

America



JANUARY 21, 2019

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

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In Other News...

If the old saying is true, that good news doesn't sell newspapers, then it seems as if newspapers should be flying off the racks on the streets these days. Of course, not many of us buy newspapers any more, so perhaps the cliché needs updating. But even if "Good news doesn't get retweeted" doesn't have the same ring to it, the principle holds true: Most of what circulates widely, either in print or on social media, is bad news.

You could be forgiven, for example, for thinking that the news in the church is all bad. Last summer brought us compounding ecclesiastical scandals, the kinds of stories I had hoped we would never need to report. I am glad we reported them, of course, and I am proud of the fearless and honest way we did it. We will continue to cover the sexual abuse crisis in the church and all of its attending consequences. That's our promise.

It's also our job. Not long ago, I said that **America's** staff are not journalists who happen to be Catholic, but Catholics who happen to be journalists. That's not to discount the good and valuable work that the non-Catholics on our staff do each day, but simply to state our fundamental orientation to events: **America** is a work of the church, and we labor in, with and for the church. That's why we exist.

Some of my colleagues in the Catholic media don't like talking about things that way. They would stress the "journalist" part over the "Catholic" part. I suspect that is because they believe that talking about it the other way around might make Catholic journalists appear less objective than we should be. Fair enough. Being able to step back and look at things

objectively is an important part of reporting the news. But it's also true that there is no such thing as absolute objectivity—every reporter walks into every story with a history, with experiences, insights, perhaps even prejudices that influence how he or she covers it.

No doubt about it: We at **America** have a personal interest in news about the church. We care deeply about the church; and I can assure you, last summer we were writing through our tears. But more often than not, our faith commitment, rather than being something that gets in the way of being good journalists, actually makes us better journalists. In the last few months, we reported every day on the sexual abuse crisis, offering news and analysis as well as spiritual resources for our readers. This unflinching coverage and pursuit of the truth is driven by our love for the church and the people of God. As people of faith, we know that the truth alone will set us free. We don't always get the story right (only God is perfect), but we have pursued it to the utmost precisely because we are committed Catholics.

At the same time, our unwavering commitment to cover the challenges facing the church might give a reader the sense that the news in the church is all bad. I apologize if we have given you that impression. I know better. The truth is that in any given hour, on any given day, the news in the church is more good than bad. Much more. By a magnitude of millions more. That's because most of the news in the church is the Good News of Jesus Christ. That's something we know as people of faith. But it is also empiri-

cally true: Every day, millions, billions of people are served by the church, helped and healed through its sacraments, and accompanied through its social services. Couples marry, children are baptized, young people are confirmed in their faith, sinners are forgiven. This is happening right now, as you read this, in every place the church calls home.

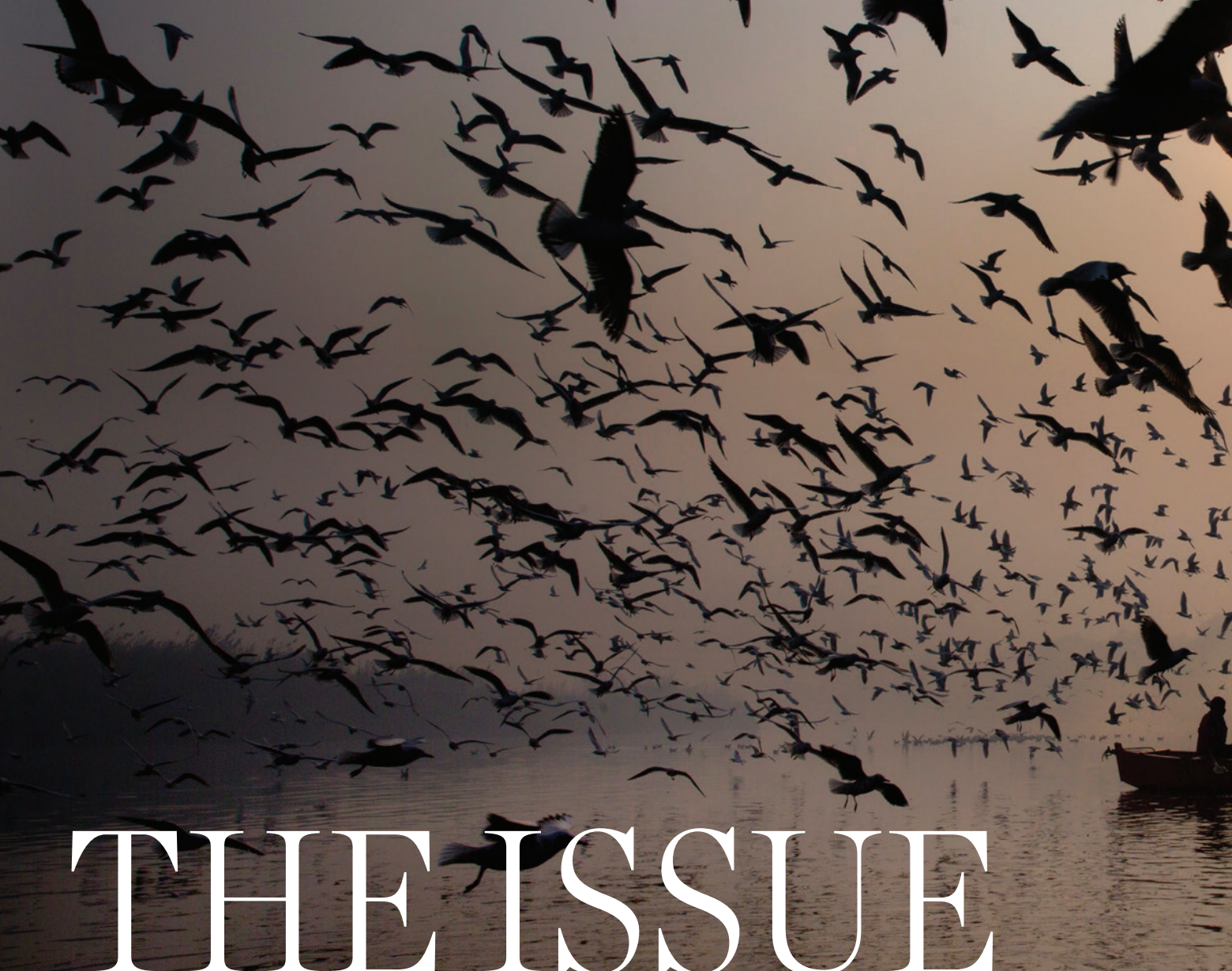
To get the story of the church right, then, we have to cover this part of it too—which is, as I say, the bigger part. Unless we also report the good news, then we will get the story wrong. That should trouble us both as Catholics and as journalists.

So in this issue of **America** we are launching a new segment in Dispatches, our traditional section for news. It's called, appropriately enough, GoodNews, and will feature stories that I hope will give you some sense of the almost miraculous things that countless people of faith do every day around the world.

We won't relegate all the good news to that section. We will also continue to feature stories in the rest of the magazine that inspire and nourish you as much as they inform and challenge. This is a part of the commitment we made in December 2017 in the Catholic Social Media Compact: "We will, as far as possible, identify and celebrate the good, the true and the beautiful as much as we name and challenge what is immoral, unjust or evil."

Because the Good News is breaking news.

Matt Malone, S.J.
Twitter: @americaeditor.



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AP Photo/Manish Swarup, File

Indians feed seagulls from the boat in the river Yamuna on the first day of the new year in New Delhi.

Cover: iStock

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Are you in favor of legalizing marijuana?

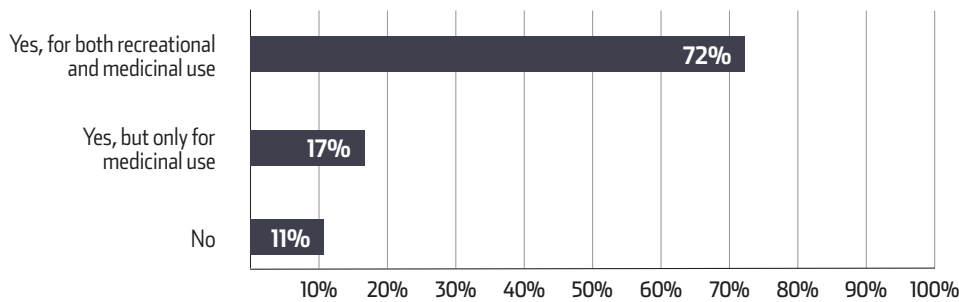
In response to this question, 89 percent of respondents said they were in favor of the legalization of marijuana, either for medicinal purposes only (17 percent) or for both medicinal and recreational use (72 percent).

Some respondents said that the medical benefits of marijuana need to be acknowledged and noted that legalization would help people with chronic pain and illnesses. Mike Griffin of East Marion, N.Y., for example, wrote: “For some patients fighting chemotherapy or individuals suffering from frequent seizures, marijuana may be the only thing that provides relief or the most effective relief.” He added: “I am concerned with all the other drugs available to youth, including vaping and opiates.”

The most popular reason that people in favor of legalization gave was that it would prevent the criminal justice system from being overburdened by low-level offenders. Sally Monahan of Mahwah, N.J., was one of the 67 percent of respondents who gave this answer. “I believe this is a racial and social justice issue,” wrote Ms. Monahan. “I don’t see marijuana [as] any more difficult to regulate than alcohol.”

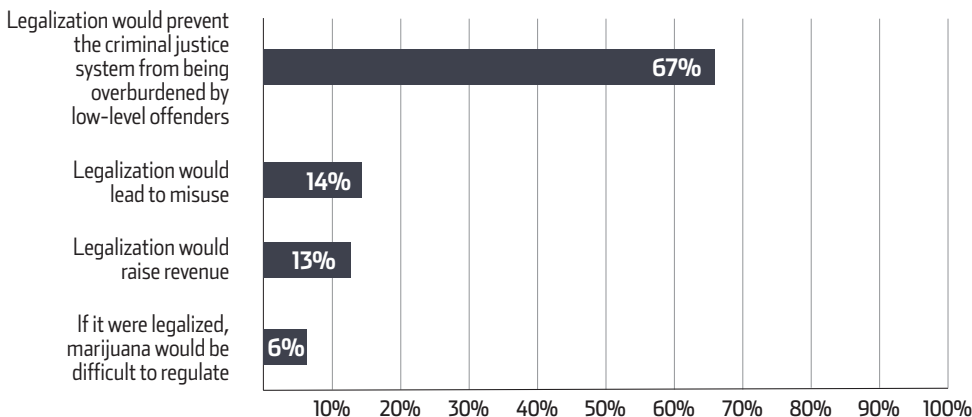
Roseanne Saah of Silver Spring, Md., concurred. “The ‘war on drugs’ has never been about helping people and keeping communities safe,” said Ms. Saah. “Republican and Democratic legislators and jurists have used low-level drug crimes to keep a system in place that punishes black and brown people as well as poor people, while enriching private prison contractors and disseminating tough-on-crime propaganda.”

Are you in favor of legalizing marijuana?



Criminalizing drug offenders is punishing those who cause no societal harm.
Rochester, N.Y.

Which of these reasons best explains your position on marijuana legalization?



Too many are in prison because of the laws in this regard, particularly people of color and the poor.
Mary Crowley
Indianapolis, Ind.

These results are based on reader responses to a poll promoted on Facebook, Twitter and in our email newsletter. Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Changing Consciousness

Re “A Call to Prayer,” by Tim Shriver (1/7): Father Thomas Keating changed the consciousness of many of us who have rested in God through “centering prayer.” His great quality of humility models for us a new way of being in our divided world. My father died last week, and I can attest that my centering prayer practice helped keep me present, loving and trusting through my dad’s difficult eight months of hospice care. I hope that the seed that Father Keating has planted through his own death will now help centering prayer grow and flourish.

Kat Beaulieu 🗨️

Acute Loss

I am one of those acutely feeling the loss of Father Thomas Keating. And yet I know his life’s work will probably become more well known now that he has moved on to greater life. He taught us the effects in daily life from a consistent practice of centering prayer. What can help us on a personal level can also help us on a national level. One person at a time.

Monica Doyle 🗨️

Special Treatment

Re “Paying Tribute to Amazon” (Our Take, 1/7): Giving tax breaks to a single company and not to others seems like a violation of fair and equal treatment to me. Why should this company receive special treatment over others? Shouldn’t the other companies in New York City sue for equal treatment?

Stanley Kopacz 🗨️

Remaining Questions

Re “What Is at Stake? The Peril and Promise of the China-Vatican Deal,” by Paul Mariani, S.J. (1/7): I think Father Mariani has written a very fine, informative article. As he points out, the terms of the agreement are being kept secret, and I think he has done a good job of presenting—to the extent the Vatican’s insistence on secrecy will permit—the possible pros and cons as well as the remaining questions about the deal.

Jeffrey More 🗨️

Not Allegiance

Reconciliation is not allegiance. Further, the Communist Party is consistent and clear about who is in control of the “Patriotic” Catholic Church. I generally admire Pope Francis, but this “deal” strikes me as shortsighted and naïve. There is no longer a Catholic Church in China. Let us hope, however, that Christians will find another flock from which to gather strength. It seems the Protestant churches holding to the word of God are more defiant.

Frank Pray 🗨️

Hoping for Epiphany

Re “How an Orthodox Celebration, Greek Tradition and a Bayou Dive Led to a Revelation of Faith,” by Sonja Livingston (1/7): This is a beautiful essay. We are working on this revelation myself and hope to find an epiphany.

Jason and Amy Rogers 🗨️

A Fascinating Tradition

This is beautifully written. And a fascinating story and tradition of which I was entirely unaware. Thank you.

Todd Witherell 🗨️

Mercy

Re “Purgatory Is Other people,” by Jonathan Malesic (1/7): “The Good Place” sounds delightfully insightful. Yes, we have to do our part to become holy. But what does that mean? Our part is to entrust ourselves to the Lord’s mercy. A good place to be.

Rhett Segall 🗨️

A Dose of Hope

Re “The America Profile,” by Matt Malone, S.J. (12/24): After reading Father Malone’s article on Gov. John Bel Edwards of Louisiana, my first thought was: That is the kind of man I would like to see in the White House. It is so encouraging to see a pro-life politician who seems to live his faith. The article came as a dose of hope at a time when so much negativity and polarization comes out of Washington.

Paul Belhumeur

Hartford, Conn.

🗨️ Comments drawn from our website, americamagazine.org, and America Media’s social media platforms.

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@americamedia.org. Please include the article title, author and issue date, as well as your name and where you are writing from.

Pro-life Priorities for the U.S. Supreme Court and Beyond

As the United States approaches the 46th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, the pro-life movement is at a crossroads. The priority that the movement has for decades rightly given to the appointment of justices who recognize that the U.S. Constitution does not define a right to abortion has finally led to what should be a five-vote majority in favor of overturning or weakening *Roe*. As pro-life activists journey to Washington again this month to bear witness to the more than 50 million unborn lives lost since 1973, it is time for the movement to ask what its priorities should look like now.

To be sure, it is not immediately likely that *Roe v. Wade* will be explicitly and conclusively overturned. Many commentators predict that the court, led by Chief Justice John Roberts, will steer a more incremental course, gradually validating states' restrictions on abortion. The practical legal outcome of such an approach may not differ greatly from the results of an outright reversal.

As we have long argued, the proper constitutional settlement for the abortion question is for it to be returned to the states as a policy matter about which voters and legislators will and should continue to debate. Whatever the degree and method by which abortion is returned to "politics as usual," it will remain a divisive political question. The pro-life movement's work becomes more complicated, not less so, as the prospect of meaningful legal protections for unborn children dawns. While judicial advocacy will continue to be important, developing and winning support for comprehensive pro-life legislation will require building a broader and more diverse

coalition than the one assembled in opposition to *Roe*.

At the same time as the pro-life cause has its best prospects ever at the Supreme Court, Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York vowed on Jan. 7 both to codify *Roe*'s results in state law and to push to enshrine it even further with an amendment to the state constitution. Nine other states have laws that codify a right to abortion. Pro-choice advocates, understanding the threat to *Roe*, have broadened their focus to include normalizing and even celebrating abortions.

At the end of 2018, *The New York Times* began running an extensive and tendentious set of editorials in defense of abortion, which are scheduled to run through January. (The entire series is already available online.) *The Times* paints a picture in which any legal attempt to defend the lives of unborn children is correlated with willingness—even eagerness—to "erode" the rights of women, driven by a desire for control over them. Carefully choosing the most extreme examples, the series implies that anyone who is not adamantly pro-choice is callously unconcerned about the lives of women.

Such unfair depictions will not surprise veterans of the pro-life movement. But they must concern us. The priority given to Supreme Court nominations has left the movement vulnerable to being reduced to the role of supporting player within an overall conservative political agenda. Along with pro-choice absolutism within the Democratic Party, this has hollowed out a vital part of national pro-life witness. Whatever one thinks of the historical prudence and necessity of the pro-life movement's alliance with the

Republican Party, its risks and limitations for the future are starkly evident.

