America

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THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

When the Culture Wars Came to Germany

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One Side Story

"Something's comin', something good." That's what the posters in the subway say. "West Side Story," Arthur Laurents's 1957 musical, with music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, is returning to Broadway this winter. Previews begin in December. This incarnation of "West Side Story," a retelling of Shakespeare's story of Romeo and Juliet, "promises to be unusual," says The New York Times, especially "given the strong stylistic hand" of its director, the Belgian Ivo van Hove, as well as "the presence of the avant-garde choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker," who intends to diverge from Jerome Robbins's iconic choreography. The production also promises greater sensitivity to the original's racial and ethnic stereotypes, an approach more in keeping with contemporary mores.

That will be a tough balancing act. The conflict in "West Side Story" is driven by the love of a young man and woman on Manhattan's West Side: a beautiful and true love, but not one powerful enough to overcome the ethnic prejudice that structures their existence. Those ethnic differences, in other words, are what drives the conflict. Or do they? Interestingly enough, the original treatment for "West Side Story" was based on a different idea, according to the Broadway historian Robert Emmet Long. The original version featured "a Jewish boy and an Irish or Italian Catholic girl, who would be brought to grief by conflicts and hatreds fueled by ethnic or clan differences."

That became the story of Tony and Maria, who are Polish and Puerto Rican, respectively. The differences between these star-crossed lovers still prove unbridgeable, but in orienting the conflict around ethnicity, the authors give the characters the same religion. Tony and Maria are both Catholic. In fact, every member of both the Jets and the Sharks, the rival gangs who substitute for Shakespeare's Capulets and Montagues, are Catholic. It is a safe bet that even Officer Krupke is Catholic.

This got me thinking. While difference is what so often defines conflict, is that what creates it? There are big differences among people, differences of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality; differences between those who are thought to be in some way true or orthodox and those who are false and alien. Racism, sexism—these are real, destructive forces. But more often than not these days, I find myself circling around the idea that conflict is driven more by what we have in common. After all, the original conflict, that of Cain and Abel, was a fight between the sons of Adam and Eve. As brothers, the two could not have had more in common, yet one murdered the other.

Why? To put it in an old-fashioned way, their conflict was a consequence of the Fall, the original sin for which their parents were banished from Eden, the consequences of which we have in some mysterious way inherited. In a moment of confusion and decision, the story goes, human existence was transformed from an ideal experience of how much we are loved into a struggle over who among us is loved. It is a subtle but profound shift. Created in the image of the eternal God, who is love, every one of us possesses an infinite desire to love and to be loved. Yet we seek to quench that infinite desire with things that are finite. God said to Cain: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground." The ground. Ground is a finite thing—there is only so much of it, whether it represents the literal earth or other things, like money or power. The relative scarcity of ground is why we fight over it.

Scripture also reveals the flip side of that fundamental human reality. Ultimately, our infinite desire for love can be satisfied only by the one who alone is the infinite source of that desire. All violence flows in some way from a failure to understand that fact. That failure, in turn, causes us to panic, to sin. Christian revelation is a scandal because it definitively reveals the irrational futility of our constant struggle to attain that which is already freely given to us.

Tony and Maria glimpse that truth at the end of "West Side Story." They intuit that there is a place, a somewhere, a someone, who can satisfy this universal, primordial desire. They sing about it in their final scene: "There's a place for us/ Somewhere a place for us/ There's a time for us/ Someday there'll be a time for us."

There is a word for a force that transcends time and space, a force that sets us free from the pain of the here and now and heals our broken hearts through a power that is everywhere and eternal. It's called grace. Tony and Maria, as Catholics, might have used a related, more familiar word to describe something similar: a sacrament.

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

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Pope Francis visits the Akamasoa "Community of Good Friends" in Antananarivo, Madagascar, Sept. 8.

Cover: "Between Berlin and Rome" from the satirical magazine Kladderadatsch, May 16, 1875

Wikimedia

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The 10 greatest Catholic school films of all time

"Catholic schools are the perfect setting for a film. There are preset costumes with uniforms and habits, clear hierarchies and social orders—not to mention characters at the ripe spot in their lives, ready to come of age." This was the judgment of Ciaran Freeman, who spent last summer, after his year as an O'Hare fellow at America Media, combing through movies about Catholic schools and ranking them. The findings were published on America's website on Aug. 30. Since then, readers have written in to let Mr. Freeman know what films he overlooked in his top-10 ranking.

What film is missing from our list? Make a case for why it belongs.

"Heaven Help Us" This is a wonderfully acted coming of age story set in New York at the fictional St. Basil's academy, a strict Catholic school where the protagonist bonds with some unlikely allies, falls in love and comes to terms with and confronts what he (correctly) perceives as injustice coming from his peers, teachers and other adults. A beautifully nostalgic piece for anyone who attended Catholic school, especially in the 1970s or 1980s.
Mike Dunn
Arlington, Va.

"Wide Awake" The movie, written and directed by M. Night Shyamalan, is about the fifth grader Joshua Beal, who is searching for God after the death of his beloved grandfather. Rosie O'Donnell plays Sister Terry, a decidedly "modern" sister. She is a far stretch from the strict "nun-teachers" of the past. The film was panned by most critics but loved by those looking for spiritual values in film.
Sandra Rodemyer, B.V.M.
Urbandale, Iowa

"St. Ralph" is about a Catholic school teenager who hopes for a miracle to bring his mother back from a coma. He decides to try to win the Boston Marathon, which he figures should be a miracle deserving of such a reward. It captures the struggles of puberty and "fitting in" of adolescence and the power of faith. The priests are real people who are really concerned about how the main character survives his struggles.
Robert Grosch
Billings, Mont.

