborer at the bottom of the social scale. The parable emphasizes how overjoyed he is at this unexpected find that will change his life. With reckless abandon he sells all he has in order to acquire the field with its treasure.

**BARBARA E. REID, O.P.**, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill., where she is vice president and academic dean.

The second parable takes us to the other end of the social spectrum. A merchant in search of fine pearls would have been a rich man, most likely making his money on the backs of the poor divers in his employ. Merchants are generally depicted negatively in the Scriptures (Sir 26:20; Is 23:8; Ez 27), as avaricious and corrupt. The surprise is that even such persons as this could come upon the reign of God and be moved to sell all they have for this pearl of great price.

If there is discomfort among the hearers of Jesus’ parables that both a poor peasant and a rich merchant could be found in the reign of God, a third parable, about a net that pulls in all kinds of fish, asks disciples to suspend judgment about who is wicked and who is righteous, leaving the sorting to God’s angels at the end of the age. There are many verbal and thematic similarities here to the parable of the weeds and wheat (Mt 13:24-30, 36-43). The parable is also evocative of the call of the first disciples to be fishers of people, for which they abandon all else (Mt 4:18-20).

There is an element of surprise in each parable, whether concerning the manner of finding or who is to be found in God’s reign. A further surprise is that the resultant joy leads to giving up all else. It is a paradoxical



path to happiness. When it finds you, any instinct to hoard this treasure evaporates; what surfaces instead is the desire to divest oneself of everything.

The metaphors of the treasure and pearl break down, however, when they imply that the reign of God can be bought and owned. The startling mes-

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Give thanks for the ways in which you have been surprised by joy.
- What do you ask for as the Holy One offers to give you your heart’s desire?
- Ask the Spirit’s help to let go of whatever stands in the way of your self-surrender to lasting joy.

sage Jesus preaches is that happiness in God’s reign cannot be purchased in any way—not by good deeds, nor with any other commodity. Rather, it is an astonishing, free gift, attainable by all. While it cannot be bought, it costs everything. The price is not paid out of obligation or guilt but is a totally free self-surrender to irresistible joy. This is an old story, not to be kept locked in a storeroom, but meant to be told anew by each person who has been set free by joy.

ART: TAD DUNNE



# No More Hunger

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), JULY 31, 2011

Readings: Is 55:1-3; Ps 145:8-18; Rom 8:35-39; Mt 14:13-21

*“They all ate and were satisfied” (Mt 14:20)*

No one really knows the precise number of hungry people in our world, but the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates it to be 925 million—that is approximately one of every seven people. The vast majority are in Asia and the Pacific (578 million), then sub-Saharan Africa (239 million), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (53 million), then North East and North Africa (37 million) and, finally, some 19 million in developed countries. In 1996 the World Food Summit set out to reduce the number of malnourished people by half by 2015. Although there has been modest progress in some areas of the world, the number of hungry people has actually increased in the past decade and a half.

Hunger was no stranger in the days of Isaiah and of Jesus as well. In the first reading, Isaiah voices the dream of the returning exiles. With their pitiful resources, they long for all to be able to eat well, without having to pay a cent. No one would die of thirst or malnutrition. In the Gospel, Jesus enacts God’s promise to fill the hungry with good food as he feeds a crowd of thou-

sands. This is not only an act of heartfelt compassion, but it is also a politically subversive action. In Jesus’ day, as now, food is about power. The rich who had control of land and the means of food production and distribution, who comprised about 2 percent to 3 percent of the population, were the ones who ate well and plentifully. The rest struggled daily to feed themselves and their children. Taxes, pestilence and drought often ate up their reserves and left them at the brink of starvation.

In today’s world, there is easily enough food for everyone and then some. But not all have land enough to grow food or sufficient income to purchase it. In the Gospel, Jesus’ disciples presume that there is enough food for everyone, but they figure it is someone else’s responsibility to provide it. They want to send everyone off to buy their own food, thinking that everyone has money and that the surrounding villages have the resources to feed the multitude. Jesus directs them away from an impulse toward self-sufficiency to a solution that depends on remaining in community and pooling

and redistributing their resources. In a eucharistic action he transforms all that they have, and there is enough.

At the end of the episode, Matthew’s notice that the count of 5,000 did not include the women and children is a reminder that children and their mothers are the ones who are hardest hit by hunger. Even when women make sure their husbands and children are fed before they themselves eat, some five million children die every year because of undernutrition.

The Gospel today invites us to resist the temptation to consider it someone else’s responsibility to address the problem of world hunger. When we gather at the Eucharist, we not only give thanks for God’s gifts received freely and abundantly, but together we seek to understand the causes of hunger and redouble our

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- How do our eucharistic celebrations impel us to act for just global food distribution?
- Ask Jesus to share his compassionate heart with you.
- Ask the Spirit to show you how to make the concerns of women and children central.

efforts to galvanize the church’s energies toward aiding peoples and nations to take the drastic measures needed.

The opening verses of today’s Gospel remind us that such actions provoke opposition from those who benefit from the unequal distribution. On the heels of the execution of John, Jesus fed the crowds, knowing he could be the next victim of Rome. Was it because he was counting the women and children who would otherwise perish?

BARBARA E. REID



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