Pro-lifers know well that the movement honors women, cares for women, is led by women and was founded by women. We should be passionate about making sure that the rest of the world can see our respect for women as well. Imagine a future in which every proposal to defund Planned Parenthood is linked to increased funding for maternal health and protections for pregnant women in the workplace. Imagine how much harder it would be to caricature pro-lifers as anti-woman—and how much closer we would be to protecting all unborn children in law and welcoming them in love.

A Sign of Hope and Accountability

Few would deny that 2018 was an *annus horribilis* for the Catholic Church in the United States. As dioceses and religious orders released the names of alleged sex abusers, it became clear the scope of the scandals was far wider than most imagined or acknowledged. Such painful revelations often feel like part of a larger narrative of decline and diminishment, and it can be a dispiriting tale for those who love the church (or work for it, or both), particularly when faced with the fact that in many cases it was the most trusted members of the Catholic community who were the source of the greatest harm. As many have pointed out, any effective reform must include meaningful opportunities for laypeople to participate in the governance of the church. Having

Founded in 1909

diverse views and life experiences represented in the room when the tough questions are asked is an indispensable requirement for healthy decision making.

An encouraging model for collaboration emerged in December from the Diocese of Bridgeport, where Bishop Frank J. Caggiano appointed Eleanor Sauers, a laywoman who has a doctorate in theology, as parish life coordinator of St. Anthony of Padua parish in Fairfield, Conn. Dr. Sauers will have decision-making and supervisory authority over a team of priests who provide sacramental ministry at the parish. While many U.S. dioceses (particularly in areas with severe priest shortages) use parish administrators when priests are not available, Dr. Sauers is one of the very few laywomen to hold such a post. Further, she will not be supervised by an ordinary priest of the diocese—she will report directly to the bishop.

Such arrangements do not solve the problem of vocations to the priesthood, but the fact that a bishop is willing to take such a step could have profound effects on our ecclesial imagination and prompt us to envision other ways of empowering lay leaders in the church.

There are implications for the prevention of sex abuse in the adoption of such a model, as well. As many commentators have noted, the instinctive response to cover up abuse is tied to existing power structures and long traditions of covering for one's fellow priests, bishops and religious—a pernicious reality that would presumably be less prevalent if laypersons were in more positions of authority. Of course, laypeople are not perfect either. Indeed, no one is. And that is the point: We are therefore stronger when the strengths of the whole community are brought to bear on its challenges and decisions.

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Centuries later, Jesuit missions still benefit local communities

“Is this work making any difference?” It is a question that we all ask individually and that every religious institution asks regularly. Much of the time, there is no satisfying answer. But a recent study from the University of British Columbia suggests that the impact of the Jesuit missions founded in the 17th century in South America, also called reductions, is not only measurable but far greater than anyone could have expected.

The economics professor Felipe Valencia Caicedo studied 30 Jesuit missions in once-remote areas of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. He focused on how the areas around the reductions have changed over the 250 years since the Jesuits were thrown out of the Spanish empire in 1767.

He discovered that in everything from literacy and skills training to overall levels of education, the areas around the former Jesuit missions continue to show significantly higher levels of achievement than equivalent communities without missions—with median years of schooling and literacy levels 10 to 15 percent higher and modern per-capita incomes nearly 10 percent higher. These areas also show the persistence of skills, some of them quite specific. Mr. Valencia offers the example of embroidery. “We know for a fact that this was introduced to the area by Jesuit missionaries, who were mostly coming from the Low Countries,” he explains. “And it turns out today there is more embroidery in former Jesuit municipalities” than elsewhere in Brazil.

“They’re there for 150 years,” he says of the Jesuit missions. “By the time they leave there are eight generations that have been trained and educated in these Jesuit ways, so to

speak.” And apparently the impact on local culture was more or less permanent, thanks in part to parents passing on knowledge to their children.

Mr. Valencia notes that other religious groups that had missions in the area do not demonstrate the same long-lasting impacts. “The Jesuits and the Franciscans both wanted to convert souls to Catholicism,” he explains. “Both were Europeans; both were doing these missions basically in the middle of nowhere, these subtropical forests, which were very isolated. But what they did in them was very different.” While the Jesuits concentrated on education, the Franciscan focus was more on care for the poor and sick. “Those are both completely valid conversion strategies,” Mr. Valencia says, but the Franciscan communities do not show the same long-lasting development of human capital.

Does that difference mean that religion itself played no part in the positive long-term impact in the Jesuit-sponsored communities? Mr. Valencia notes that certain Jesuit ideas, “things like striving for excellence, development of the full person,” certainly persist in former reduction areas. But it is difficult to prove that the persistence of these values is directly tied to Ignatian spirituality.

And yet Mr. Valencia says that the Jesuit mission areas do seem to be imbued with a greater ethical sensitivity. He describes research games where individuals are told to flip a coin nine times; if they get heads five times or more, they will win a prize. The game works on the honor system; the moderator will not check to make sure they actually flipped enough heads or tails. “In general, people systematically cheat,” Mr. Valencia explains. “It’s

very well known. But what’s interesting is, in Jesuit mission areas they cheat less. Whereas in the Franciscan mission areas, if anything, they [cheat] more.”

“I don’t want to get in trouble with the Franciscans!” he insists, laughing.

Beyond all this, Mr. Valencia’s research confirms long-accepted findings that education is in a sense self-perpetuating. That is, the more educated you are, the more able and open you are to learning more and adapting further. So in Brazil, he notes, when genetically modified seeds were introduced, those whose ancestors had been taught by the Jesuits “are faster to adopt this technology.”

Some might see Mr. Valencia’s research as suggesting the Society of Jesus accomplishes a greater good through education than through direct service to the poor. “Poverty alleviation programs are good,” Mr. Valencia says, “but investments in human capital seem to be very longlasting.” Still, he cautions that his research is limited to isolated communities; it is far more difficult to measure long-term effects in big, constantly changing cities.

Mr. Valencia’s findings also raise this question: If the effects of education not only last far beyond the actual presence of the Jesuits but continue to develop and increase, is there really a need for Jesuits to continue to stay in places that are already long established? Do Jesuits do more for the church and world by continuing to work at the same schools for centuries or by moving on to new ventures—as St. Ignatius himself did?

Jim McDermott, S.J., is *America’s Los Angeles correspondent and a contributing writer.*
Twitter: @PopCulturPriest.

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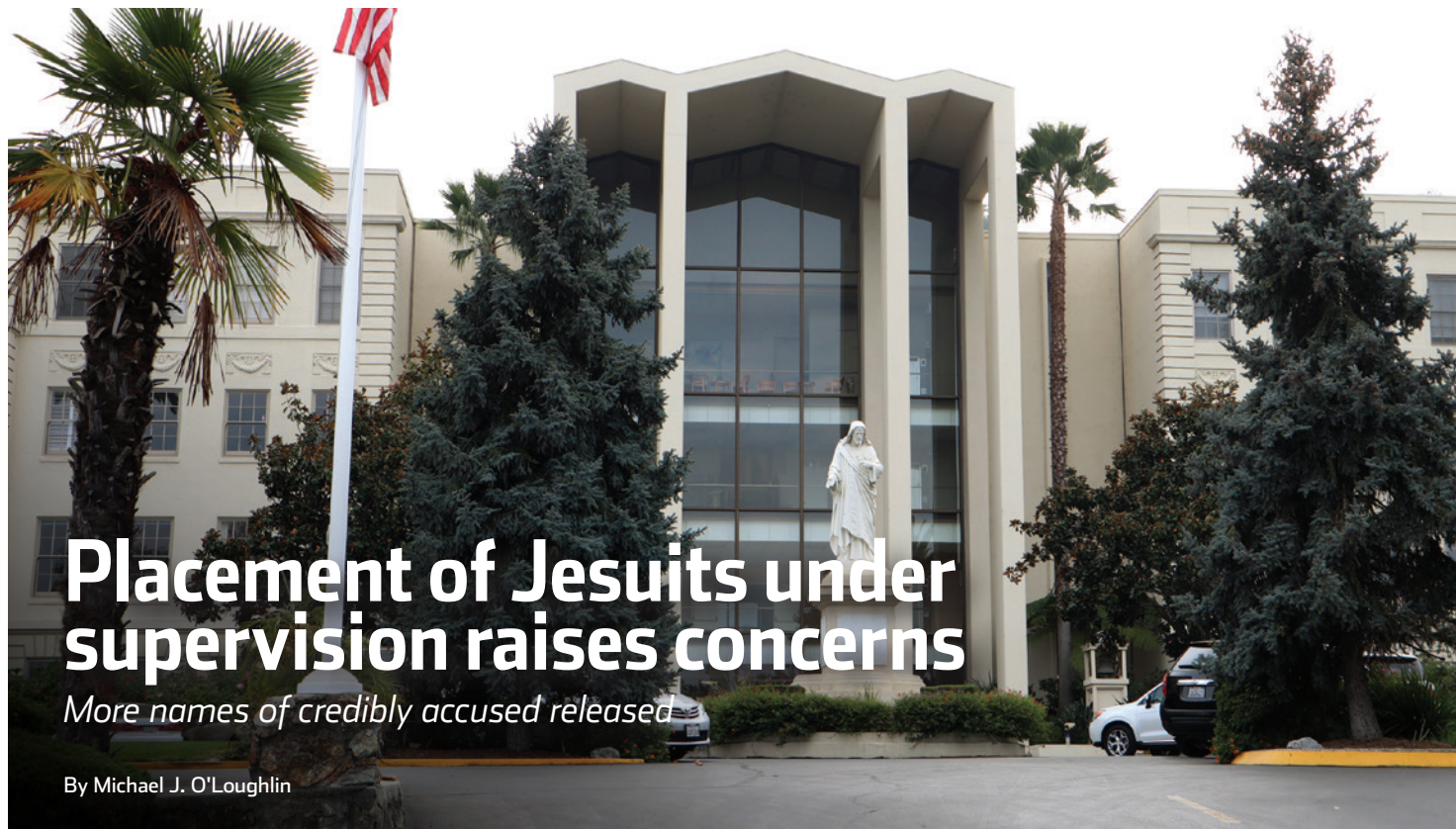
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Placement of Jesuits under supervision raises concerns

More names of credibly accused released

By Michael J. O'Loughlin

As provinces of the Society of Jesus in the United States release lists of their members who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse against minors, questions are emerging about where these men should reside after being removed from ministry. In particular, a recent report by a nonprofit investigative journalism group raised questions about why the addresses of the accused priests and brothers are not being made public and whether neighbors and law enforcement have a right to know that individuals deemed dangerous enough to be barred from ministry are living in their communities.

Mike Gabriele, the director of communications for the Maryland Province and the USA Northeast Province of the Society of Jesus, said that when a member of the order is credibly accused but is not in the custody of law enforcement, he is placed on a “safety plan” that includes a removal from ministry, the monitoring of his whereabouts, restrictions on his access to technology and provisions meant to ensure that he is kept away from minors.

Being able to impose those restrictions on the accused is one reason, Mr. Gabriele said, that the order does not simply seek to oust members facing credible accusations.

“If he’s still in the Society of Jesus and living in a monitored environment in a Jesuit community, we can keep tabs on him,” Mr. Gabriele said. “We can monitor his whereabouts and keep his restrictions in place, whereas if he were just to leave the Society, then he would be out living in the residential community somewhere.”

Mr. Gabriele said that the Maryland Province’s safe environment protocols have been in place since 2003 and that a third party audits their procedures annually. Jesuits who have been accused of abuse are removed from active ministry at the start of an investigation, he said, and if an allegation is deemed credible, they are removed from ministry permanently. The province plans to conduct an additional third-party audit of its files “to ensure that our previous reviews were both accurate and complete.”

The nonprofit Center for Investigative Reporting reported in December that at least 20 Jesuits who had been credibly accused of abuse against minors were housed at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash., until 2016. Those Jesuits were on safety plans, but according to the report, these plans were not uniformly enforced.

Facing backlash, the Jesuits West Province said that no

◀ The Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos, Calif.



Jesuits accused of abuse against children will be allowed to live at Gonzaga in the future.

“Jesuits West guarantees that no Jesuit with a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is currently or will ever be knowingly assigned to Gonzaga University or the Jesuit community on its campus,” the province said in a statement on Dec. 18. Instead, Jesuits facing credible allegations will live at the province’s senior health care facility in Los Gatos, Calif.

The Cardinal Bea House at Gonzaga doubles as a retirement home and an infirmary for Jesuits of what was once the Oregon Province. (Oregon completed a merger with the California Province in 2017 to become the Jesuits West Province.) The C.I.R. report outraged many readers who compared the relative comfort of Jesuit abusers at the Cardinal Bea House with the indifference and even hostility shown to victims and their families in the past. As with other cases of

accused priests living in church-owned residences, some have asked why such men were not reported to police, laicized or removed from the community.

“If we reassigned a Jesuit that we knew faced an allegation of abuse, that’s deadly wrong,” Scott Santarosa, S.J., the religious superior of the Jesuits West Province, said. “What’s hard is I can’t speak for who knew what, when. All I can say is that now when anything comes to our attention in this matter, we do remove a man while we investigate.”

He acknowledged that assigning members of the province who had been confirmed as abusers to the Cardinal Bea House was not ideal; however, the Oregon Province had few other residential options. He said his predecessors believed the Cardinal Bea home was suitably distant from any ministry of the province that might put known abusers in proximity to children.

Many of the elderly Jesuits who were identified as abusers were already in residence at Bea House when allegations against them began to surface.

“Once a man has final vows as a Jesuit,” Father Santarosa said, “it is sort of a commitment for the long haul. It is not easy to dismiss a man, but it was also partly because it

was our responsibility to supervise these men who did so much harm on our watch.”

There was the belief, he said, that laicized men would have “a lot more chance for reoffending if they were out in the community on their own than if they were under our care and supervision.”

More answers about how decisions were made in the past are likely to be revealed after a thorough review of provincial records early in 2019, said Father Santarosa.

On Dec. 17, the Maryland Province released a list of Jesuits “with a credible or established offense against a minor” dating from 1950. The most recent instance of abuse occurred in 2002, the order said, with most of the allegations dating back decades. The list included 19 Jesuits, most of whom are deceased.

The province said that no credibly accused Jesuit is currently in active ministry. Five Jesuits on the Maryland Province list are reported to have been removed from ministry and to be now living “in a restricted environment on a safety plan.” The list does not include information about their residences, but an article in ThinkProgress reported that four of the men live in a Jesuit retirement home in Baltimore.

On Dec. 7 the West Province released the names of all priests and brothers credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors since 1950. Father Santarosa considers that a “draft” list and said more names may surface as old files are reviewed.

Despite the controversy over the Cardinal Bea residence, Mr. Gabriele would not rule out college campuses as locations where Jesuits accused of abuse could be located. He said that the Maryland Province seeks residences that do not house active ministries and where the accused can be monitored. Sometimes, he said, the health care needs of the Jesuit are also taken into consideration.

“I think what’s appropriate is that the Jesuits who are pulled from ministry and on our safety plans are in [Jesuit residences] where there are no active ministries going on... and that they’re not associated with any Jesuit work, even at a parish,” he said.

Michael J. O’Loughlin, *national correspondent*.
Twitter: @MikeOLoughlin.

A Catholic travel itinerary



The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe (1976 building at left and 1709 building at right), Mexico City

The foreign policy of the United States may have taken an isolationist turn over the past few years, but its citizens are more interested than ever in seeing the rest of the world. In 2018 there was a record 138 million valid U.S. passports in circulation, up from 49 million in 2000 and a mere 11 million in 1990. The percentage of U.S. citizens with passports is now at a record 42 percent; it was below 10 percent as recently as 1994.

According to the World Bank, there were 73 million

MOST-VISITED CATHOLIC SITES

In 2012, *Travel + Leisure* magazine compiled a list of the world's 41 most-visited "sacred sites," based on estimates from tourism boards and other sources. No. 1 was the Meiji Shrine and Sensoji-Temple, a Shinto shrine in Japan that attracts **30 million** visitors annually. The highest-ranking Catholic site was the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe; below are all the Catholic sites that made the top 25, followed by estimates of annual visitors in millions.

3. Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico City: **20m**

5. Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris: **13.65m**

6. Sacré Coeur Basilica, Paris: **10.5m**

11. St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City: **7m**

13. Cologne Cathedral, Germany: **6m**

13. Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, France: **6m**

13. Shrine of Padre Pio, San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy: **6m**

16. St. Mark's Basilica, Venice, Italy: **5.5m**

17. Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy: **5.5m**

18. St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City: **5.5m**

24. Sistine Chapel, Vatican City: **4m**

25. Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem: **4m**

THE CHURCH IN THE U.S. AND CANADA

Largest Catholic church: Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C. Includes 70 chapels and accommodates 10,000 worshippers.

Oldest Catholic church in the U.S.: Cathedral of San Juan Bautista, San Juan, Puerto Rico. First built in 1521, rebuilt in 1540 after a fire.