"Au Revoir les Enfants" Your list has a strong American bias. The biggest overseas absence is this film by Louis Malle. It is set in a French Carmelite boarding school in the winter of 1943-44 and deals with the themes of friendship, identity, charity, bravery and betrayal.
Cian Molloy
Wicklow, Ireland

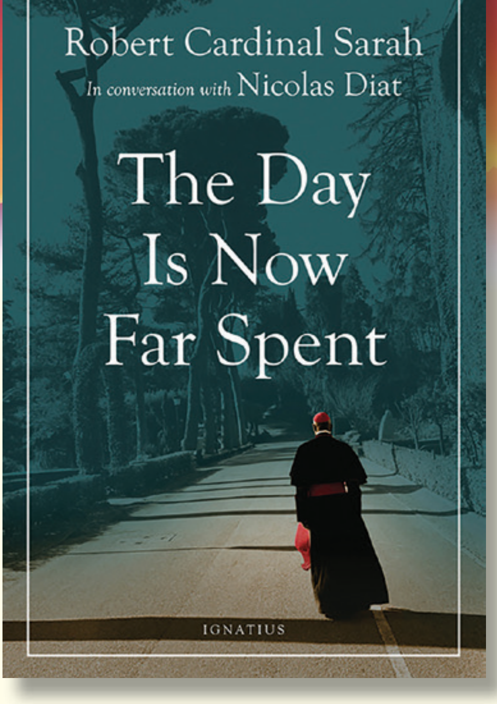
"Sister Act 2" A wonderful depiction of a dedicated, holy and passionate group of nuns who are shown as real people, who make a huge difference in the lives of a diverse group of inner-city kids.
Fred Donodeo
Olney, Md.

For all the drama that high school brings, the heightened theatrics that go with coming-of-age, Catholic school reminds us that we're just a small part in a much bigger whole. "Lady Bird" captures this truth beautifully. It is the greatest Catholic school movie of all time.

Ciaran Freeman
Former O'Hare fellow at America

Lady Bird (2017)

A Riveting Analysis of the Western Cultural Crisis



"Cardinal Sarah is a latter-day Christian prophet, and this book is his most urgent wake-up call yet to a West sleepwalking toward a paganized dystopia."
—**Sohrab Ahmari**
Author, *From Fire, by Water*

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—**Most Rev. Charles Chaput**
Archbishop of Philadelphia

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—**Raymond Arroyo**
NY Times Best-Selling Author
Host, *The World Over*

"A riveting account of the issues of our times. The Cardinal pulls no punches in offering the most cogent analysis of what ails us today."
—**Bill Donohue**
Author, *Common Sense Catholicism*

◆ THE DAY IS NOW FAR SPENT

Cardinal Robert Sarah *with* Nicolas Diat

In what he calls his "most important book", the best-selling author and brilliant Churchman analyzes the spiritual, moral, and political collapse of the Western world, concluding that "the decadence of our time has all the faces of mortal peril."

A cultural identity crisis is at the root of the problems facing Western societies. Cardinal Sarah says, "The West no longer knows who it is, because it no longer knows and does not want to know who made it, who established it, as it was and as it is. This self-suffocation naturally leads to a decadence that opens the path to new, barbaric civilizations." While making clear the gravity of our situation, he calls us to a renewal of devotion to Jesus Christ through prayer and the practice of virtue.

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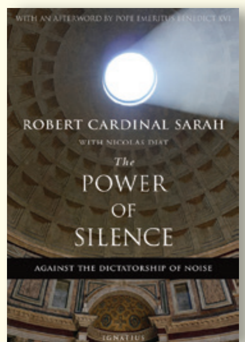

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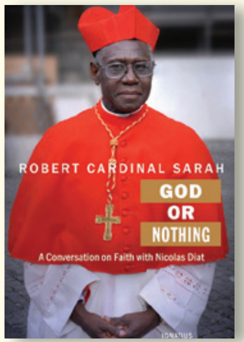

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Executions Will Not Stop Gun Violence.

Immediately after the mass shooting in El Paso on Aug. 3, President Trump spoke about adopting universal background checks for gun purchases. He later backed away from considering them after a phone call with the president of the National Rifle Association. The fact that universal background checks are widely popular with the American people, including those who favor gun ownership overall, seems to make no difference. A Washington Post-ABC News poll released this month found overwhelming support for both background checks and allowing authorities to take guns away from individuals who have been found by a judge to be a danger to themselves or others.

The Trump administration has spoken positively about "red flag" laws but has rejected background checks; it is also reported to be proposing legislation to make it easier to swiftly execute mass shooters. Despite the lack of evidence that the death penalty effectively deters any kind of murder, and despite arguments from gun-rights advocates that criminals will blithely ignore any proposed gun restrictions, somehow the threat of capital punishment is imagined to deter mass murderers—who often kill themselves or are killed by police in the course of committing their crimes. This proposal is nothing more than the desire for vengeance masquerading as policy.

The ongoing violence itself is shocking and depressing, but another grim facet of the plague of mass shootings in the United States is the way we have become inured to it. After Las Vegas in 2017 (58 dead, 422 wounded), after Parkland in 2018 (17 dead, 17 wounded) and after El Paso in 2019, the United States at least went through the motions of a debate on gun policy. But another gunman murdering seven people in Odessa, Tex., not even a month after El Paso, barely registered.

The Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit organization that charts gun violence in the United States, says there have been 275 mass shootings (which they define as any incident where four or more people, excluding the shooter, are shot or killed) in the country so far this year. In 2017, almost 40,000 people died because of firearms. That is more than 13 times the number who died in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Even as mass shootings continue to attract a high level of public attention and sympathy, the vast majority of gun-related deaths in this country, including suicides, take place within homes and families, most often by means of handguns. None of the proposals to curb gun violence that are realistic politically—with the possible exception of the red flag laws mentioned above—begin to address this deadly reality. And even those laws have faced opposition. In Colorado, a number of sheriffs pledged to refuse to enforce a state-level red flag law because they considered it unconstitutional.

Our collective inability to respond to the epidemic of gun violence in our country or even to one of its most tragic manifestations in mass shootings is a kind of spiritual paralysis. Both the sense of apathy following terrible news and the idea of countering violence with swift capital punishment are marks of desolation, a withdrawal from God marked by a lack of hope. At the same time, the resistance to even the most practical and simple reforms highlights a disordered attachment to guns and, even more basically, to violence as a means to power and security.

There are many questions about what policies will most effectively reduce mass shootings or gun violence overall and even more about what sort of reforms are politically and constitutionally possible. Yet it is clear that the United States has been trapped for too long in the lie that our government can do nothing to limit gun violence.

This lie and the apathy that it induces are part of the logic of sin and evidence of the evil spirit at work. Better laws alone will not solve the nation's gun violence problem, but in addition to the good they do as policy, they can also help us break through this moment of paralysis. We are not powerless in the face of suffering, nor are we limited to answering violence with violence.

Stay Focused on a 'Poor Church for the Poor'

Over the last week in Mozambique, Madagascar and Mauritius, Pope Francis celebrated Masses with almost 1.5 million people in total. Most of the people at those Masses were poor, and in Madagascar, many people spent the night sleeping outside in the field where Mass was celebrated in order to be present.

Throughout this papal visit to Africa, the universal church was invited to see what a "poor church for the poor" looks like. One striking example was Akamasoa, a cooperative project outside the capital of Madagascar through which the local people have built more than 3,000 brick homes, along with schools and clin-

ics, in what was formerly a garbage dump. In his remarks there, Francis described Akamasoa as “an expression of God’s presence in the midst of his people who are poor.”

That is what happened on the ground in Africa. But for much of the church in the rest of the world, this has been overshadowed by what happened on the plane. On the flight to Africa, Pope Francis described himself as “honored” by some attacks on him during an informal conversation with a French journalist who had written a book about opposition to Francis in the United States. In the press conference on the return flight to Rome, asked about whether these attacks could lead to schism, Francis said, “There is always schismatic action in the church” but that it comes from “an elitist state, from ideology detached from doctrine” and from detachment “from the people of God, from the faith of the people.”

Those words on the plane make for striking headlines and have led to plenty of arguments about how Francis has responded to those who have criticized and attacked him. But despite the sometimes obsessive attention given to ecclesial factionalism and infighting, on the ground, among the people of God, something far more hopeful was going on. The Gospel was preached and the good news was announced to those who are poor. Let’s keep our attention there.

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The science is in: Faith can be effective against adolescent depression

In 2016, nearly 45,000 people in the United States took their own lives, marking a 25 percent increase in suicide since 1999. In an especially alarming trend, the incidence of at least one major depressive episode per year among adolescents has risen by almost two-thirds over the past decade to reach 13.3 percent. Because many who experience mental health difficulties as adults first show symptoms during this developmental period, the World Health Organization lists mental health in adolescence as a top global health priority.

I have seen these trends in my own life as a professor. As a social scientist, I want to understand why. As a Christian, I wonder whether religion can help to protect adolescents from mental illness.

What do statistics tell us? The preponderance of evidence supports the idea that increased religiosity is associated with better mental health. (Religiosity is measured through surveys of how often individuals attend religious services or pray, as well as how much importance they attach to religion.) But it could be that adolescents with better mental health attend church regularly and have a more stable home environment. How do we know whether it is the church attendance or the stable home environment that is benefiting them?

If we could run an experiment to answer this question, we might randomly assign some adolescents to attend religious services or pray and others to avoid this activity; after a period of time, we could assess them for indicators of depression. But there are obvious ethical concerns with such an experiment. Instead, we can conduct what is called a quasi-experiment.

In collaboration with Sriya Iyer, an expert on the economics of religion at the University of Cambridge, and Anwen Zhang, an economist at the University of Glasgow, I investigated a unique data set, the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent to Adult Health, which includes rich questions on religiosity and depression, and we focused on the years when students were in high school.

When we look across grades in the same school, by chance students in some grades are exposed to more religious peers than students in other grades. This creates a sort of experiment. We know that students who by chance are exposed to religious peers become more religious themselves. So we can study religiosity coming solely from this random variation in the religiosity of school-grade peers. In other words, if certain adolescents become more religious as a result of exposure to religious peers, we can investigate whether these same adolescents subsequently show improved mental health.

So what do we find? Robust effects of religiosity on depression. Among the students in our quasi-experiment, a 1.0 standard deviation increase in religiosity decreased the probability of being at risk of moderate to severe depression by 11 percent. (This standard deviation change is equivalent to switching from not attending church or church youth activities to attending at least once a week.) These effects were strongest for the individuals who presented the most severe symptoms of depression. This finding offers a startling contrast to evidence on the effectiveness of cognitive-based therapy, which is generally less effective for the most depressed individuals, at least in the short term.

Crucially, we found that the benefits of religiosity with respect to depression are not driven merely by exposure to more religious peers in a school grade but instead by the individual student behavior. And we found that religiosity helps to buffer against some stressors, like worse physical health or the suicide of someone close. Furthermore, our research suggests that adolescents who have fewer support structures in place at home and in school experience more benefits from religiosity.

We see similar benefits from religiosity regardless of whether adolescents are active in other activities like school clubs or athletics. This suggests that these other youth activities, in which adolescents can find a sense of meaning and social belonging, do not appear to substitute for the benefits of religiosity for mental health.

Our research suggests that counselors who deal with children would be remiss to dismiss the potential beneficial effect of religiosity in treating clients. Given the growing body of evidence supporting a positive association between religion and mental health in many cases, research into religion is achieving growing acceptance in the field of psychiatry today, as in a variety of other fields, like economics. This is great news, as much remains to be discovered about how mental health and other important outcomes relate to faith and the inner spirit.

Jane Cooley Fruehwirth *is an associate professor in the Department of Economics at the University of North Carolina, in Chapel Hill, N.C. She is a co-author of "Religion and Depression in Adolescence," published in the Journal of Political Economy (June 2019).*

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In the Amazon region, Pope Francis sets the agenda for a new kind of synod

By Luke Hansen

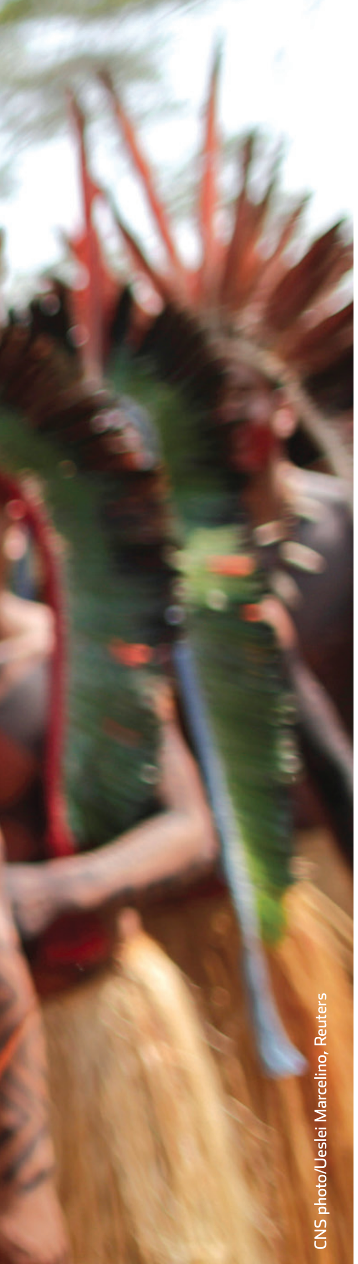
While other special assemblies of the Synod of Bishops have addressed particular geographical regions like Africa, Asia and Europe, the coming meeting on the Pan-Amazonian Region is the first one organized around a distinct ecological territory. It begins in Rome on Oct. 6 and will continue until Oct. 27.