Oldest Catholic church on the continental U.S.: San Miguel Chapel, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The present building dates from 1710.

travel departures from the United States in 2015, up from 61 million in 2000. There is no data on Catholic travelers in particular, but it seems safe to assume that they make up a large segment of international travelers. Here are some of the most popular sightseeing destinations of interest to Catholic voyagers.

Robert Sullivan, *associate editor*.

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ENDANGERED CHRISTIAN SITES

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization maintains a list of World Heritage sites "considered to be of outstanding value to humanity." The agency has also identified 54 sites endangered by environmental changes, warfare or human development. They include the following sites with special importance to Christians:

Abu Mena, Egypt. An early Christian holy city built over the tomb of the martyr Menas of Alexandria, who died in A.D. 296.

Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls. Among its 220 historic monuments are the Resurrection rotunda in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which houses Christ's tomb.

Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem. The site identified by Christian tradition as the birthplace of Jesus since the second century. The site also includes Latin, Greek Orthodox, Franciscan and Armenian convents and churches.

Hebron/AI-Khalil Old Town, Palestine. Includes a compound built in the first century to protect the tombs of the patriarch Abraham and his family. The site is a place of pilgrimage for three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Medieval Monuments in Kosovo, Serbia. Includes the 13th-century frescoes of the Church of Holy Apostles.

Ancient City of Bosra, Syria. Early Christian ruins and several mosques are found within its walls.

Ancient Villages of Northern Syria. The relics of some 40 villages illustrate the transition from the Roman Empire to Byzantine Christianity.

Oldest Catholic church site in Canada: Cathedral-Basilica of Notre-Dame de Québec, Quebec City. Built in 1647 and destroyed twice by fire; last restored in 1922.

World Heritage Site: San Antonio Missions, Texas. This is the only site in the United States on UNESCO's World Heritage list that is of special interest to Catholics. It was built by Franciscan missionaries in the early 18th century, when it was part of the colony of New Spain.

Sources: "World's Most-Visited Sacred Sites," *Travel + Leisure* magazine, Jan. 4, 2012; "The Church in the U.S. and Canada" from church websites; "World Heritage in Danger," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Heritage List, UNESCO. Passport data from the U.S. Department of State and the BBC; travel data from the World Bank.



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May speaks during Prime Minister's Questions at the House of Commons on Dec. 19.

Mark Duffly/UK Parliament via AP

Theresa May fumbles toward a no-deal Brexit

British Prime Minister Theresa May survived a right-wing challenge to her leadership from within her own Conservative Party on Dec. 12. But just as in a previous foray into deeper electoral thicket—an ill-considered snap election in June 2017—Mrs. May comes out of the latest vote weaker than when she went in. Even as most Conservative M.P.s voted to retain her as the party's leader in Parliament, about one-third failed to rally to her banner.

The intraparty discord has been brought about entirely by the protracted split among Conservatives over Brexit. The vote made plain both just how riven the Tories are over the decision to leave Europe and, if any further evidence were needed, just how unsatisfactory is the Brexit deal struck with the European Union that Mrs. May is trying to sell.

Meanwhile, the British state continues to make preparations for the growing possibility of a no-deal exit. That outcome is one the bureaucracy thinks sufficiently plausible that it is spending large sums recruiting new staff and renting warehouse space for key supplies, such as E.U.-produced medicine, that may abruptly prove hard to come by.

The prime minister initiated a five-day debate in the House of Commons over the widely lambasted deal she brought home from Brussels. But in the end Conservatives postponed a “meaningful vote” on the deal because, as some government officials admitted, they presumed it would lose by a significant margin.

The prime minister settled on Jan. 15 for the replay vote in Parliament on her Brexit deal but now risks a no-confidence vote sponsored by the Labour Party. Mrs. May has demonstrated her staying power, surviving several leadership crises, but her luck appears to have run out.

A leak to British media revealed that during her closed-door, pre-vote meeting with party members in the House of Commons, she had to buy some votes by promising not to lead the Tories into the next general election, scheduled for 2022.

On her latest trip to Brussels, the prime minister asserted that she would get further concessions from the E.U. 27, as the union minus Britain is now called, even though E.U. negotiators continue to flatly deny the possibility. All sides hope to avoid the return of a hard border that would separate the U.K. member Northern Ireland from the neighboring Republic of Ireland, which remains an E.U. member state.

As revelations about the nature of the run-up to the vote continue to provoke outrage—Britons now know that many lies were told and Russian intrigues on social media spun—there is merit in the growing clamor for a second “people's vote” before calamity strikes in March. There is at this late moment an opportunity to admit that the Brexit “deal” Mrs. May and her Conservative Party are clinging to is nothing like what the Leave campaign promised. Diminution and economic damage across Britain are now widely forecast.

Listening to the will of the people would surely imply that, Scotland and the northeast of Ireland having voted to remain, the concerns of these nations should be respected more. There is a growing resentment that Scotland is treated as a mere region of the United Kingdom, and the separatist movement in Scotland has found a new energy.

David Stewart, S.J., London correspondent.
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Christmas chaos at the border

Trump's wall challenged by church leaders

On Christmas Eve, 8-year-old Felipe Alonzo-Gómez died while in the custody of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Felipe, who had traveled from Guatemala before he was detained along with his father, was the second child to die in U.S. custody in December.

As the federal shutdown continued in December, President Trump said he would veto any funding bill that did not include \$5 billion for a U.S.-Mexico border wall. While the Trump administration has said the wall is necessary to curb illegal immigration and drug trafficking, many faith leaders who live along the border see things differently.

“The idea of a wall is absurd,” said the Rev. Julio López, the director of Casa del Migrante in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico. “The Berlin Wall fell, why are we thinking about more walls?”

“We have to build bridges, bridges of humanity before walls,” Father López said. “Barriers already exist, be they cultural barriers or sociopolitical barriers that often separate us. Many times they are instruments of discrimination. So with all that, why do we need more barriers?”

But Benjamin de la Garza, the executive director of Catholic Charities in Laredo, Tex., recognized the need for border security, if not the kind of barrier proposed by the president. Catholic Charities and other faith-based orga-

nizations work with immigration enforcement to care for newly arrived asylum seekers.

“We want to prevent drugs and we do want to prevent all the illegal activity that goes on across the border and across the river,” he said.

In Laredo, detention centers are full and there are too few immigration judges, Mr. de la Garza said. While immigrants and asylum seekers wait for the cases to be decided, Catholic Charities and other groups step in to help.

Since late December, many Christian groups have been responding to what they say are chaotic scenes of migrants being randomly dropped off in their cities and towns near the U.S.-Mexico border by federal immigration officials. Dylan Corbett, executive director of the Hope Border Institute in El Paso, Tex., could not say if the government shutdown was to blame for the chaos in El Paso, but, he said, “These games are unacceptable.” He charged on Dec. 26 that as local groups struggled to process the migrant drop-offs, a border crisis was being “manufactured in Washington.”

The release of the migrants, which seems to have happened also in neighboring New Mexico, took place on Christmas Day itself and several days leading up to it. “We here at the Catholic Diocese of El Paso are very concerned about the hundreds of people being put on the streets in El



CNS photo/Jose Luis Gonzalez, Reuters

Central American migrants, who were dropped off at a bus station in El Paso, Texas, line up for food on Christmas Day.

Paso, at the bus depot, at the airport and at a local park,” Bishop Mark Seitz wrote in a statement released on Dec. 27. “We understand that the facilities of Homeland Security are overcrowded, but the decision of our government to simply put these children and families with no money, no tickets, no food, no access to phones, out on the street is inhumane and unconscionable.

“Clearly, this Christmas the newborn Savior will find no room,” Bishop Seitz wrote. Catholic parishes have made available volunteers and facilities to help, said Bishop Seitz, but he believes the government also needs to own up to what happened.

“Our government has a responsibility, when it takes these refugees into custody, to provide for their basic needs,” Bishop Seitz wrote. “With the recent deaths of two young children, the accounts of mistreatment in holding cells and the heartless expulsion of these families, an undeniable picture is coming into focus, and it is not one of which we Americans can be proud.”

J.D. Long-García, senior editor. Twitter: @jdlongarcia.
With reporting from Catholic News Service.

Visit americamagazine.org for a video report from the border.



The church of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah awaits repairs in Qaraqosh, Iraq.

Photo by Kevin Clarke

GOODNEWS

The ‘extraordinary power of faith’ in Iraq

Speaking in Westminster Abbey at an ecumenical service on Dec. 4 “to celebrate the contribution of Christians in the Middle East,” Prince Charles recalled his “great joy” upon meeting Luma Khudher, a Dominican Sister of St. Catherine of Siena, in England in October. He described how as Isis extremists advanced on the Christian town of Qaraqosh in 2014, Sister Luma “got behind the wheel of a minibus crammed full of her fellow Christians and drove the long and dangerous road to safety.”


Now she has returned to the Nineveh Plains to help re-establish the Christian presence there. “Like the 100,000 other Christians who were forced from the Nineveh Plains...they left behind the ruins of their homes and churches and the shattered remnants of their communities,” he said.

“The sister told me, movingly, of her return to Nineveh with her fellow sisters three years later, and of their despair at the utter destruction they found there,” he said. “But like so many others, they put their faith in God, and today the tide has turned—nearly half of those displaced having gone back to rebuild their homes and their communities.”

Prince Charles said the return of Christians to Iraq represented “the most wonderful testament to the resilience of humanity and to the extraordinary power of faith to resist even the most brutal efforts to extinguish it.”

The prince expressed his hope that Christians and Muslims will again live together in peace, saying that throughout history they have “shown that it is possible to live side by side as neighbors and friends.”

From Catholic News Service



THE PRESIDENT OF EXPRESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM

By Ronald E. Osborn

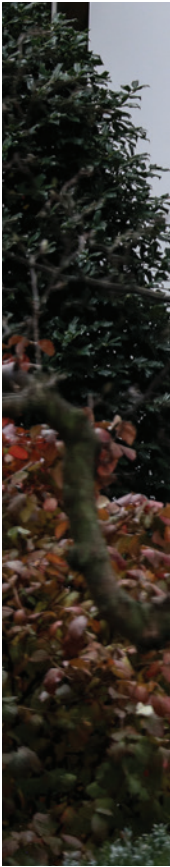
Three important thinkers provide key terms for understanding how we have arrived at this historical moment

In an article in *First Things* in 2011, the Eastern Orthodox theologian David Bentley Hart pondered why so many literary depictions of the devil present him as attractive, witty, stylish and debonair. If there is a devil, Hart ventured, he is a thug and a bore, “probably a monomaniac who talks about nothing but his personal grievances and aims, and in the bluntest, most unrefined language imaginable—the sort of person you try your best to get away from at a party.”

Hart recalled a legal case from 1993 in which a poor, elderly New Jersey woman, Vera Coking, fought to keep her home while a ruthless developer used all his power to have the land seized by eminent domain so he could buy it at a discount and turn it into a limousine parking lot for one of his Atlantic City casinos. Hart then offered the following verdict on that developer and on the nature of the diabolical: “Cold, grasping, bleak, graceless, and dull; unctuous, sleek, pitiless, and crass; a pallid vulgarian floating through life on clouds of acrid cologne and trailed by a vanguard of fawning divorce lawyers, the devil is probably eerily similar to Donald Trump—though perhaps just a little nicer.”



President Donald Trump signs into law the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018.



Six years later, *First Things* was publishing articles of a very different kind about the meaning of Donald Trump and Trumpism. In an essay published in July 2017, the magazine's editor, R. R. Reno, praised the new president (whose candidacy he had endorsed in 2016 along with other notable conservatives calling themselves "Scholars and Writers for America" as "the most likely to restore the promise of America," to end "crony capitalism" and to "promote an honest and just government") for having "discerned the true meaning of our historical moment." Liberal commentators were alarmed by a speech Trump had just given in Warsaw to the people of Poland. They heard echoes of the blood-and-soil rhetoric of Hitler and National Socialism. Reno, too, was "struck by Trump's emphasis on 'will,' and especially by the way in which he spoke of the Polish nation as consecrated by 'the blood of patriots.'"

But far from harboring any moral or political qualms about Trump's language, Reno compared him with Pericles. He admired Trump's use of "the classic rhetoric of resolve, determination, will, blood, and sacrifice" to counter the true threat of our age—not the danger of resurgent authoritarianism around the globe but what Reno called "velvet nihilism." He defined this peril as "a disposition of cultural and moral disarmament that cannot rouse itself to affirm or defend much of anything." According to Reno, postwar fears of fascism and the slogan "Never Again!" have led to "disenchantment," "irony," "moral relativism and radical secularism." But for Reno, it is time to move on. "We do not need to be chastened by Auschwitz," he remarkably concluded. What we need in "our circumstances" are "consolidating motifs, to rally people to causes that are worthy of their loyalty, even to the point of self-sacrifice."

Whatever else Trump represents, he has never stood for loyalty (except the unquestioning loyalty of others to himself), for self-sacrifice or for traditional or conservative values in the face of the moral relativism of Hollywood and coastal elites. Embraced by nearly half of voting Americans—including a majority of non-Hispanic Catholics and an overwhelming majority of evangelical Protestants—for his alleged prowess as a businessman and for the "authenticity" of his vitriol against the political establishment, the only "motifs" that Trump has "consolidated" are precisely those of the nihilism that conservative intellectuals have long made it their vocation to decry. Three important thinkers of the past 40 years—Alisdair MacIntyre, Robert Bellah and Charles Taylor—provide key terms for understanding how we have arrived at this historical moment.

Their ideas will be familiar to many readers, yet they are worth revisiting as we now witness the putative defenders of reason, virtue and the wisdom of the ages offering equivocating if not always effusive support for our nihilist in chief, the president of expressive individualism.

American Individualism and the Loss of Virtue

In his seminal study of moral philosophy in 1981, *After Virtue*, MacIntyre offered an unsettling tale. "Imagine," he wrote, "that the natural sciences were to suffer the effects of a catastrophe." For some reason the masses turn against scientific knowledge and go on a rampage, burning scientific textbooks, smashing research laboratories, lynching physicists and abolishing all science courses from the universities. Generations later, people realize that the anti-science purge was a terrible mistake. A few enlightened individuals attempt to undo the damage. Not raised in a scientific culture, however, all they know of the scientific method and scientific theories is what they have gleaned from mysterious bits and pieces of the past—disconnected fragments of learning that do not add up to any unified project or integrated worldview (a single page from an article here, portions of the periodic table there, etc.). They might imagine that by faithfully preserving and committing to memory this potpourri of artifacts they are engaging in "science." Yet true scientific knowledge does not advance, and their veneration of what they believe to be science more closely resembles a kind of superstition or religious faith.

MacIntyre then offered a "disquieting suggestion" about our current reality:

The hypothesis which I wish to advance is that in the actual world which we inhabit the language of morality is in the same state of grave disorder as the language of natural science in the imaginary world which I described.... We possess indeed simulacra of morality.... But we have very largely, if not entirely, lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality. But how could this be so?... The catastrophe will have to have been of such a kind that it was not and has not been—except perhaps by a very few—recognized as a catastrophe.



Photo by Oliver Contreras/SIPA USA (Sipa via AP Images)

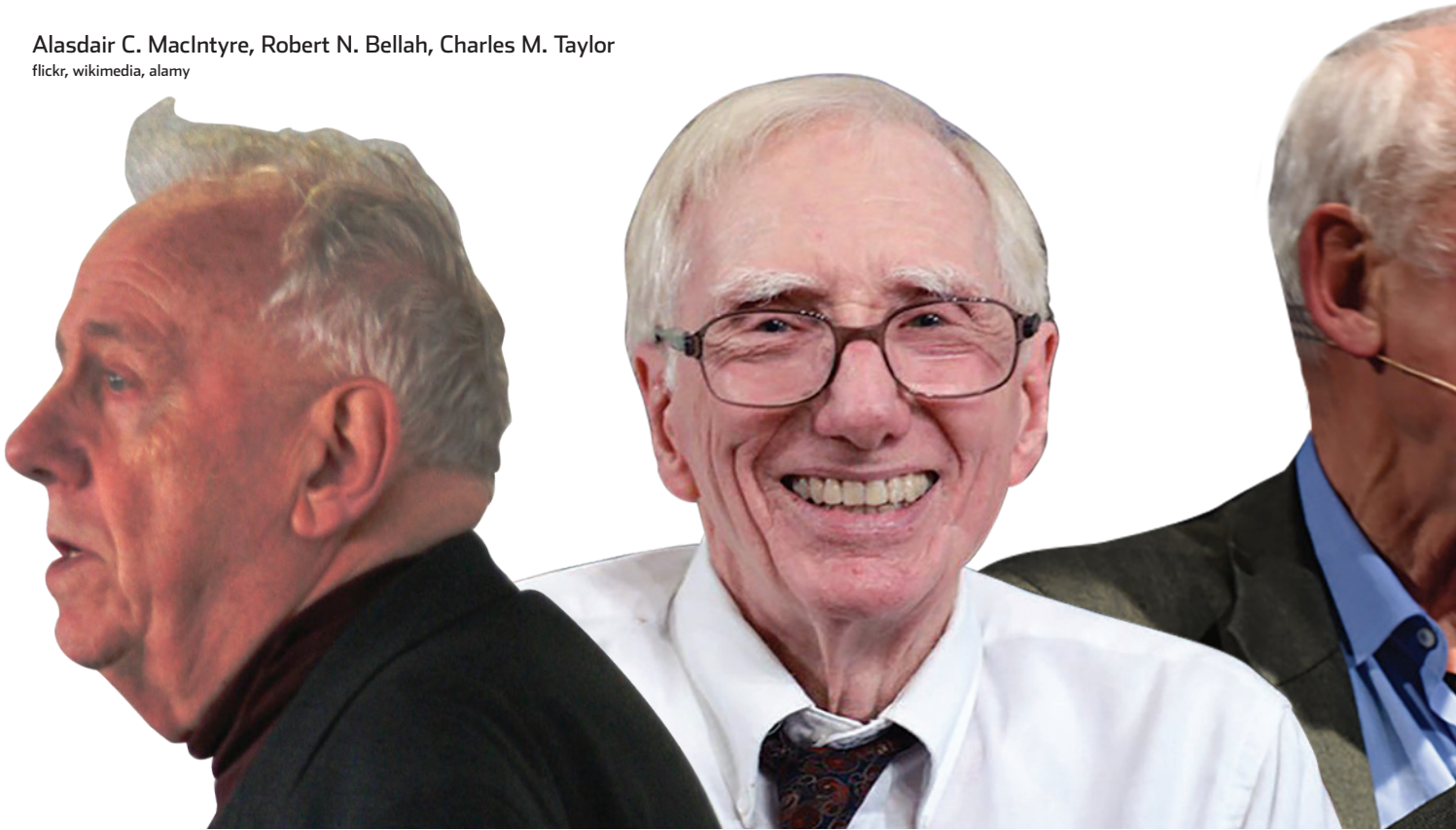
Insofar as secular liberal societies do subscribe to any overarching moral theory, according to MacIntyre, it is the theory of *emotivism*—namely, the view that there are no objective moral standards and that statements of moral principle are really just masks for personal preferences. These notions have penetrated far deeper into our culture, MacIntyre suggested, than we might realize or care to admit. “The reduction of morality to personal preference continually recurs in the writings of those who do not think of themselves as emotivists.”

He identifies two modern types who in their professional roles are incapable of engaging in serious moral debate and yet have come to influence our moral thinking powerfully: the manager and the therapist. Both in their own way obliterate questions of moral ends, transforming all problems into matters purely of technique to be evaluated in terms of quantifiably measurable outcomes (greater profits in the case of the manager, reported feelings of mental well-being in the case of the therapist). The idioms of management and therapy, MacIntyre contends, have thoroughly penetrated and colonized a host of other spheres, including education, politics and religion. In the emotivist frame, objective truth is no longer held up as a paramount value. Indeed, the idea that individuals ought to be held accountable to universal standards of truth—whether em-

pirical or normative—is explicitly rejected. Bottom lines and psychological harmony—the truth that is true only if it serves my interests, or if it feels true to me—trump all.

Where MacIntyre used the term *emotivism* to name our moral predicament, the sociologist Robert Bellah and his co-writers, in their classic 1985 study of American society, *Habits of the Heart*, identified two powerful strands of American thought that in some ways correspond to the managerial and therapeutic types: utilitarian individualism and expressive individualism. The archetypal utilitarian individualist in American history, they suggested, is Benjamin Franklin, who made a lifelong project of personal self-improvement according to economic standards of industry and thrift. Franklin’s *Autobiography* was a kind of secular *Pilgrim’s Progress* that self-consciously set out to transform classic Christian virtues along more pragmatic lines. Utilitarian individualism sees people as self-made and self-maximizing creatures, motivated primarily by appetites and entering into rational social contracts not out of any noble concern for the common good but rather to advance their own interests, security and profits.

While our political and economic life is dominated by the assumptions and vocabulary of utilitarian individualism, however, American culture is arguably even more strongly influenced by the second form of individualism,



which arose in opposition to the drive toward ever greater efficiency and control. “Expressive individualism holds that each person has a unique core of feeling and intuition that should unfold or be expressed if individuality is to be realized.” The archetypal expressive individualist, according to Bellah, is Walt Whitman, whose most famous work, *Leaves of Grass*, begins with the words, “I celebrate myself.” For Whitman, in contrast to Franklin, the goal of life is not to maximize efficiency for the sake of material acquisition but rather to luxuriate in sensual and intellectual experiences, to take pleasure in one’s bodily life and sexuality and to express oneself freely, without any concern for social conventions.

More than a decade after *Habits of the Heart* was published, Bellah traced the origins of both utilitarian and expressive individualism to still deeper wellsprings in American history than either Franklin or Whitman, sources he confessed he had earlier failed to appreciate fully. American-style individualism, he argued in a plenary address to a meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Francisco, is at its root religious, flowing out of the idea of freedom of conscience first championed by radical Protestant sects like the Quakers and the Baptists. Secular liberalism thus lives on borrowed moral capital. “[T]he key move was to extend the sacredness of conscience from religious belief to any seriously held conviction whatever.” Bellah wryly continued, “[H]ere, in the city of San Francisco, where you

can probably do almost anything within reason and still not raise an eyebrow, it is all ultimately thanks to the Baptists.”

But Bellah detected a fatal contradiction in the culture of expressive individualism. With ever greater affirmation of the sacredness of the individual, “our capacity to imagine a social fabric that would hold individuals together is vanishing.” In the final analysis, he wrote, “Roger Williams was a moral genius but he was a sociological catastrophe. After he founded the First Baptist church he left it for a smaller and purer one. That, too, he found inadequate, so he founded a church that consisted only of himself, his wife and one other person. One wonders how he stood even those two.”

Yet the most powerful dissolvent of the social fabric was not the drive toward religious purity and freedom of conscience (leading to the perennial splintering of Protestant denominations). It was the capitalist drive toward an *economic* individualism that “knows nothing of the sacredness of the individual” and whose “only standard is money.” Bellah was not optimistic about America’s long-term prospects: “[T]he poignant reality is that, without a minimal degree of solidarity, the project of ever greater recognition of individual dignity will collapse in on itself. Under the ideological facade of individual freedom, the reality will be, is already becoming, a society in which wealth, ever more concentrated in a small minority, is the only access to real freedom.”



Whatever else Trump represents, he has never stood for loyalty, for self-sacrifice or for traditional or conservative values. ●●

The Rise of the Culture of Authenticity

In his magnum opus, *A Secular Age*, in 2007, Charles Taylor similarly linked expressive individualism with consumerism and with the subordination of values to the demands of the market. There are traces of these developments as

far back as 18th-century Romanticism, but Taylor sees a fundamental shift after World War II from a mere emphasis on subjectivity to a full-blown consumerist culture of authenticity.

Since the 1940s, the United States has undergone a period of unprecedented affluence and the widespread diffusion of what were formerly thought of as luxury goods, from washing machines to packaged family holidays. Corporations have honed techniques of mass marketing to convince people that they need to purchase a constant stream of novel things in order to express their individuality. The “pursuit of happiness” in American society—and globally insofar as the world has embraced American values—thus today largely means the pursuit of ever more “stuff.” According to Taylor, the convergence of consumerism and expressive individualism fosters an ethic of “soft relativism.” “Expressions like ‘do your own thing’ become current; a beer commercial of the early 70s enjoined us to ‘be yourselves in the world of today.’ A simplified expressivism infiltrates everywhere. Therapies multiply which promise to help you find yourself, realize yourself, release your true self, and so on.”

Under soft relativism, traditional understandings of marriage and sexual ethics undergo a corresponding radical reevaluation. Practices that were formerly stigmatized taboos become the staples of light entertainment. No good of the community, no natural law, no biological inheritance

and certainly no appeal to sacred writ can be allowed to interfere with the one sacred truth of the culture of authenticity: Individuals must be free to define themselves and their own goods however they desire, provided only that all involved are consenting adults in the “free market.”

The highest and perhaps only real ethic of our secular age is the “harm principle” first enunciated by John Stuart Mill—namely, the idea that no one should interfere in any aspect of anyone else’s life except to prevent a person from doing harm to someone else. “Doing harm” is itself now seen, though, precisely in terms of interference. To impede—or even to call into question—someone else’s self-expression, whatever that expression might be, is to commit a kind of violence against their personhood. The pursuit of virtue is thus replaced by the quest for self-actualization. In Taylor’s words, “One shouldn’t criticize the others’ values, because they have a right to live their own life as you do. The sin which is not tolerated is intolerance.” Or, in the words of the Rev. Franklin Graham, whether or not the president of the United States had an affair with a porn star and silenced her with hush money on the eve of an election “is nobody’s business.”

The irony of “authenticity” in the consumerist societies of late capitalism is that personal expression takes the form of brand loyalty. “Individuality” is expressed as group conformity—and, in the political realm, a sheer tribalism divorced from any sense of ideological consistency or firm moral commitment. Corporate marketing on the one hand isolates individuals in their acquisitiveness, fostering indifference to “losers” in the global economy. At the same time, advertising and social media exploit our fears of isolation, binding us ever closer to one another, not in authentic community but in liturgies of consumption that revolve around insecure imitation games (or what the social theorist René Girard called “mimetic rivalries”). “The present youth culture is defined both by the way advertising is pitched at it and, to a great degree autonomously, as expressivist,” notes Taylor. But the “styles of dress adopted, the kinds of music listened to, give expression to the personality, to the affinities of the chooser, within a wide space of fashion in which

American-style individualism, Bellah argued, is at its root religious, flowing out of the idea of freedom of conscience first championed by radical Protestant sects like the Quakers. ●●

one's choice could align one with thousands, even millions of others."

The new emphasis on private space has freed us from older relationships of mutual support, neighborliness and shared responsibility. But this expanded freedom to assert our personal "identities" comes at steep social and spiritual costs. The culture of authenticity is marked by growing distrust of social and political institutions because of their failure to fulfill their promises and satisfy our deepest human longings. Yet we are complicit in the breakdown of these institutions through our refusal to place others ahead of ourselves or to limit our "right" to consume and to emote, whenever and however we please.

The Decadence of Trumpism

And so at last we return to the president of expressive individualism, who exemplifies, in the crudest forms imaginable, both the utilitarian and emotivist frames that have animated the American experiment from its founding and who perfectly embodies the essential relativism, individualism and narcissism of our consumerist "culture of authenticity." Strip away Benjamin Franklin's literary genius and still quasi-Christian concern for the relationship between pragmatic utility and the development of good character and we are left with *The Art of the Deal*. Remove Walt Whitman's poetic elegance, generosity of spirit and love for the commoner, and it is no great leap to the boasts of the modern libertine who has devoted his entire life to celebrating himself and who has only contempt for the constraints of conventional morality: "You know, it doesn't really matter what [the media] write as long as you've got a young and beautiful piece of ass." "When you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything."

Politicians regularly proclaim as an article of faith their abiding trust in the "wisdom of the American people," in our collective common sense that in the end must always somehow see us through. But in our morally and spiritually exhausted "Weimar America," in conservative commen-

tator Rod Dreher's phrase (that echoes prescient earlier comparisons, made from the left by Noam Chomsky and Richard Rorty, between Weimar Germany and conditions in the United States), there is no more reason for faith in the collective wisdom and virtue of the *demos* than there is for faith in the wisdom and virtue of the leader whom the *demos* has already chosen—the hotelier from Manhattan with his golden palaces; his smash-mouth politics; his serial adulteries; his manifest lying about matters great and small; his lack of all impulse control; his disdain for tradition, rules and norms; his fulsome praise of thugs and dictators; his casual cruelty toward those he deems weak; and his crudely transactional morality.

Conservatives have long decried the relaxing of sexual ethics and the loss of codes of etiquette as markers of liberalism's moral impoverishment and as *political* perils to Western civilization. Yet with the rise of Trumpism, they are themselves now deeply and irreversibly implicated in the expressivist turn. All of the old pieties, it turns out, are completely fungible for most conservatives as well. Basic principles of rationality, truth-telling, civility, decency and restraint have been laid waste by the reality television star's hostile takeover of the Republican Party and ascent to the White House on a tsunami of emotive tweets and hyperbolic promises of "better deals." Yet an astonishing number of Americans, abandoning their own earlier proclamations of the necessity of virtuous character for wise and just political leadership, now cheer the unraveling—and the cruelty.

According to Taylor, there is a troubling amnesia among many liberal champions of the ethics of authenticity, a forgetfulness of the violence that can be unleashed on the world when large numbers of people embrace political ideologies that are emotivist and expressivist at their cores. For many young people, it is "as though the morality of mutual respect were embedded in the ideal of authentic self-fulfillment itself"; they are "oblivious of how the terrible twentieth-century aberrations of Fascism and extreme nationalism have also drunk at the expressivist source." But if liberal cheerleaders for authenticity are oblivious, as Taylor says, to the ways in which liberalism and extreme nationalism have drunk from the same expressivist wells, the converse is also true. Many self-described conservatives are willfully oblivious to the ways in which their newfound "populist nationalism" partakes of the spirit of the age, the ethos of "me first" bleeding into the nativism of "America First."

Today's "conservatives"—who embraced Trump as their champion from out of a field of 17 Republican alter-



President Trump speaks to reporters about border security in the briefing room of the White House, Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019.

AP Photo/Evan Vucci

natives—are the heirs not of Edmund Burke so much as of Robespierre and the Jacobins, eager to smash the highest achievements of their forebears in the name of an inchoate appeal to something “greater.” This is not the “velvet nihilism” that Rusty Reno fears but rather nihilism of a far more uninhibited, coarse and quintessentially American kind. To comprehend the wellsprings of this new radicalism from the right and its appeal across large swathes of the electorate, we must come to terms not only with the realities of stagnating wages, growing inequality, economic despair and fears of racial and cultural supplanting in the heartland, but also with the moral and spiritual significance of a sordid spectacle that in retrospect appears as a dark portent of our times: more than 80,000 frenzied fans cheering Trump on as he body-slammed, beat and shaved the head of a writhing, sobbing Vince McMahon, and then rained money from the sky (most of it fake, some of it real) during the 2007 “Battle of the Billionaires” storyline on WrestleMania XXIII. This is what the apotheosis of utilitarian and expressive individualism in the American experiment can, at least potentially, look like: an unvarnished appeal to fantasies of power and revenge; the rich growing

richer through the cynical orchestration of pseudo-events that play on mob appetites, insecurities and hatreds; the catharsis of collective scapegoating climaxing in ritualistic violence.

In the final analysis, Trump’s revolt against the liberal order ironically manifests and exacerbates all the internal contradictions eating at the heart of the culture of authenticity. What his ruinous triumph has revealed in stark relief is how few authentic conservatives are left in our expressive land. As the atmosphere of chaos, mendacity and venality surrounding the White House deepens day by day, Trump’s ceaselessly tolerant and indulgent supporters and apologists—whose silences often speak louder than their words—can no longer plausibly claim to be the guardians of virtue. They must now be counted among the greatest moral decadents of our secular age.

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SINGLE MOTHERS AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

How the church can support single-parent families

By Kaya Oakes

In the late afternoon on a muggy day this past summer, I attended a funeral for a friend's mother. A woman who had spent her working career as a nurse and her retirement years volunteering with AIDS patients, my friend's mom lived into her late 90s. The testimonies at the funeral were moving. Her friends and family spoke about her kindness, her devotion to the marginalized and her deep and devout love for the Catholic Church that had sustained her over the course of a very long life. But when her children got up to speak, both of them returned again and again to the same topic: their mother's care for them as a single parent.

The relationship between single mothers and the Catholic Church is not always an easy one. Because the church has long defined marriage as central to lay Catholic identity, Catholic single mothers have sometimes stayed hidden in the shadows.

The history of Ireland's mother and baby homes, where so-called "fallen women" and their children were subject to horrific treatment at the hands of Catholic religious orders, has become widely known thanks to a number of journalistic and government investigations. Similar homes existed throughout the United States. Physical and mental abuse, rampant disease



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and early death were common in Catholic-run homes for single mothers. An investigation by the Marshall Project into mother and baby homes in the United States revealed that these homes were “at least as numerous” until the mid-20th century as they were in Ireland—and “at least as brutal.” The so-called “fallen women” who populated these homes, according to the historian Estelle Freedman, experienced a greater stigma than male criminals of the 19th century.