"The synod is a son, a daughter, of 'Laudato Si','" the social encyclical published by Pope Francis in 2015, said Mauricio López in an interview with **America**. Mr. López is the executive secretary of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network, or Repam, and one of two non-bishops on the 18-member pre-synod council, the group responsible for preparing for the synod.

"The synod is not the end of the road," Mr. López said, "but the beginning of a new stage for the church in the Amazon, planting the seeds of *metanoia*, of radical conversion, from within, at this *kairos* moment."

The working document (*instrumentum laboris*), "Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology," reflects Amazonian approaches to theology and ways of thinking, frequently expressing the interconnectedness of all life and the indigenous peoples' quest for *buen vivir* ("good living" or "life in abundance"). The importance of the region's ecological richness and diversity is matched by its vulnerability to climate change caused by humans, according to the working document.

The territory suffers from high levels of environmental destruction and exploitation, and the people who in-



Shanenawa people in the indigenous village of Morada Nova near Feijo, Brazil, dance during a festival on Sept. 1 to celebrate nature and ask for an end to the burning of the Amazon.

habit the land are often victims of systemic human rights violations. In recent weeks, the Amazon rainforest has received increased attention as devastating fires burn at the highest rate since 2010.

The international community needs to "take serious measures to save the lungs of the world," said the executive council of the Latin American Bishops' Conference in a statement released on Aug. 22. "What happens to the Amazon is not just a local issue, but is of global reach. If the Amazon suffers, the world suffers."

The Pan-Amazonian region includes eight different countries and one French territory—Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana—with about 34 million inhabitants in the Amazon Basin, including three million indigenous people who belong to 390 ethnic groups.

Key themes in the working document are life, territory and *kairos*; migration and urbanization; challenges to families; and inculturation, interculturality and evangelization. The document, which is critical of old and new forms of colonialism in the region, calls for a prophetic church rooted in indigenous and Amazonian reality that can effectively respond to the pastoral needs of its communities in the proclamation of the Gospel.

Two cardinals, both outspoken opponents of Pope Francis, have voiced strong criticisms of the working document for claiming that the Amazonian territory is a "theological place" and a "particular source of God's revelation" and for suggesting that the church, in response to pastoral challenges in the region, might ordain older married men as priests or confer an "official ministry" on women.

Cardinal Walter Brandmüller, 90, of Germany, has written that the document "contradicts the binding teaching of the church in decisive points and thus has to be qualified as heretical." Cardinal Raymond Burke, the former archbishop of St. Louis and former prefect of the Apostolic Signatura, agreed with Cardinal Brandmüller that some "disturbing propositions" of the working document "portend an apostasy from the Catholic faith."

In response to these criticisms, Mr. López emphasized the substantial consultation administered by Repam among as many as 87,000 people over the course of two years who "actively participated in the discernment and shared their insights, their hopes, their fears and their cries." He added that "many are pastoral leaders, indigenous leaders and organizations on the ground." Ninety percent of the bishops of the Amazon region also participated in those sessions, he said.

The working document "has been discussed and approved by a very significant collegial structure that cannot be undermined by the criticism of a very few who have not been here," said Mr. López. "The voice of the people of God is there.

"Even though there might be some complex issues at stake, these documents are coming from the voice of the people, not some experts writing down their own ideas.

"We listened to the people who have devoted their lives—day in and day out—in the Amazonian region," Mr. López said. "I invite anyone who feels that this document does not express reality to come here and serve in one community for a few months, for a year, in a very isolated place, and to receive the gift of encounter. I am pretty sure that their ideas would change."

In the preparatory process for the synod, Mr. López said, the pope emphasized bringing the periphery to the center, to surface different voices and perspectives. "The pope has asked us to be courageous, to bring courageous proposals and to be truthful to what we hear from the people," he said.

The third part of the working document, which conveys the challenges and hopes of becoming a prophetic church with an "Amazon and missionary face," contains the boldest proposals related to church organization. The document asks that the eucharistic ritual be adapted to local cultures; calls for a change in the criteria "for select-

ing and preparing ministers authorized to celebrate the Eucharist"; asks to "reconsider the notion that exercise of jurisdiction (power of government) must be linked in all areas (sacramental, judicial, administrative) and in a permanent way to the sacrament of Holy Orders"; and asks for "new ministries to respond more effectively to the needs of the peoples of the Amazon."

The working document also calls upon the church to "promote vocations among indigenous men and women in order to respond to the need for pastoral and sacramental care," to study "the possibility of priestly ordination...for older people, preferably indigenous, respected and accepted by their community, even if they have an existing and stable family" and to "identify the type of official ministry that can be conferred on women, taking into account the central role they play today in the church in the Amazon."

During visits to the United States, Mr. López said he learned a lot from North Americans' consciousness of ecological issues and their sensitivity toward creation and spirituality.

"We can see how serious the American public takes this commitment, how much solidarity they express toward indigenous communities and what is happening in the global South," he said. "Americans understand how the Amazon is crucial to the future of the planet. The peripheries—the Amazon and the indigenous—can bring light to the North, but at the same time, the Amazon region can only have a future if things change in the North. We need one another."