While the church’s treatment of single mothers has greatly improved, some of that stigma remains. In a survey of Catholic women commissioned by **America** and conducted by Georgetown University’s Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, single Catholic mothers reported mixed experiences of parish life. The survey revealed that “Catholic women are more likely to agree ‘very much’ that divorced and remarried Catholics (25 percent) and non-heterosexual Catholics (25 percent) are more welcome in their parish than unwed Catholic parents (16 percent).” Most of the widowed and divorced parents who responded said their parishes were only “a little” or “some-what” welcoming, and nearly 18 percent said their parishes were not at all welcoming. More than half of women overall said their parish provides no or little support for new mothers (52 percent) or child care (55 percent).

It is not news to Catholics that change in the church is

slow, particularly when it comes to the status of women. In the case of births out of wedlock, women have long carried the burden of responsibility for whatever actions may have led to their becoming single mothers. In his apostolic exhortation on the family, “*Amoris Laetitia*,” Pope Francis wrote, “A pastor cannot feel that it is enough to simply apply moral laws to those living in ‘irregular’ situations, as if they were stones to throw at people’s lives.”

But attitudes toward single mothers vary widely from parish to parish. The pope spoke out against priests who refuse to baptize the children of single mothers in 2016, saying that denial is a form of “pastoral cruelty.” When it comes to the baptism of the children of single mothers, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says only that at least one of the parents must promise to do their best to bring up the child as a Catholic. Yet even in Berkeley, Calif., the famously liberal city where I teach, the priest at my former parish told me he had received a phone call from a sobbing woman who had been told by the pastor of another local church that her child could not be baptized there unless she was married.

According to the last U.S. census, nearly a quarter of children in the United States are being raised in single-parent homes, and the majority of those are single-mother families. That means there are over 10 million single mothers, about half of whom are divorced, a third



Women have long carried the burden of responsibility for whatever actions may have led to their becoming single mothers. 💧💧

of whom have never been married and a smaller number who are widows.

There have been multiple stories in the past few years of single female employees of Catholic churches, schools and colleges being fired for becoming pregnant out of wedlock. Morality clauses, which require teachers at Catholic schools to agree not to bear a child out of wedlock, enter into a same-sex marriage or use birth control, have received increased attention in some dioceses. In 2014, Shaela Evanson of Helena, Mt., became pregnant and was fired for violating the morality clause of the contract at the Catholic school where she taught. The single mother Christa Dias was fired by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in 2010 when she became pregnant through in vitro fertilization, and on a Reddit thread from 2016, a devout teacher at a Catholic school fretted about expediting her wedding after she became pregnant so as not to lose her job. In December 2018, Naiad Reich, a Catholic school teacher in Pennsylvania, was terminated from her position when she informed the school's principal that she and her partner were expecting a child out of wedlock.

Second-Class Catholics?

The difficulties single mothers face in the church are not new. Although my friend's mother was a churchgoing Catholic until her death, as a divorced woman in the 1960s, she sometimes faced judgment from fellow Catholics, with the added stress of raising two children on her own as a working woman. Vacations were a rarity, the kids often wore second-hand clothes, and money was so tight they took in roomers to make ends meet.

Ashley Doherty, who is in her 60s and was widowed in her 30s, says that when it came to parish life as a single mother, "I felt on the outside looking in at the time, without anybody being deliberately rude." Ms. Doherty grew up in Mississippi during the era of segregation and says that the church of her childhood treated a single-parent family or any family without a large number of children as problematic. For those kinds of families, "it almost becomes a requirement that you acknowledge your second-class status before you're allowed in the door," she says.

Ms. Doherty says the prejudice toward single mothers in the church may be part of a larger reaction against other kinds of relationships—same-sex couples, unmarried couples living together and so on—that stray from the ideal of a "traditional" family. As the rise of feminism in the second half of the 20th century began to change society's

views of the roles available to women within families, the church struggled to understand how to deal with the presence of single mothers who may have previously stayed hidden in congregations. By the 1970s and '80s, these women were discovering a kind of self-agency as they saw single, empowered women more widely represented in popular culture.

"It's not like we were having single mother marches," Ms. Doherty says. But their presence did become more mainstream, and they were less ashamed of their status. Before feminism, she says, single mothers "were almost content to be in the back of the back of the church." But even after the feminist revolution, "the time constraint and the inability to participate" that Ms. Doherty encountered as a single mother meant it was difficult for her to really feel engaged in parish life, even though she chose to remain Catholic.

That experience led her to question whether to bring up her daughter in the church, and she ultimately decided that it would be her daughter's own decision. When her daughter was in junior high, Ms. Doherty realized her daughter's catechesis classes were thin on theology, and she told her daughter it was up to her whether she would continue with them. By the time her daughter was 13 and the time for confirmation had arrived, Ms. Doherty says she told her: "You can walk out any time. This is not mandatory." But her daughter chose to be confirmed, stayed in the church and is now raising her own children as Catholics.

Help Wanted

Donna, a single mother in her 30s, who asked that her last name be withheld, says that her experiences in the Catholic Church have also been mixed. Donna was divorced at a time in her life when she was lapsed from the church, and

her child from that marriage was not baptized. When she returned to the church a year ago, she was told by the pastor of her local church that in order for her child to be baptized, she would need to get an annulment. She contacted her local archdiocese, but they never returned her calls.

In her years as a single mother, it was partially the church's attitude—exemplified by that unreturned phone call—that caused her to again distance herself from the church. Single motherhood, she says, means “you never get a break, you never rest or are able to take a step back,” which for her meant that spiritual questions had to move to the back burner in favor of survival. The logistical and financial assistance she did receive did not come from the church but from her artistic community. At times, she says, she felt “branded with a scarlet letter” in church and adds that she had never “encountered a Catholic community that helped me out personally.”

Donna is now engaged and pregnant again. Although she left the church before because she felt “treated like the sum of my mistakes in life,” she says her current efforts to get her first marriage annulled, get married in the church and have her child and soon-to-be-born second child baptized are the result of “a lot of growing up” and an effort to move past “nasty” experiences with church staff and to “keep my eyes on Christ.”

Donna says that any kind of support from the church for single mothers would have been enormously helpful to her in the past but that some members of the clergy seem afraid to offer it “because of a misplaced fear of glorifying divorce or glorifying premarital sex.” A single-parents group, a Bible study or simply providing a place where single Catholic mothers could get together and share their experiences, she says, was pretty much impossible to find.

Acknowledge, Accept, Support

It is telling that while I was researching this essay, my searches turned up only one group for Catholic single parents that promoted itself in ways that were easy to find on the internet. That group meets at St. Thomas More church in Austin, Tex. Founded in 2003 by two single parents from the congregation, the group was given approval by both the pastor and the diocese. The participants mirror the larger demographics of single parents in the United States: While single fathers do attend the group, about three-quarters of the participants are single mothers, and a majority of those are divorced. At their first meeting, 25 single parents showed up, and they made it their goal to identify the is-

ssues faced by Catholic single parents and to meet the needs of the single parents in the congregation.

The number one issue they identified, according to the program's current director, Jaquelyn Mika, was that the single parents did not know where they fit in the Catholic Church and did not feel welcomed. They also learned that what single parents in the congregation needed was primarily “emotional, practical and spiritual support.”

Ms. Mika, a single mother to grown children, says that in terms of practical support, child care is the number-one priority for single mothers who attend the group, so the parish provides free babysitting during the meetings. The format is simple. The group meets monthly and is facilitated by a moderator. It provides an opportunity for single parents to discuss their lives in what Ms. Mika calls a “safe and confidential” environment, with opportunities to speak but not a lot of pressure to do so. The parish also offers supplemental monthly meetings for single parents with guest speakers offering talks on topics of special interest to parents, including the psychological issues common in single-parent households, the legal issues faced by single parents as well as health and budgeting. On the spiritual side, the group has hosted speakers on the annulment process and on catechesis for children. They also offer social events that parents can participate in with or without children.

The group has also provided support to single-parents groups at other churches and has identified three areas where single parents feel their pastoral needs are not generally being met. Those include acknowledgment, acceptance and support. Acknowledgment, Ms. Mika says, can mean anything from occasional recognition in prayers at Mass to sensitivity from pastors and church staff. The needs of single parents are different; and time, money and child care are all high priorities. Acceptance includes reassurance that they do have a place in the church and not being made to feel like “second-class citizens.” And support can range from providing child care to a church forming its own single-parents group.

Ms. Mika says attendance can fluctuate from meeting to meeting because of the logistical challenges single par-

Photo courtesy of Donna



Photo courtesy of Ashley Doherty

Ashley Doherty, who is in her 60s and was widowed in her 30s, said after her husband's death she "felt on the outside looking in" at parish life.

ents face, but that the numbers are not the priority. Forming community is. While her group was enthusiastically supported by the local diocese, that has not always been the case for groups in other churches that have sought help in starting a similar ministry. And occasionally, people just stop attending. But not showing up can actually be a sign of success: People often arrive for the first time feeling spiritually broken, and after six months to a year of attending the group, they sometimes feel so much better that they just move on. Simply having a place to feel acknowledged, accepted and supported is enough to create change.

Groups like the one at St. Thomas More can help break the stigma around single mothers in the church, but as the Catholic single mothers I spoke to testify, it is also a matter of acknowledgment and acceptance from congregations and pastors. Pope Francis called a single mother who had written him in 2013 and offered to baptize her child if she could not find a priest who would do it. But the fact that the woman expected to be turned down by priests in the first place reflects the same second-class status that many single mothers experience.

In their experiences on the margins of the church, these self-sacrificing women who stick with the church even when it pushes back against them might actually be prophetic witnesses to the power of faith. It is worth remembering that the first person to spread the news of Jesus was not the apostle Paul but the many-times-married Samaritan woman he met at the well. "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony," John's Gospel tells us. Perhaps it is time for the church to begin listening to these women, too.

Kaya Oakes, a contributing writer for *America*, teaches writing at the University of California, Berkeley, and is the author of *The Nones Are Alright*.



History's battles of ideas are etched into the stones of Notre Dame d'Orval, a monastery on the Belgian-French border founded by Benedictine monks in the 11th century.

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A Mid-Life Calling



By John W. Miller

To find my vocation, I had to stop running away and start listening

The day after I quit my job at The Wall Street Journal to take a midlife sabbatical, I had lunch with a former chief executive of U.S. Steel. Walking home, I slipped on an icy Pittsburgh sidewalk and broke my finger.

Laid up over Christmas at my parents' house in Brussels, where I grew up, I was unable to pick my banjo, play basketball or ride a bike. That same month, my marriage had been annulled. Into a life without familiar hobbies, work and status came rushing strange vibrations.

Every morning, I woke up with warmth pounding in my chest, a quaking heart filling with bliss and terror. For a few scorching, unbearable weeks, scenes from my past flashed before my eyes, recasting beliefs and assumptions. I had known happiness. I had known sadness. What was this? God?



For the first time in my life, the famous visitation scenes of Scripture made sense. I had been knocked off my horse. The bush was burning. ●●

The numinous pounding lasted into the spring, throwing off my plan to take just a few months off and then get back to work. I turned down two jobs and a fellowship.

I retreated to Pittsburgh and scheduled an appointment with a spiritual director. In March and April, I spent mornings feeding homeless people at a soup kitchen and afternoons reading and napping on my couch. Every few weeks, my spiritual director and I met for prayer and conversation.

I found myself ridiculous, beating back a messiah complex and listening to myself entertain notions of throwing all my possessions in the river. Friends whispered and worried. I made sure to shave every day: If you're wondering if God is speaking to you, it is best to maintain a facade of impeccable sanity.

But something was happening. For the first time in my life, the famous visitation scenes of Scripture made sense. I had been knocked off my horse. The bush was burning.

The intensity of the calling experience, the dissatisfaction with a job I had once loved and the failure of my marriage suggested, I thought, a path in the church.

Around the time I broke my finger—my ring finger, no less—my marriage had been formally annulled by the church. God, I thought, was marching me off to the monastery. In this age of twittering madness, I would join those bearing witness to peace, sanity and truth.

Although I have been a practicing Catholic since my teens and graduated from a Catholic college, I felt unfamiliar with the church. Outside of marriage and attendance at a Catholic school, my closest involvement had been covering the sexual abuse crisis as a journalist. But I could not ignore this strange calling. That would be the only thing worse than the pain and confusion I was feeling.

I picked the brains of anybody I could find—a parish priest in Pittsburgh, a Jesuit in Washington, D.C., a Domin-

ican in Brussels. I spent a week at a Jesuit retreat house outside Cleveland. After one priest I talked to compared my story to that of St. Ignatius, I read his autobiography. I learned about movements of the spirits and discernment. I was accumulating knowledge—but no clarity.

Then a trusted priest friend in Belgium suggested I go on retreat at Notre Dame d'Orval, a monastery on the Belgian-French border.

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Monastic communities are like families. Some fight. Some fail. This one, my friend said, is healthy. It commands a global beer business. The monks faithfully follow the rule of St. Benedict. They pray, work and welcome visitors.

I booked a week. On a warm Monday in May, I took trains from Brussels to a tiny farming town called Florenville and trekked five miles on a road that snaked through a pine forest to the monastery.

Orval, which makes a popular dry, citrusy ale, attracts beer tourists from all over the world and has the restaurant and brewery museum to satisfy them.

It also welcomes pilgrims. For \$50 a night, you can get a simple room and sustenance, including a Trappist beer, and, if you want, time to talk with an attentive monk.

There are good reasons to get to know Orval besides spiritual searching. History's battles of ideas are etched into its stones. Founded by Italian Benedictine monks in the 11th century, by the 1700s the monastery had become one of the world's leading industrial sites, run by monks, with nine forges and state-of-the-art hydraulic technology. It represented the kind of ecclesiastical luxury hated by the freethinkers who seized power in the French Revolution, and in 1793, steeple-toppling Jacobins burned it to the ground.

The site lay in ruins until the 1920s, when a new wave



of anti-clericalism in 1926 again threatened French monks, who went shopping for a new home. The Trappist order bought the Orval site from its private owners and started making the beer to pay for construction of a new monastery among the ruins of the old.

A 60-foot statue of the Virgin and child fronting the main chapel looks over a large cloister with a pond, surrounded by the cloister walk, from which doorways lead to the monks' small, private rooms. Everything is eternally and cheerfully colored in green and white. On the sunny mornings I attended daily prayer. Pilgrims sat with monks, white plastic chairs almost touching, trading secrets for wisdom.

My confessor was the abbot, Father Lode, a tall, funny, charismatic man in his 60s who reminded me of C.E.O.s I had covered as a journalist. He seemed to know everybody, dropping names of popes, philosophers, even musicians with whom that my dad, a pianist, had played.

On the second day, the abbot said he had something important to tell me. "I don't think you have a calling, at least not for now," he said. "I think you need to go back to what you know, get a job, maybe meet a woman. When you're happy again, your heart will tell you what's next."

The only thing God wants us to give up, he continued, is the devil. "If you're not enjoying things you used to enjoy, that's your ego or that's depression. That's not from God."

That evening, as I ate in silence with the other pilgrims and savored my beer, I felt a weight lift from my shoulders.

The next day, the abbot resumed his lecture. There are three things you need to orient yourself in times of crisis and change, he said.

One is divine inspiration. The second is the facts of your life. What you've done before and what you're able to do, practically. And the third is a wise witness to certify

that you're living in reality.

"You can't figure out your calling experience on your own," Father Lode said. "And when you do understand what it means, it's going to make you very happy, like you're in love. But you're not going to fall in love while you're going so far from what you know." Again, he said, "Go back to what you know."

He offered a note of caution: "You could spend your whole life running around the world interviewing monks and priests, like a journalist, and not get anywhere," he said. "But this part of your life is not about being a reporter; it's about listening to your heart."

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"Vocation," Thomas Merton wrote, "does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I was born to be."

I returned to Pittsburgh and got back to work, as a writer, filmmaker, and youth baseball coach. I even met a woman.

The process of understanding my vocation will go on for the rest of my life, but I mark the conversation with Father Lode at Orval as the point when I stopped running away and started running toward something.

It took a wise Belgian abbot to remind me that every calling is an invitation to become our truest, happiest selves and not to turn us into somebody we're not.

I emailed the abbot to thank him.

"You're certainly starting a new phase in life, one where you'll live more deeply," he replied. "But you'll get there. And we're here to help."

John W. Miller is a Pittsburgh-based writer and former staff reporter and foreign correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*.

The Heresy of Modernity: Modern Travel

Who doesn't love to get away? G. C. Heseltine, for one. But one might wonder if it was a question of temperament rather than the details of his journeys, because this extended screed against modern travel from the April 18, 1931, issue of *America* turned fairly quickly into a screed against, well, just about everything else. One hesitates to ponder what Mr. Heseltine would think of selfie sticks, coach airline seats, Airbnb or Starbucks! In any case, we knew he would be the perfect fit for this travel issue....

It is a great mistake to think that men travel only to get to a certain place, to see some famous sight, or to perform some personal or business mission.... The best thing about many journeys is coming back, going all over the world to find your way home. It is then that you find home is worth going away for, and, in the words of the song, there is no place like it.