Luke Hansen, S.J., *special correspondent. Twitter: @lukehansensj. Father Hansen will be joining Vatican correspondent Gerard O'Connell reporting for America Media from Rome during the synod.*

COUNTRIES OF THE PAN-AMAZONIAN REGION

AMAZON BASIN

VENEZUELA
Population: **29.4 million**
Catholics (Vatican est.): **27.6 million (94%)**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **6.1**
Poverty rate: **90%**
Major concern: **Political stability**

GUYANA
Population: **775,000**
Catholics (Vatican est.): **N/A**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **3.1**
Poverty rate: **36%**
Major concern: **Health care**

SURINAME
Population (synod est.): **572,000**
Catholics (synod est.): **117,000 (22%)**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **2.5**
Poverty rate: **70%**
Major concern: **Climate change**

COLOMBIA
Population: **48.9 million**
Catholics (Vatican est.): **46.1 million (94%)**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **7.1**
Poverty rate: **27%**
Major concern: **Transition from drug-based economy/peace process**

FRENCH GUIANA (FRENCH TERRITORY)
Population: **275,000**
Catholics (synod est.): **69,000 (25%)**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **1.4**
Poverty rate: **27%**
Major concern: **Neglect by French government**

ECUADOR
Population: **16.8 million**
Catholics (Vatican est.): **14.6 million (87%)**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **1**
Poverty rate: **23%**
Major concern: **Damage from extraction industries**

BRAZIL
Population: **207.8 million**
Catholics (Vatican est.): **174.9 million (90.8%)**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **58.4**
Poverty rate: **27%**
Major concern: **Deforestation/wildfires**

PERU
Population: **31.4 million**
Catholics (Vatican est.): **28.5 million (91%)**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **12.8**
Poverty rate: **22%**
Major concern: **Illegal mining**

BOLIVIA
Population: **11.2 million**
Catholics (Vatican est.): **9.6 million (86%)**
Percentage of Amazon basin: **7.7**
Poverty rate: **36%**
Major concern: **Rights for indigenous population**

Within the nine countries of the Pan-Amazonian region, there are about **three million indigenous people living in the Amazon Basin, representing about 390 different ethnic groups.**

The Amazon Biome is 2,586,884 square miles (6.7 million square kilometers). **The Amazon River is over 4,101 miles** (6,600 km).

Sources: Population data from the United Nations (2017) and the *Annuarium Statsticum Ecclesiae* (2017), via the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate; French Guiana and Suriname data from synod working document; Amazon Basin definition from "Land Use Status and Trends in Amazonia," Amazonia Security Agenda Project (2013); poverty rates (2007 -2018) from the 2019 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, United Nations Development Program, The Borgen Project.

Note: Other sources suggest significantly lower Catholic populations in the Pan-Amazonian region, as Protestant denominations make gains. For example, in 2013 the Pew Research Center estimated the Catholic population in Brazil to be only 123 million and 65 percent of the country's total population.

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Notre-Dame Cathedral restoration begins amid disagreements

Tourists peer through protection panels securing a perimeter around the Notre-Dame Cathedral in August.

Under a warm summer sun in August, a vast enclosure of scaffolding keeps much of the reconstruction work at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris hidden from curious onlookers. Seen from afar, not much has changed since April 15, when the cathedral's wooden attic, roof and spire collapsed in flames as the world watched aghast. While the current work focuses on strengthening its fire-damaged walls, different ideas about how to restore the cathedral have been circulating among church and state officials.

Msgr. Patrick Chauvet, the rector and archpriest of Notre-Dame, would like to restore the cathedral exactly as it was before the fire. That would mean recreating the great wooden attic, nicknamed "the forest," that was consumed in the blaze. The forest was a medieval engineering marvel built from more than 1,300 ancient oak trees.

"You don't put your ego in this," Monsignor Chauvet told **America**. "You are small and humble in front of this 900-year old building." For Monsignor Chauvet, the work of the original cathedral builders must be respected.

Christophe Girard, Paris' deputy mayor for culture, agrees. "There are so many contemporary architectural projects around the world already, so common. Let's leave Notre-Dame alone," he said. Both men are determined to comply with the goal of getting most of the restoration done within five years, a deadline set by President Emmanuel Macron and approved by the French legislative assembly last July.

Parisians hold Notre-Dame close to their hearts, of course, and some object to the hurried schedule. Macha du Bourblanc, an author at the French Catholic magazine Le Rouge et le Noir told **America** that the restoration should be "a work of patience, affection and an awareness of a job well done; it's not something industrial. How we can [rebuild] something in five years that has taken hundreds of years to be built?"

Ms. du Bourblanc also looks forward to seeing Notre-Dame as it was before the fire, while respecting modern-day ecological norms. "We could, for example, paint metal beams to give it a wooden appearance and so avoid disfiguring the cathedral," she said.

Plans to rebuild the forest with wood have provoked criticism at a time when comparisons between the Amazon fires and the Notre-Dame fire have been made. To some commentators, the rush of donations to rebuild the cathedral has been unseemly when compared to the apparent lack of public interest in raising money to suppress fires raging in the Amazon in August.

Charles Delhez, S.J., a Belgian sociologist, initially thought the cathedral should be rebuilt to its previous form for the sake of art, history and nostalgia. But he has changed his mind.

"Sentimentally, I would say, 'Yes,' for the oak forest; but it was my own brother who made me think when he told me, 'I won't give a penny to rebuild the cathedral,'" he said. Father Delhez now believes that there are more urgent priorities to be addressed, like poverty around the world and combating the fires in the Amazon.

"If we rebuild, we should do so modestly," he said. "Modestly means not spending large sums of money on it."

Without undermining the important symbolic nature of the cathedral, Father Delhez believes that "after seeing these flames in the Amazon forest," he said, "we need to be aware of our blindness" to the great emergencies of our time.

"Is there a genius out there who would find a way to restore the cathedral in a modest way, but still save its beauty and symbolism?" he wondered.

Melissa Vida, *Brussels correspondent.*
Twitter: @MelissaVidaa.

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In another journey to Africa, Pope Francis brings hope to the periphery

On his fourth journey to Africa in September, Pope Francis visited Mozambique and Madagascar—two of the world's poorest countries—and Mauritius, a tourist resort and tax haven threatened by rising sea levels. He was given a warm welcome by government authorities, the church and the people in each of these nations on the "periphery" of the universal church.

Everywhere large crowds turned out to cheer him and receive his blessing. Francis took five planes and travelled 12,000 miles on this physically demanding journey, but he is in good health, draws energy from crowds and clearly enjoyed every moment. He likes Africa and rejoiced at its young population—50 percent are under 18 in Mozambique and Madagascar—declaring them "the future of society and of the church."