On the other hand, people are known to go away, not because they want to get *to* any place, but because they want to get *away*—from the police, their creditors, or the club bore. It is one of the real blessings of modern transport, perhaps the only real blessing, that it enables you to get away very quickly.... That is the only excuse, but it is a good excuse, for the speed-craze.

It is a common error amongst modern travelers to think that they can travel more and in greater comfort than our forefathers, merely because they can travel faster. Most modern travel is not travel at all, unless you can call getting from one modern city to another modern city, travel. To me it is suspiciously like staying in the same place. All modern cities, especially in the same country, have the same deadly, monotonous, efficient architecture, the same traffic, the same sorts of shops (and thanks to the chain stores, even the same shops), the same hotels all built like a public lavatory, and the same worried-looking, strenuous citizens, rushing about as busy as so many ants, dressed in the same fashion.

Never have different towns been so much alike, thanks to the modern

economy of ideas, the habit of making one idea do for everybody, because people are too busy working for somebody else, to think for themselves. Modern communications make it possible for a cafeteria, policeman's uniform, or heartache melody sprung upon Chicago, to be adopted at once from San Francisco to Long Island, so that wherever the traveler goes he will eat the same food, obey the same regulations, and hear the same cacophonous wail.

There is not even a journey to excuse such travel. The journey is cut by every ingenuity known to science so that it is as brief as possible.... To prevent any hint of travel creeping into a modern railroad journey you can have the same canned fodder, the same palpitating saxo-sob by radio, and be poisoned by the same hooch....

It is pretty much the same with travel abroad. The same monotony of modern efficiency is distributed over the capitals of Europe as over the cities of the United States. All grand hotels are Grand Hotels, and there the matter ends for most travelers.... The difference between the Europejski in Warsaw and the Biltmore is not worth going five thousand miles to enjoy.

The traveler who makes use of modern travel to meet foreign peoples and see foreign places usually fails utterly, though he does not always know it.... The vision of the modern traveler is blurred as it would be by double-speed movies. Adding to this the help or hindrance of guide books, he gets a very poor image on

the mind—the sole purpose of seeing. It is impossible for him to gain any definite or real impression since the essential condition for that is one of time. To see the marvel of the Niagara Rapids it is necessary to stand and stare, which is exactly what everybody does. To visit the Tower of London, the National Gallery, Westminster Abbey, and the Zoo in one day, or Stratford-on-Avon, London, and Paris in the same week is like being forced to run at a breathless pace the full length of the Grand Canyon of Colorado. The difference is not one of travel, or of sightseeing, but only of physical exertion.

So it is that modern travel, in its most highly developed form, for pleasure or curiosity, fails in its object. Modern travel for other purposes is not travel but transport. The idea that we travel easier or better than our ancestors who had only their two feet or a horse, is a great fallacy. Thousands upon thousands of medieval bishops from the remotest parts of Europe regularly made their *ad limina* visit to Rome. There was constant communication between Rome and every See, and between all the courts and nobles, numerous as they were, *by travelers*, since there were no telegraphs or radio. When a man went traveling in the old days, there was a perpetually changing wonder revealed to him, slowly enough for him to take it in. The world is so mapped and places are so described today, that the element of surprise, which is half the fun of travel, is lost.

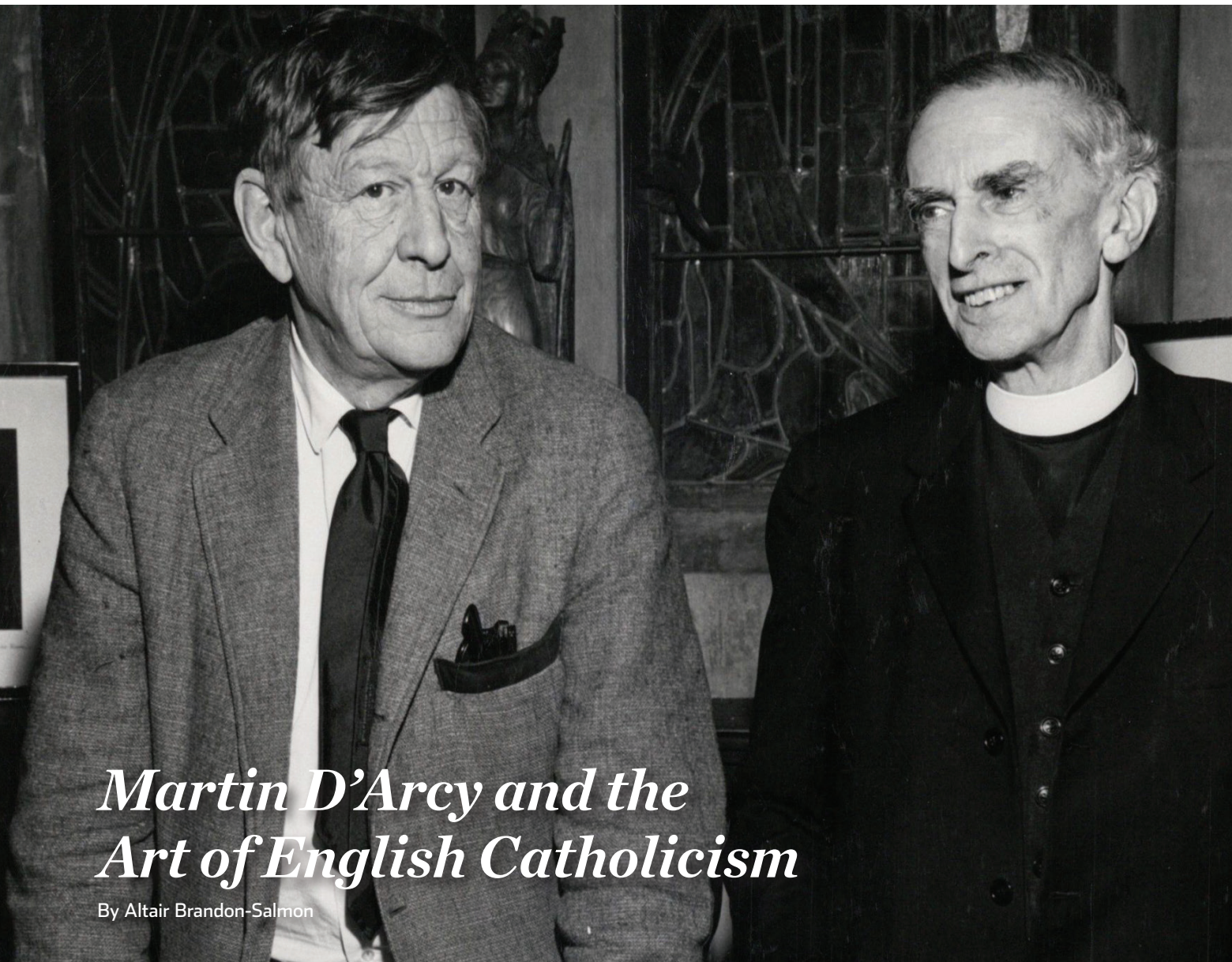
What American today could travel like Marco Polo to the court of the great Kublai Khan at Xanadu, like William of Rubruk far through Central Asia to Mongolia and the lands of the Tartars, or like many another to Cathay and the three Indias and the land of Prester John, and bring back tales of “palace gates of sardonyxes inlaid with snakes horn, windows of crystal, tables of gold and amethyst, pavements of onyx, lamps burning balsam,” of where “twelve archbishops sit on our right at table to meals every day and twenty bishops on our left,” and where the King is preceded by a wooden cross “that he may always bear in mind the Passion of Christ.”

It is not that the places are not there, nor equal wonders to be seen, it is because travel has been confined to rails and routes and the tales of those have all been told. Travel is a poor thing if no one will listen to your tales when you come back. The modern world is too sophisticated and too busy to wonder at them. The medieval travelers went far and wide, again and again, and there was nothing to stop them.

You can still travel today to wonderful places and live among wonderful peoples, but they are inaccessible to those who go by rail or automobile, tossed deftly from one Grand Hotel to another. It requires little more than it did centuries ago, a stout heart, a strong stomach, and two sound feet, with the courage and curiosity to venture into the unknown. The unknown is not remote or far away, it is anywhere a little way off the modern trav-

eler’s route, the beaten track. It is as full of unheard-of marvels as the lost Atlantis or the land of Prester John.... But modern travel allows no such thing. The twentieth-century traveler always knows where he is going.

G. C. Heseltine was a frequent contributor to *America* in the 1930s.



Martin D'Arcy and the Art of English Catholicism

By Altair Brandon-Salmon

It is 1935, and Martin D'Arcy, S.J., the foremost English Catholic personality of the interwar period and the master of *Campion Hall*, Oxford, is at lunch in London with Sir Edwin Lutyens, the most celebrated English architect of his time. Lutyens is designing the new college building for *Campion Hall*, the Jesuit college at Oxford University, but as they wait for lunch to arrive,

he pulls out a photograph to show to Father D'Arcy: It is of a large Spanish polychrome relief sculpture, depicting St. Ignatius Loyola surrounded by his companions, with two cherubs holding his cape aloft.

Mr. Lutyens suggests that it should perhaps go to the new Catholic cathedral in Liverpool. But Father D'Arcy disagrees: "I immediately told Lutyens

that the obvious place for it was *Campion Hall*," D'Arcy relates in his essay "Treasure Hunting," "and he not only agreed but took care that it could be fitted into the wall in a suitable spot."

That polychrome sculpture of St. Ignatius is still in its original (Lutyens-designed) niche at *Campion Hall*. It functions as an alternative portrait of the Jesuit founder: Instead



Burns Library, Boston College

◀ Martin D'Arcy, S.J., was a well-connected figure and friends with a disparate series of people, including W. H. Auden, left.

of the august, antique oils of aristocrats and bishops hung in the dining halls of the colleges they had founded, at Champion Hall the visitor meets the spiritual originator of both the Society of Jesus and the hall itself. It sums up the magpie-like eye of Father D'Arcy (1888–1976) and his eagerness in furnishing his “new” college to the same standards as his surroundings.

This was all the more pressing as Champion Hall was viewed as a Catholic interloper, an intruder into a university still deeply connected to the Church of England. Catholic students had only relatively recently (since 1895) been allowed to become full members of the university; Champion Hall was

one of four “permanent private halls” founded at the turn of the century in order to provide teaching, accommodation, and perhaps most importantly, a community for young Roman Catholic students.

Catholicism, in a land that had repudiated the pope in Rome for nearly four centuries, was still seen as “a religion of dissidence and alterity,” as

Jane Stevenson of Oxford University recently wrote. Father D'Arcy, a playful, well-connected figure, friends with a disparate series of people—from Evelyn Waugh to Kenneth Clark, Edith Sitwell and W. H. Auden—wanted to present a rival vision of Oxford, what it might have looked like had Britain stayed Catholic. Thus his regime of art collecting had a definitive sense of purpose: to assure his college's social status in an intensely class-conscious university and to posit a Catholic vision that stressed the historical continuity of English Catholicism, with its links to continental Europe.

Father D'Arcy's cultivation of a kind of English baroque could be seen everywhere in the new college, from the polished wooden floor underfoot, redolent of Spanish missions, to the unapologetic Catholic iconography to be found hanging on the walls. Peter Davidson, curator and archivist at Champion Hall, has written how there is a tradition in England of “perceiving the Catholic arts as the arts of the enemy,” yet D'Arcy was not trying to unduly provoke Oxford, but rather to present a vision of what the university would have been like if Mary, Queen of Scots, had taken the English throne in 1558 instead of Elizabeth I.

This is seen most clearly in what is now known as the D'Arcy Room in Champion Hall. Found on the ground floor of Micklem Hall, a 16th-century house assimilated into Champion Hall by Mr. Lutyens, the visitor descends a small series of steps into a wood-paneled room, illuminated by French windows that open out into the garden. Here facing you are four

paintings in conversation with the viewer and with one another. They represent an alternative Catholic monarchy for England: a portrait of Mary of Modena, the devout Roman Catholic wife of James II, from the studio of Geoffrey Kneller; a miniature of James Francis Edward, the Jacobite claimant to the throne in the 18th century; a portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, pretending to be from the 16th century but extensively retouched, poor Mary having a touch of Ginger Rogers about her; and of course, a dignified portrait of James II, another piece of Kneller studio work. None of these are paintings one would expect to find in an Oxford college, either now or in 1936.

Indeed, when Father D'Arcy bought these paintings from Mayfair galleries, they were deeply unfashionable and were sold at low prices. Aided by his friendships with prominent dealers, like John Hunt, paintings were on occasion offered to him before they went on sale. Even more extraordinarily, because of D'Arcy's friendship with Kenneth Clark, director of the National Gallery, Clark did not bid for baroque religious works at auction that he knew D'Arcy wanted for the hall. Thus for a relatively small outlay, the new Jesuit college was able to assemble a remarkable collection of old masters, including Cigoli, Marcello Venusti and Jacopo Bassano.

A Rich Variety of Artworks

Yet Father D'Arcy was not content with only 17th-century oils of Catholic monarchs and gentle



Photo: Courtesy Campion Hall



Campion Hall's artwork includes "Christ at the Column," by Palma Il Vecchio (c. 1528), and a restored version of "Madonna and Child" (Florentine, anon., c. 1450).

Madonnas. Staying in the D'Arcy Room, if one turns toward the panelled wall opposite the alternative Jacobite royal house, there is a rare watercolor on linen from China, showing St. John receiving the Book of Revelation from an angel. Only here St. John is depicted in the graphic Chinese manner, painted by an 18th century Chinese Catholic convert, probably intended for the Jesuit mission in China—it points toward the international scope of the Society of Jesus and reminds us that we are in a specifically Jesuit house.

The collage-like effect of the room is completed by several small prints

from David Jones. Jones, a modernist poet and engraver, was a Catholic convert and friendly with Father D'Arcy, and gave a number of his prints to the hall. D'Arcy was especially keen on presenting Campion Hall as a "modern" college, so apart from engaging Lutyens to design it, he collected works by Picasso and Derain and two powerful prints by Georges Rouault. This was complemented by an array of British contemporary art by Frank Brangwyn and Eric Gill. Father D'Arcy even had his portrait painted by that quintessential English bohemian, Augustus John. With its deep links to both baroque and global art, the col-

lection is equally rich in modern devotional art, making for one of the most idiosyncratic yet coherent private collections put together in the British Isles in the 1930s and '40s.

The D'Arcy Room, with its baroque candlesticks and salmon-pink upholstered chairs, could perhaps be mistaken for the parlor of a recusant Catholic family. This, of course, is part of the point. Yet it is also very similar to common rooms found in other Oxford colleges—such as the Elizabethan Jesus College—differing in the details rather than in the overall structure. It is at once intensely familiar and remarkably disorientating, shot through with

a distinctly “continental” flavor (a term which has long troubled, and continues to trouble, so many Britons).

If the D’Arcy Room displays in the most concentrated form his art-collecting predilections, then the Lady Chapel represents his significant role as a patron of the arts. Passing through Lutyens’s intimate but vaulted chapel, the light shades humorously shaped as cardinals’ hats, there is a small side chapel that holds a marvellous painted room, an exceedingly rare endeavour for England in the 20th century. Every surface has been painted by Charles Mahoney, resituating the life of the Madonna in a walled garden in contemporary, 1930s England.

Mahoney took his cue from the old masters that surrounded him as he worked on the wall paintings in the postwar period. It has been part of the tradition of Western art to rearticulate the Gospels in the visual vernacular of its audience: So just as Florentine artists in the Quattrocento placed Jesus and his disciples in the Tuscan landscape, Mahoney brings the story of the Virgin Mary into an idealized English garden, complete with roses, oaks and carefully tended shrubbery (a garden-er in blue overalls is one of the figures

kneeling to the “Virgin of Mercy”).

Father D’Arcy funded the Lady Chapel using donations by Evelyn Waugh from the royalties for his biography of St. Edmund Campion, and D’Arcy had originally approached Stanley Spencer to complete the scheme, no doubt inspired by his work at Burghclere Chapel. However, the two men did not get on, D’Arcy dismissively describing Spencer thus: “So diminutive as to be almost a dwarf in labourer’s clothes with a dirty satchel containing all his belongings, he was no ordinary guest.”

Mahoney, a Royal Academician, was a safer pair of hands and experienced in mural painting (although much of his work was destroyed in the Blitz). Age and illness, though, prevented him from entirely finishing the Lady Chapel. One panel remains as a monochrome sketch, still waiting for the vitalizing application of color.

Still, it is a remarkable, beautiful environment, summing up D’Arcy’s aspirations for a specifically English Catholicism, employing the recognizable visual symbols of Britain, its fashions and its mores to retell the life of the Virgin using Catholic iconography. There is not much else like

it in the history of English art in the 20th century.

Forever an Outsider

Since the Reformation, English Catholics have been persecuted and discriminated against at every level of society. Indeed, the memory of this persecution in families who have maintained their faith over the centuries remains strong. Father D’Arcy belonged to a generation whose parents and grandparents lived through a regime of legalized prejudice—civil rights had only been restored to Catholics in Britain in 1829. To situate a Jesuit college at Oxford as an intellectual and social equal of its Protestant brethren was a radical, subversive act.