He flew into Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, "to sow the seeds of hope, peace and reconciliation" among its 30 million people. Since independence in 1975, the people of Mozambique have suffered greatly from a civil war (1977 to 1992), a resurgence of conflict between 2013 and 2018, and two devastating cyclones this year.

Francis came to support a new peace accord signed in August, declaring it "a triumph for the country." He knows that if peace endures, there is a better chance of greatly reducing poverty. Mozambique is rich in mineral and natural gas resources. The pope appealed to both government and rebel opposition leaders to work together for the common good. He called on Catholics to accompany the peace process and encouraged young people from different religious backgrounds to develop "social friendships" and build a peaceful future.

The eradication of poverty was at the heart of his message in Madagascar, the world's fourth largest island and an eco-hotspot, renowned for its multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious population of 27 million people. Poverty is widespread here, and the pope could see evidence of it everywhere.

He received an ecstatic welcome from thousands of young people when he visited Akamasoa, "the city of friends," an impressive project started by a former theology student of his in Buenos Aires, the Rev. Pedro Okape, that enabled him to declare, "Poverty is not inevitable." The country's young president, Andry Rajoelina, a committed Catholic, has sworn to work to eliminate poverty. Francis considers him a sign of hope and showed great friendliness.

In all three countries, Pope Francis pleaded for protection of the environment. Mining by foreign companies to extract precious minerals has been a major problem in Madagascar and Mozambique. In Madagascar, deforestation is

Dancers perform before Pope Francis leads a vigil with young people at the Soamandrakizay diocesan field in Antananarivo, Madagascar, on Sept. 7.

CNS photo/Paul Haring

especially a threat. Francis called on all three governments to eliminate corruption, which in Mozambique and Madagascar is often due to foreigners' bribing officials for access to the country's resources.

Francis was given an enthusiastic welcome in Mauritius. Many here fear their island may be obliterated if sea levels rise because of global warming. They hailed his leadership in combating climate change.

Francis inspired hope when he preached a joyful Gospel message based on the Sermon on the Mount to bishops, priests, consecrated persons and the 1.4 million Catholics who attended his three open-air Masses. His very presence strengthened their faith, many said.

When he arrived in Port Louis, Mauritius, to celebrate Mass—some 400 years after the Jesuits did so for the first time on the island—over 100,000 islanders waved sugar-cane palms and moved rhythmically as they sang with gusto the Creole song: "Un soleil se lève sur notre église" ("A sun rises on our church").

For them, he was just that.

Gerard O'Connell, *Vatican correspondent. Twitter: @gerryorome.*

Sister Larraine Lauter holds the hand of a tiny patient in a cholera clinic in Verrettes, Haiti, in 2017.

CNS photo/Bryan Woolston, Journey Press

GOODNEWS: Water With Blessings makes progress against cholera in Haiti

As she held the tiny hand of an infant at a cholera clinic in Verrettes, Haiti, two years ago, Sister Larraine Lauter said, she made a promise "in my heart, that she wouldn't have to be back in that hospital." Sister Lauter, a member of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount St. Joseph and co-founder of the nonprofit group Water With Blessings, based in Middletown, Ky., is on track to keep that promise.

Verrettes, a community of close to 50,000 people, and two other communities in Haiti—Anse-à-Veau and Cornillon—have been cholera-free, said Sister Lauter, since Water With Blessings began its work. The group trains women in communities without access to safe drinking water to use donated water filtration systems. Since its founding, the group has trained 100,000 of these "water women" in 48 nations.

Sister Lauter said her promise to Haiti and that little girl back in 2017 was a "crazy" one, but it was rooted in her faith. "I didn't make that promise because I thought I could do it," she said. But she did think she could "count on the Haitian team, the mothers and the generosity of the people in the U.S., and we could ultimately count on God."

Cholera has killed thousands in Haiti since an outbreak began in 2010, following a devastating earthquake that killed more than 200,000. Since Water With Blessings launched its cholera-free campaign in 2017, the organization brought donated filters to three communities in Haiti and trained 15,000 Haitian women to use them. Close to 60,000 households have benefited from the filters.

"We're asking a lot of [the women]," Sister Lauter said. "I tell them this is Haiti's second revolution, and this time the women are the heroes."

From Catholic News Service

THE CHURCH IS MULTILINGUAL

Why aren't more Catholic schools?

By J.D. Long-García

Clad in a shirt and tie as he directs morning traffic down Clower Street, William Daily seems to know the name of just about every student emerging from their parents' cars. "¡Buenos días, Isabel!" the principal of St. Mary Magdalen Church and School says to one student. "¡Buenos días, Kevin!" he says to another. Mr. Daily learned to speak Spanish while serving people living in extreme poverty in Quito, Ecuador. His language skills are essential in his current role, as many of the parents sought out the San Antonio school because it offers their children something many other Catholic schools do not.

What makes St. Mary Magdalen unique is that it is a dual-language school, part of a small but growing type of institution committed to teaching in two languages across a range of subjects.

Mr. Daily, a former member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, led the local implementation of the Two-Way Immersion Network for Catholic Schools, or TWIN-CS, a program established in 2012 by the Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College. The dual-language curriculum appears to have paid off for St. Mary Magdalen. In 2012, before the school adopted the TWIN-CS approach, 98 students were enrolled. Today, there are more than 450.

While the majority of Catholics in the United States under 18 are Latino, only 4 percent of Latino children are enrolled at Catholic schools. The TWIN-CS program, a method of teaching that respects their language and culture, is helping to change that, according to Kristin Barstow Melley, director of professional development at the Roche Center.

The English language and American culture have tended to dominate bilingual education, she said. Many Catholic schools try to accommodate local immigrant communities but fall short. Some schools might add a Spanish-speaking receptionist, Ms. Barstow Melley said, but the faculty will still speak mostly English. Besides, a school's Catholic identity often tends to reflect just one culture even if the

Kindergartners Daniella Davila and Kathleen Daily pray in Spanish during class at St. Mary Magdalen in San Antonio, Tex. The school began offering dual-language education in 2012.

All photos taken by the author.

SAINT MARY
MAGDALEN
SCHOOL

Addison Adams, Giancarlo Bombín and Angel Huerta, second graders, take turns reading aloud in Spanish.

student body represents a range of ways to be Catholic.

"It's not representative of the emerging diversity," Ms. Barstow Melley said. "To truly become welcoming, the school has to be transformed. We assist schools through that transformation."

According to the National Catholic Education Association, the number of Catholic students in the United States has declined by more than 18 percent since 2009. Since 2012, the Roche Center, through this program, has created a network of schools to offer dual-language education at Catholic schools throughout the country. The "network" is both a noun and a verb, Ms. Barstow Melley said. TWIN-CS is both a network of resources and a way for schools to network with each other. There are 18 schools in the network and more are on the horizon.

"Everything we do is designed with the intention of being educators, to think more sacramentally, to support their own spiritual life," she said, adding that the model is "culturally responsible." The approach incorporates cultural traditions that reflect students' family background.

"This is what being Catholic is about," Ms. Barstow Melley said. "The Catholic Church is multilingual. This is how we're church."

Bilingual education is a hot topic in the education sector, but dual-language models are something different.

"We want children to be able to be their whole selves," Ms. Barstow Melley said. "This country has never been monolingual. Yet we're one of a handful of countries that insist on monolingual education." Bilingual students are in many places discouraged from using their non-English skills in school, and some states even ban teaching in languages other than English.

At St. Mary Magdalen, the hallway is decorated with images of the Blessed Mother colored in crayon. A sign outside Ms. González's pre-K classroom reads, "Class of 2034," and another tells students the language of the day.

On the day I visit, the sign reads, "Español."

Arianna Watkins, whose home language is English, has attended the school since kindergarten, and now she is starting fourth grade. Her younger sister, Layla, is in first

grade, and her older sister, Ajah, is in eighth. Arianna and Layla speak more Spanish than Ajah since they have been part of the dual-language program since it began. The two younger siblings can speak in Spanish without their older sister understanding, she said.

"Sometimes, not all the time," Arianna clarified. "And also, when it's my little sister, she ends up telling my older sister what we said anyways."

Arianna also said it was easier to spell in Spanish, as English is filled with sometimes contradicting sounds and confusing rules. She noted how the letter "c," for example, can represent different sounds in English depending on the word. In Spanish, on the other hand, letters have a consistent sound.

While there is a language of the day, which is used by students as they make their way through the hallways, certain subjects are always in English and others are always in Spanish. Math, for example, is always in English, and it is taught at the level of native English speakers. Social studies and religion, however, are always taught in Spanish, at the level of native Spanish speakers.

Students at TWIN-CS schools sometimes become teachers as well. They are paired into learning dyads, with one coming from a Spanish-speaking home and the other coming from an English-speaking home. At St. Mary Magdalen, the student from the Spanish-speaking home helps the other student in social studies and the student from the English-speaking home helps the other in math.

"So they work together and they help each other out and they learn from each other," said Mr. Daily, the principal. "That really does wonders for language equity and language empowerment as well. The students who speaks Spanish at home, they are a great resource. Whereas in certain environments, monolingual environments, it might be seen as a detriment, in a dual language environment, their Spanish background really is an asset."

The pairing cultivates not only language equity, but also equity across cultural and socioeconomic lines. The students work together to achieve bilingualism, learning not only from teachers who are native speakers, but from

> Having a dual-language school where the second language is Spanish means you're exposing all the students to a second culture.

students as well.

"From a pedagogical perspective, the way to best, most deeply learn something is through teaching it. You learn it on a whole deeper level than you otherwise would. And the kids have an expertise that adults don't have," Mr. Daily said. Children can learn from each other as peers, he said.

Arianna said she liked learning in both English and Spanish because her grandparents, unlike her parents, prefer to speak Spanish. She also likes going to bilingual Mass and understanding everything that is happening.

"It feels good to know prayers in English and Spanish, but I want to learn more," she said, "because I like to pray."

That is music to her father's ears.

"I grew up in Columbus, Ga., where English was my primary language," said Willie Watkins, adding that he picked up a lot of Spanish by marrying into it, so to speak. His wife, from San Antonio, comes from a Hispanic background.

"We get compliments on our girls all the time because of their good behavior and their good habits and, you know, things like that. We give credit to the school for that," he said, noting the girls pray before meals and before bed "without needing to be told."

"And it's so beneficial for the kids to speak more than one language," he added. Mr. Watkins said the school provides connections to the family's faith and culture.

Incorporating native languages into education is a national trend, according to Verónica Alonzo, associate superintendent for operations at the Diocese of Dallas. In Texas, both charter and public schools are exploring ways to address the changing needs of students.

Catholic schools in her diocese also partner with Boston College. Ms. Alonzo said implementing the model can take more than two years of planning. She pointed to the experience of Santa Clara of Assisi Academy in Dallas, which offers dual-language education from pre-K through third grade.

Santa Clara grew without taking students away from nearby Catholic schools, Ms. Alonzo said. Enrollment at the school has steadily increased from 158 students in 2011, before it offered dual-language education, to 199 in 2015.

Advocates of dual-language education say it is not what Americans have come to know as bilingual education. While bilingual education offers a portion of learning in a language other than English, dual language mandates that half of the learning take place in the other language. The composition of the student body is also important when it comes to dual-language education. In Spanish-language programs, ideally half of the students are English-dominant and the other half are Spanish-dominant. That makes it easier to implement in some places.

In Dallas, for example, nearly a quarter of the workforce was not born in the United States. Yet while many parents may want to have their children brought up knowing two languages, Ms. Alonzo said dual language is not meant for all schools. The program requires more resources than standard educational approaches.

"Our market in Dallas is beginning to get saturated," she said, explaining that public schools are expanding their dual-language offering and providing transportation, which is not always an option at Catholic schools.

More Than Language

The benefits of dual-language education go far beyond language, advocates say.

"Having a dual-language school where the second lan-

Students at St. Matthew have benefited from dual language education since 2009.

Assistant Principal Yvette Sandoval Guerra coordinates the dual language program at St. Matthew School in Phoenix, Ariz.

guage is Spanish also means you're exposing the students to a second culture," Ms. Alonzo explained. "There's always a fear of the unknown, but once you get to know a person or culture, then the barrier is often no longer there."