Despite his closeness to a literary and artistic elite in Britain between the wars, D’Arcy would forever be an outsider to the establishment, his religion an enduring mark of difference.

Nevertheless, in assembling an art collection that ran the gamut from Picasso to Pacchiarotti, Derain to Murillo, D’Arcy announced, as Jane Stevenson put it, “that Jesuits were, within an Oxonian sense of the term, civilized.” Campion Hall represented





A painted chapel at Campion Hall by Charles Mahoney resituates the life of the Madonna in a walled garden in 1930s England.

a legitimate alternative to the conservative Anglican traditions espoused by the university as a whole.

Much of the artwork collected by D'Arcy remains at Campion Hall, supplemented by acquisitions in the same aesthetic spirit, testifying to the internationalism of the Society of Jesus and the importance of beauty in attempting to grasp the divine. Paintings like Cigoli's brooding, baroque "Lamentation" become a visual prompt through which ecumenical dialogue with the Church of England can take place. The art is passed by undergraduate and graduate students on their way to tutorials, or to a lecture, or even for lunch, communing, con-

sciously or not, with the chipped but ardent sculpture of St. Ignatius, his face ineffably peaceful, hand forever raised in benediction.

The art has become embedded into the daily life of Campion Hall, exposing an international group of students to a baroque visual culture, reminding them of an old knowledge, that England was not always thus, that its Protestantism was a political choice and that the suppression of Catholicism was equally a conscious, planned-out program, with centuries-long repercussions.

In Campion Hall, Father Martin D'Arcy created a powerful vision of Catholic values and British identity in

continuity with both the nation's and the church's history. As Britain faces a reckoning with its own identity in the 21st century, it would do well to remember its Catholic, continental and transnational past represented by Campion Hall.

Altair Brandon-Salmon is the former assistant curator at Campion Hall. He is currently a master's student in the history of art at Christ Church, Oxford.

Pietà

By Atar Hadari

His cries quieted eventually
like ants disappearing down an ant-hole,
he'd woken on the underground
from a passion of outstretched on his mother's lap sleeping—
the bottle had already dropped
and she bent so his hand held stretched out
almost touched the floor,
but it missed and she picked the bottle up
where it rattled on the train floor before it stopped,
and he didn't wake only the copper lights
with ornamental shadows made him rise
outstretched, the bone-buttons bowed on his duffel coat
and his lower midriff bared where the T-shirt rode
up on his mother's tartan pants
and shining patent leather boots: he screamed, he screamed
and she rocked him and comforted,
eventually the ants fled
but Judas came with his rifling hands
and before sleep came again
made sure they got off and proceeded round
the station through a brilliant tunnel
and some stairs rising toward the stars.

Atar Hadari's *Songs From Bialik: Selected Poems of H. N. Bialik* (Syracuse University Press) was a finalist for the American Literary Translators' Association Award. His translation *Lives of the Dead: Poems of Hanoch Levin*, published by Arc Publications in 2018, won an award from PEN Translates.



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Time's a-wastin'

By Nick Ripatrazone

"Anyone can do any amount of work," wrote the American humorist Robert Benchley, "provided it isn't the work he is supposed to be doing at that moment." Procrastination is an act of will, the choice to postpone what needs to be done. We are lying to ourselves when we procrastinate—yet everybody does it. For some, procrastination is endemic to creation. For others, it is an act of survival.

Two new books consider our tendency to tune out, slow down and postpone the inevitable. **The Art of the Wasted Day**, by Patricia Hampl (Viking, 288p \$26) and **Soon: An Overdue History of Procrastination**, by Andrew Santella (Dey Street Books, 208p \$25.99) are very different books. Santella's is not a self-help book for procrastinators. He offers no balms and no solutions. He is a proud time-waster, and he is not about to stop: "My aim wasn't to end my habit but to justify it, to excuse it." *Soon* is peppered with historical anecdotes. Santella considers why contemporary culture detests procrastination, when so many great artists and in-

ventors—from Leonardo da Vinci to Frank Lloyd Wright—were chronic procrastinators. Even Moses took his time, not to mention St. Augustine's dictum: "Not yet."

Hampl, a novelist and poet, has written a book about leisure. Her patron saint is the essayist Michel de Montaigne, who "found his vocation early, accompanied by music plucked on sheep gut as he went up and down the staircase of his father's cold house." She says Montaigne understood "the value of being sluggish, lax, drowsy." Her book is a paean to solitude and moving slowly, and a rejection of organization and to-do lists, actions "meant to sweep away all the dumb tasks of the day so that Real Life can be lived."

Procrastination and leisure are not exactly the same thing—Hampl says: "Leisure isn't simply idleness, and it isn't simply an exhausted pause before shouldering the next task"—but the two books complement each other nicely. Both procrastination and leisure are functions of time; we cannot always financially or emotionally afford to pro-

crastinate or relax, but they offer us some control. We get to slow down the rush of existence and tread water. We know it won't last forever, but sometimes delusion can be so comforting.

The ideal audience for *Soon* is writers and artists, those who must create under pressure and see procrastination as an inevitable element of life. Procrastinators, Santella explains, "attempt to justify their delay with elaborate rationalizations." Such a narrative approach can risk becoming repetitive, but Santella settles into a nice mixture of personal anecdote, philosophical commentary and curious historical notes. My favorite procrastinator, Edgar Allan Poe, used to pass the time with Jesuits in the Bronx—eating dinner and playing cards. They "never said a word about religion."

Santella alludes to his Catholic childhood throughout the book—with the type of facetious worry that Catholics can appreciate: "The Christian tradition's antipathy to procrastination is rooted in the desire for eternal life—and the fear that if we put off salvation too long, untimely

◀ Two new books prompt the question:
Where do procrastination and leisure converge?

death will intervene and damn us to unending torment.”

St. Expeditus is the patron saint of procrastinators. According to legend, in fourth-century Armenia, a Roman centurion planned to convert to Christianity but met a talking crow who tried to convince him to wait. “Realizing that the crow was, in fact, the Devil in avian form arrived to tempt him, the centurion...did something remarkable. He stomped the talking bird to death.” St. Expeditus is artistically rendered as holding a cross and stepping on the felled crow. “The vanquished bird holds in his beak a scroll bearing the Latin word for tomorrow, CRAS, the root of the English word ‘procrastination’ and a close approximation of the sound of a crow’s distinctive croak. The cross Expeditus holds in his portraits reads HODIE—Latin for ‘today.’”

This odd saint—who most likely never lived—makes Santella think about the relationship between time, spirituality and procrastination. “In my Catholic grade school,” he writes, “brilliance was tolerated, but punctuality revered. Nothing was more important than being on time.” In that parochial world, the “classroom clock was almost always positioned, not coincidentally, just below the crucifix that watched over us.”

We have only so much time on this earth, so procrastination can almost appear sinful. And once upon a time, it did. Hampl’s book begins in 1953. She is 7 years old, a daydreamer. “When you close your eyes, you see and hear things you didn’t notice before, though they must have been there all along. It’s not that you make things up—you notice things.” Hampl is a writer of

gorgeous sentences, and *The Art of the Wasted Day* allows her syntax to ride the routes of her thoughts. Her mom hates her habit of getting lost in the clouds, but Hampl knows that “daydreaming doesn’t make things up. It sees things. Claims things, twirls them around, takes a good look. Possesses them. Embraces them. Makes something of them. Makes sense. Or music. How restful it is, how full of motion. My first paradox.”

Young Hampl is about to make her first confession, but she is scared to learn that daydreaming is listed as a sin in her Baltimore Catechism. In hindsight, it makes a little (lighthearted) sense: When you daydream, you are “lolling under the filtered light of heaven. You possess everything that passes through the mind. It’s divinity. That must be the sweetness. That must be the sin.”

Hampl is not quite a procrastinator. Whereas Santella wanted his to-do lists “to go on forever—and me, too, if possible,” Hampl conceived of lists as generative, essential to her being. “Whole decades can go this way,” she reflects, “not just in domestic detail, but awash in the brackish flotsam of endeavor, failure and success, responsibility and reward.” On one hand, she wishes to reprimand herself. A few pages later, though, she worries that her hurried and harried existence sped by: “the sense of life being littered rather than lived.”

She thinks back, with admiration, to the nuns of her youth: “We caught a glimpse of their mysterious lives behind the filmy black curtain dividing the cloister from our side of the chapel. Enclosure, silence, chanted Latin murmurings. It was romantic and dead serious.” The nuns were away

from the world, “There was the sense that precisely because they weren’t out there they saw it all. Observation was not an act of experience, but of the imagination.”

Observation as imagination is what brings Hampl back to Montaigne. She is a pilgrim and travels to southwestern France to visit his infamous tower, where he wrote much of his work. She is devoted to him and for good reason. Hampl says, “words are partly thoughts, but mostly they’re music, deep down,” which sounds like Montaigne’s description of his own literary approach as “meddling with writing.”

He meddled in that tower, which includes a chapel below his “shrine-like cavern.” She appreciates how Montaigne “built liturgy into his privacy.... He was a skeptic—and also a believer. He bridged the gap. He lived above with his books in the unheated tower, and he tended, faithfully, the rituals down there in the candlelit dark where mystery abided.”

That is where procrastination and leisure converge: a place of mystery. Much of Hampl’s book is wistful, but there is an elegiac strain. Her husband died in 2015. She longs for him. He was her reader for so many years. There is a refrain in the book of holding “his beautiful hand,” which is now “dust.” Her past conversations with him are threaded with her present pilgrimages. Leisure, contemplation, and perhaps even procrastination might not be able to stop time, but in their own curious ways, they can hold back despair.

Nick Ripatrzone has written for *Rolling Stone*, *The Atlantic*, *The Paris Review* and *Esquire*.



The Big Fella Babe Ruth and the World He Created

By Jane Leavy
Harper
560p \$32.50

Larger than life

An argument could be made that the storied baseball stadium on 161st Street in the Bronx is not “the house that Ruth built,” but instead the house the Xaverian Brothers built. As Jane Leavy notes in her sprawling new biography, it was while a young George Herman Ruth was living at St. Mary’s Industrial School in Baltimore that the Sultan of Swat fell under the spell of a baseball-loving Xaverian brother named Martin Leo Boutilier, known to the boys as “Brother Matt.”

“Ruth would credit Brother Matt for his pigeon-toed gait and his uppercut swing—saying he was born as a hitter the first day he saw [Brother Matt] hit a ball,” writes Leavy. Before he died in 1948, at the age of just 53, Ruth fondly recalled Brother Matt “teaching me how to play ball—and how to think.” That’s not exactly a compliment, given the more tempestuous moments of Ruth’s life (as well as Brother Matt’s, it turns out), all of which Leavy colorfully documents.

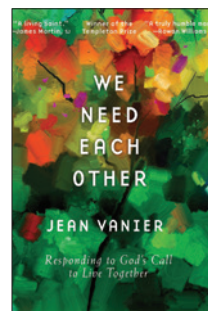
Right up front, Leavy cites the Jesuit maxim: “Give me the child for the first seven years and I’ll give you the man.” Slightly disappointing, then, that she makes rather quick work of numerous fascinating

figures from St. Mary’s. Leavy’s main focus is a cross-country barnstorming tour Ruth and his fellow Yankees slugger Lou Gehrig embarked upon in the autumn of 1927, after what was arguably Ruth’s and the Yankees’ greatest year. From the Jersey Shore to L.A., Ruth dazzled big crowds, playing exhibition games against local talent as well as (controversially) Negro Leagues stars. Leavy then steps back to chronicle Ruth’s life and times, with a heavy emphasis not only on the culture Ruth played in, but the ways he radically altered that culture.

Leavy’s book (like other Ruth bios) could have taken a broader look at how St. Mary’s shaped this enormous public figure who maintained an intriguing relationship with Catholicism throughout his life. Ruth’s agent, Leavy notes, convinced Ruth to campaign for Al Smith in 1928, yet there is no mention of what Ruth may have thought about the election’s anti-Catholic hysteria.

Ultimately, *The Big Fella* is very much like its subject: ambitious, entertaining and always willing to swing for the fences.

Tom Deignan, a contributor to the recent book *Nine Irish Lives*, has written about books for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The National Catholic Reporter*.



We Need Each Other

By Jean Vanier
Paraclete Press
144p \$19.99

In this together

Jean Vanier’s new book, *We Need Each Other*, is classic Vanier. Longtime readers of the writings of this revered spiritual master and prophetic voice will recognize many of the lessons and anecdotes that Vanier shares from his other works. Nevertheless, his simple lessons on humility and Christian love always bear repeating.

In 1964 Jean Vanier founded L’Arche—a group of communities in which disabled and able-bodied people live together. After encountering inhumane living conditions in a French mental institution, he took in two patients from that institution and began to care for them himself, forming the first L’Arche community. There are now more than 150 such communities around the world. Vanier still lives in the original L’Arche community in Trosly-Breuil, France, where the community that he cared for over more than 50 years now cares for him.

We Need Each Other, published in honor of Vanier’s 90th birthday, is adapted from a retreat he gave in Kenya in 2008. The book combines Scripture reflections with stories from Vanier’s life and anecdotes about the disabled people and their families with whom he has worked

and lived. Each story ends with a variation on the same lesson: God is just as needy and hurt as we are, and we come in contact with God through others, no matter their disability, poverty, nationality, religion or anything else that might estrange us.

“In reality, we need each other;” Vanier writes. “We need to touch our wounds and keep the vision. I am wounded. I need help from my community. I need help from Jesus, because I cannot do it on my own.”

This small book draws the reader, who becomes a retreatant, into reflection with succinct yet probing questions: What are you looking for? Have you met Jesus? Is healing possible? Vanier helps the reader first to acknowledge and explore his or her own weakness and then to bring that weakness to God and one’s community for healing through acts of love.

Colleen Dulle, *assistant producer of audio and video at America Media.*
Twitter: @ColleenDulle.



The Incomplete Book of Running
By Peter Sagal
Simon & Schuster
185p \$27

Running to stand still

When I was 7 years old, I ran about a mile around my elementary school’s track. I liked it, so I have been running ever since. A lot of people have asked me: How can I make myself like running? I have never known how to answer this question, but Peter Sagal does. No need to start with a mile, just try running to the end of your street at first, Sagal advises in *The Incomplete Book of Running*. Get hooked through little victories.

Sagal, the host of the weekly N.P.R. news quiz “Wait Wait... Don’t Tell Me!” and 14-time marathoner, has many nuggets of running wisdom. But *The Incomplete Book of Running* is more than a guidebook. There are many sources for running wisdom and race stories but none as funny as Sagal and few as spiritual.

The book opens with Sagal narrating his decision to serve as a running guide for a visually impaired runner in the Boston Marathon in 2013—Sagal’s ploy to distract himself from his messy divorce. They finished the race shortly before the bombs exploded. Sagal grapples with the tragedy that missed him by about 100 yards and with feeling unneeded by his family. He writes about having body image issues and anorexia

as a teenager, something rarely discussed by men.

Sagal knows what it is to run away from problems, to need to be needed, and how much can be achieved through stubborn persistence. He also knows where all the public restrooms within four miles of his house are. If you want more details about Sagal’s bowel habits, you should buy *The Incomplete Book of Running*. If you do not, you should buy *The Incomplete Book of Running* and skip Chapter 6.

Sagal’s self-reckoning might be serious, but it is not somber. He dabbles in Kantian morality and whether the categorical imperative applies to “bandit” runners (those who enter a race without registering or paying). He also writes about running for charity in boxer briefs that say “KNICKERS OF GLORY” on the butt. His writing is entertaining, even if your ideal run is no run. That is because, in Sagal’s book, writing about running is inseparable from being honest about the human needs we all have.

Emma Winters, *Joseph A. O’Hare Fellow.*
Twitter: @emwinters1.



Full book reviews at
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From a Palestinian rocker, love songs and protest anthems

By Eloise Blondiau

"I feel art shouldn't only be entertainment," says Rasha Nahas.

When she is on stage, Rasha Nahas's wiry frame splays like a bird on the cusp of take off, her swoop of curls falling forward. "Myself, I am a desert torn," the 22-year-old singer-songwriter declares, accompanied by her electric guitar. "I was born on a mountain by the sea." Ms. Nahas is performing solo to a cross-legged audience in Berlin at a Sofar Sounds event, which hosts surprise performances in secret venues across the world.

A Palestinian artist who lives and performs in Berlin, Ms. Nahas is from the Mediterranean city of Haifa, where she was trained as a classical guitarist before venturing into rock. Hailed by *The Guardian* as having the "theatricality of Weimar cabaret with

added violins and rockabilly," Ms. Nahas is now in the process of making her first album, which she is self-producing and crowdfunding with help from Palestinian and European fans.

Although she still writes in Arabic, her native tongue, Ms. Nahas's upcoming album is in English. This is partly because she wants a wider audience to hear her music and also because she says that is how the songs come to her. "I am not assuming that everyone speaks English," she said, "but I want people who are not only Arabic speakers to have access to my music."

But Ms. Nahas first found an audience with a stirring original song in Arabic, "Meen Bint Sgheeri" ("Who's a Little Girl"), which she performed for a YouTube series called "Indigenous

Sessions," a project that highlights local musicians in Palestine. In the video, a fresh-faced Ms. Nahas showcases her classical guitar techniques (she never uses a guitar pick, even when playing the electric guitar). "Meen Bint Sgheeri" has a rolling, liquid quality that comes naturally to Arabic, with Ms. Nahas singing run-on lines punctuated by the guitar. "This is a funny way to say it," Ms. Nahas said, but in Arabic "sometimes the words roll on the rhythm. In English they're square, and in Arabic they're more round."

Ms. Nahas's sound has sharpened as a result of writing and performing in English, and it has also affected her lyric composition. "In Arabic there are hundreds and thousands of ways to say you love somebody," Ms. Nahas

A boy's poverty-stricken life in Beirut

said, referring not only to the vast vocabulary of Arabic but also the various different dialects and the difference between spoken and written Arabic. By contrast, in English “it’s hard to describe emotions without sounding like a hundred other different songs.”

In the past two years, Ms. Nahas’s sound has taken a further twist. It is experimental, a little weird or “rude” as Ms. Nahas said. “The Fall,” a song released last year, could not be further from “Meen Bint Sgheeri.” Ms. Nahas’s voice has grown, and she has greater control of it in the glissando-filled song.

Ms. Nahas’s newly assembled band, which includes a cellist, a violinist and a drummer, are helping her bring to life what she broadly calls rock songs, steered by electric guitar and backed by string arrangements. Ms. Nahas plans for her album to include protest songs, love ballads and character-driven narratives.

“With the European audience, I’m somehow bringing something very familiar, in terms of like a band onstage playing rock and roll,” Ms. Nahas said. “But it is very much influenced by who I am, and the story I bring with me being a woman in exile, being a Palestinian artist born in Haifa.” Ms. Nahas describes her exile as chosen, because she decided to leave Haifa for Berlin so she could advance her music career and she can return home.

For Ms. Nahas, it is not enough to make music that is beautiful. “I feel art shouldn’t only be entertainment,” Ms. Nahas said. “Music has this power to open people’s hearts, and I feel like when I open people’s hearts, I want to leave some questions there.”

Eloise Blondiau is a producer at America Media.

Poverty is the uncredited lead character in “Capernaum,” one of the year’s more remarkable movies and one with many ancestors: the Italian neo-realism of De Sica and Rossellini, the faux-vérité of Abbas Kiarostami and possibly even Carl Dreyer’s “Joan of Arc”—the human face being the film’s most eloquent device, amid the supreme chaos (or “capernaum”) of current-day Beirut.

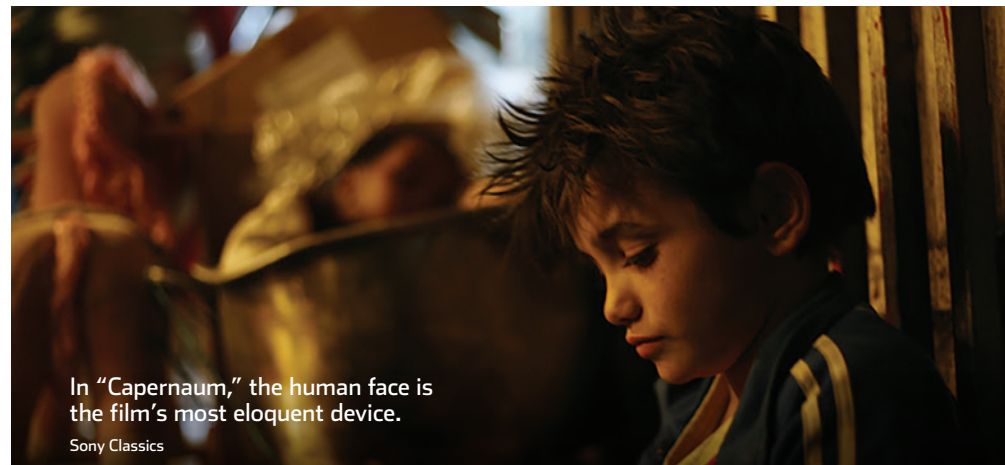
The dominant face belongs to Zain (Zain al Rafeea), a tough, savvy street kid whom we first meet as he is being examined by a police physician. Zain looks like a first-grader; the doctor says he is 12. It is the first of many appalling details that flow like a river of recriminations throughout “Capernaum,” which is bookended by Zain’s court case. He has been accused of stabbing someone. Who? The likely candidates multiply as the story unfolds. Meanwhile, Zain has his own complaint to file: He wants to sue his useless parents. Why? For having allowed him to be born.

Viewers are thereby hooked, and the Lebanese director Nadine Labaki keeps them that way throughout a picaresque journey through the streets and hovels and storefronts and sordid domestic dramas that provide her film’s physiology. With few exceptions, the movie is told in flashback and portrays Zain’s hardscrabble existence.

Labaki has cast her film with what are usually called “non-actors” but who are nevertheless peerless here as conveyers of charity amid misery, nobility amid squalor. They also, apparently, have back stories as agonizing as those of the characters they play, including Yordanos Shiferaw, who plays Rahil, the Ethiopian immigrant whose permit has expired and who constantly fears deportation as she cares for—and hides—her 18-month-old, Yonas. Shiferaw herself was a displaced person, and in “Capernaum” she plays one scrambling to find the money for a counterfeit ID from the predatory document forger who also wants to traffic her son.

Money may be the root of all evil, but lack of it is the lifeblood of predatory criminality and bureaucratic indifference. The poor will always be with us, Jesus said, but they will also always be victims, as Labaki and her film make clear, generating drama high and low and even an occasional bit of dark humor. Zain, in one of his more desperate moments, tries to pass himself off as a Syrian refugee so a relief organization will give him milk and food for Yonas. It’s a wry moment but hardly the only one in “Capernaum.”

John Anderson is a television critic for *The Wall Street Journal*.



In “Capernaum,” the human face is the film’s most eloquent device.

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Speak Boldly!

Readings: Neh 8:2-10, Ps 19, 1 Cor 12:12-30, Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is foremost a prophet. God had a message for human society, and Jesus was its herald. Luke relates many of the same miracles one finds in Matthew and Mark, but the most memorable parts of his Gospel are actually not the actions of Jesus but his words. Some of these are words of teaching, like the great parables of the good Samaritan or the prodigal son. Some of these are words of challenge, like those he spoke to Zacchaeus and Martha, the sister of Mary.

In Luke's mind, Jesus did not build God's kingdom so much as point out its arrival. The kingdom was already in place, surrounding and penetrating every person, but people had somehow missed it. Anxieties, ego-driven passions, the "normalness" of everyday experience all distracted attention from the quiet but inexorable divine action all around them. The kingdom of God that Jesus revealed was hidden in plain sight.

The essential component of Jesus' messianic mission was to draw attention to this new reality. Luke found a foreshadowing of this in the prophecy of Isaiah, which Jesus quotes in this Sunday's Gospel. Liberty for captives and healing for the broken in body and spirit were the distant goal; the first step was to proclaim that such things were even possible. For many, faith was a dying ember, inspiring only the faintest wisp of hope. Jesus recognized quickly that his first responsibility was to reignite that faith in the hearts of many. He did this by proclaiming a simple message: God was still at work and was still committed to the plans he had revealed centuries before.

Jesus proclaimed this message with boldness, and it led to the transformation of many. This boldness fascinated Luke, who identified it as key to the ministry of both Jesus and the Apostles. Speaking the good news with boldness did reignite the faith of many. Simply reminding people of God's ancient promises aroused excitement and hope. In many of Luke's miracle accounts, this burgeoning faith was the necessary prerequisite for the healing or deliverance that followed.

'That you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.' (Lk 1:4)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How do you proclaim God's promises with boldness?

How does your own faith inspire the faith of others?

One should be cautious not to oversimplify. Alleviating poverty and restoring freedom require more than a mere change in perspective. Nonetheless, any solution does require a transformation of mind as a first step. These moments of conversion can be profoundly exciting, and this excitement can open a door for divine grace. Jesus' prophetic boldness was the spark that kindled the healing and liberation Isaiah foretold.

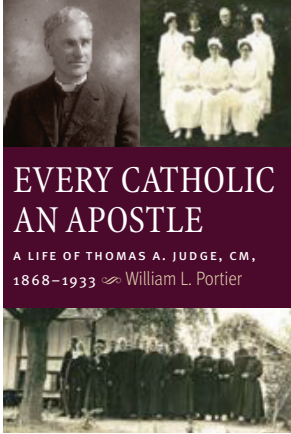
The right word at the right moment can change a life. The right response to a devastating crisis can renew an entire world. If this Sunday's Gospel reading offers any challenge to today's disciples, it is to remember the power of bold speech. Although we may need new words to communicate the message, Jesus' own experience shows us that God's ancient promises have an enduring power to inspire faith and excite hope. Divine grace remains active, but it requires someone with a living faith to be fully effective. Inspiring that faith is the task of those who take up the mission of Christ. The simple reminder that God is at work can transform the lives of many.

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

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The Fall and Rise of Many

Readings: Jer 1:4-19, Ps 71, 1 Cor 12:31-13:13, Lk 4:21-30

One of the themes that Luke follows throughout his writings is the idea of the “great reversal.” The arrival of Jesus, Luke thought, would topple kings, confuse the proud and lift up the lowly. As Simeon prophesied to Joseph and Mary, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel” (Lk 3:34). In short, many of those in the best position to recognize the messiah’s arrival ended up resisting him, whereas those who lacked the knowledge or status to appreciate Jesus’ significance believed in and followed him whenever they encountered him.

The reasons for the “great reversal” were mysterious, but Luke found it in many places. People learned in the prophecies of Israel rejected Christ, whereas the unlettered poor and literate but irreligious types, like tax collectors, appreciated his preaching (Lk 7:29-30). Jesus offended guardians of Jewish national identity but attracted Gentiles (compare Lk 20:19-26 with Lk 7:2-10). In this Sunday’s Gospel, those who had known Jesus since early childhood threatened to kill him, even after residents of Capernaum, Jesus’ adult home, flocked to him for healing.

It is not explicit in Luke’s account why the residents of Nazareth turned on Jesus, but it certainly had something

to do with his bold speech. Mark’s version of these events makes that plain, “Where did this man get all this? Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary?... And they took offense at him” (Mk 6:2-3). Luke compresses this controversy into a subtle phrase that the Lectionary renders “They also asked, ‘Isn’t this the son of Joseph?’” The surprise they experienced at his gracious words quickly turned sour when they considered the man they thought they knew. Jesus was not allowed to speak about himself or about God with such boldness.

This is the nature of Jesus’ prophetic message in Luke’s Gospel. Jesus’ words had power. Those who encountered Jesus for the first time, like the residents of Capernaum, found his message fresh, even exhilarating. Those who thought they knew him, like his childhood neighbors at Nazareth, found his message impossible to take seriously. No one with Jesus’ background, they thought, could preach authentically the words they heard from his mouth. Similarly, those who did not know Jesus but studied prophecies of the coming messiah also found him preposterous. Leaders of the community, like the scribes and Pharisees, heard the power of his words and saw his mighty deeds but could not accept that he was the one Israel had awaited for centuries.

Luke wrote this passage in part as a warning to disciples of every age. We can come to think that we know all we need to know about Christ’s message, the extent of his power and the effects of his love. When divine grace draws us into a deeper understanding of the Gospel, that invitation can be disruptive. We can reject what we only think we understand, as did the citizens of Nazareth, or we can accept the mystery, as did the citizens of Capernaum, several of whom became apostles and followed Jesus for the rest of his days.

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

They also asked, ‘Isn’t this the son of Joseph?’ (Lk 4:22)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Have you ever found Jesus’ message impossible to believe?

How did you come to accept it?

Have you ever spoken words on Christ’s behalf that caused others to reject you?

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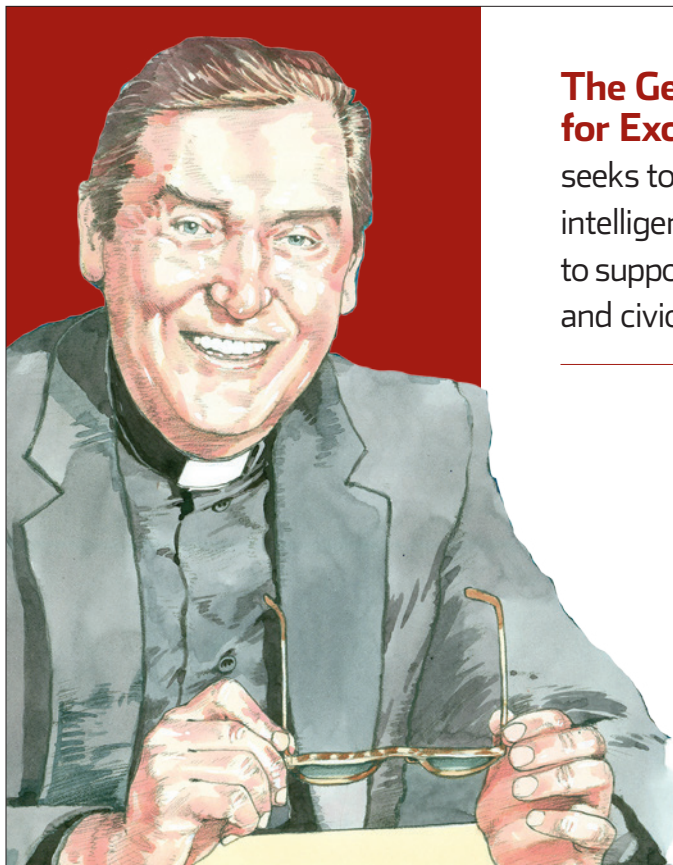
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To Support and Defend

The fight against extremism is not over

By Tom Kean



In the 17 years since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, U.S. law enforcement has prevented another large-scale terrorist attack on the homeland. The militaries of the United States and its allies have relentlessly pursued terrorists overseas, killing Osama bin Laden and dismantling the Islamic State. Despite these achievements, the global struggle against extremism is not over. In the past five years, over 150,000 people have been killed in terrorist attacks, six times the number killed in the five years following Sept. 11. Islamist militants have established a presence in more places than ever before and govern territory in close to a dozen countries across the Middle East and Africa.

Fourteen years after the 9/11 Commission that I chaired issued its final report, Congress has tasked the U.S. Institute of Peace with developing a plan to “prevent the underlying causes of extremism” in fragile states in Africa and the Middle East. I, along with the former U.S. Representative Lee Hamilton, the vice chair of the commission, have agreed to lead this effort to fulfill the one unmet recommendation of the 9/11 Commission: to prevent the continued growth of Islamist terrorism. Terrorists cannot be defeated only by force. Rather, the United States needs a preventive strategy to mitigate the political, economic and social causes of extremism. This strategy contains four essential elements.

First, the United States needs to reorient current spending toward programs that address the underlying causes of extremism. The United States has already spent close to \$6 trillion fighting terrorism, the vast majority on military and law enforcement operations. The calls in the initial 9/11 Commission Report to confront the growth of extremism by expanding educational opportunities, fostering economic development and encouraging more open, tolerant societies have gone unheeded. Even in countries where extremists have established a presence, an overwhelming percentage of U.S. development spending goes to public health and disaster relief rather than programs that engage vulnerable youth, promote women’s leadership or empower civil society.

Second, the United States should prioritize targeted, locally owned programming, which shows promise in dissuading individuals from joining terrorist groups. In 2010, a U.S.-funded program in eastern Afghanistan recruited upstanding young men and gave them training and funding to design and implement projects that they—rather than foreign technocrats—thought would improve their community, like building dams or terraces. In areas where this program was implemented, insurgent strikes plummeted, even as attacks spiked across the rest of Afghanistan.

Third, the United States needs to better leverage the efforts of other donors. Geographic proximity and the migration crisis have caused European countries to commit billions to confront extremism in the Sahel. The Gulf States, too, are becoming increasingly active in efforts to curb extremism. Nevertheless, existing global efforts remain poorly coordinated and rarely follow best practices. The United States should become more active in global efforts to unite donors and recipients around a common agenda.

Finally, the United States needs to act with decisive leadership in a time of rising geopolitical uncertainty. Major global and regional powers, like China, Russia, the Gulf States, Turkey and Iran, are more active in the region than ever before, and growing strategic competition among them is a major cause of the recent rise in extremism. High-level diplomacy is needed to mitigate the potential for further outbreaks of conflict that extremists will exploit.

Implementing this preventive strategy will be hard and will take some time to bear fruit. But after 17 years of an approach that has created more terrorists than it has killed, the United States can ill afford to wait.

Tom Kean, former governor of New Jersey, served as the chairman of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission.

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