Some schools are turning to a dual-language model in order to set them apart from other schools, though experts warn that the program is not a silver bullet to other challenges facing Catholic schools.

St. Matthew Catholic Church and School in Phoenix, Ariz., began implementing dual-language education in 2009. Michael Guerra, the school principal, said necessity and the population drove the change.

"We were looking for something that distinguished us," he said. Mr. Guerra said the situation at St. Matthew's is unique because they serve largely low-income families. He said about 60 percent of students are able to speak Spanish at the time they enroll.

"A lot of parents identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic, but they also identify as Catholics and believers," Mr. Guerra said. "That unites us. We're able to express our faith."

The school population had been hovering around 90 students for years, but it more than doubled its enrollment since implementing the dual-language model. "You have to know your population, see if there's a need and go from there," Mr. Guerra said.

"It's not always going to be hunky dory. You're going to lose some of the kids," he said. Switching to a dual-language model can be a controversial given the "political climate," he added, referring to the divisive rhetoric surrounding immigration. "But you have to ask yourself if your community needs it."

Mr. Guerra counts on the expertise of Yvette Sandoval Guerra, his assistant principal and the coordinator of the dual-language program. Ms. Sandoval said a key component of the program is communication among the staff. The teachers who teach in the Spanish language are from Mexico and those who teach in English are from the United States.

"The English-language teachers learned how to pair up with the Spanish-language teachers to figure out what's working and what's not," Ms. Sandoval said.

The program requires the involvement of the parents and needs to be continuously evaluated and adapted. For example, the school is now teaching math in English to improve student performance on standardized tests. They are also increasing the percentage of subjects taught in English per grade as students approach high school.

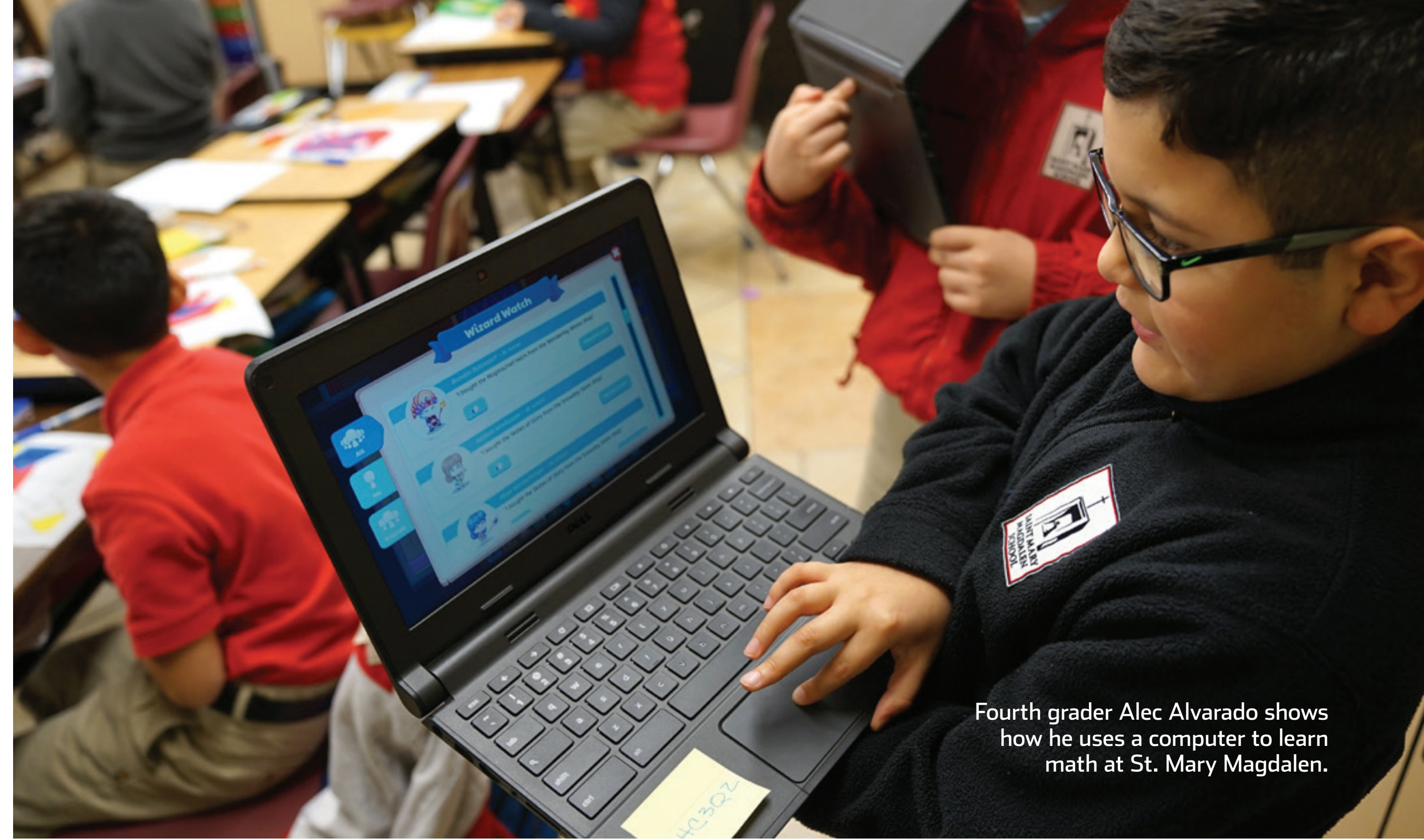
Helping Schools Thrive

At St. Matthew's, school leadership has also made a point of encouraging cultural traditions. Students can express their Catholic identity as matachines, Mexican dancers who honor Our Lady of Guadalupe.

By honoring culture as well as language, schools are able to engage both parents and grandparents, according to Mary Bridget Burns, assistant director of the TWIN-CS program at Boston College.

"It has to be the right fit for the community. To do this takes time," Ms. Burns said. "There's not a one-and-done kind of approach. We're focused on sustainability and growth."

Growth often depends on dual-language schools partnering with each other. TWIN-CS hosts regular conferences as well as twice-monthly webinars. It also maintains a blog, which depends on the active participation of dual-language educators across the country. Each school


Fourth grader Alec Alvarado shows how he uses a computer to learn math at St. Mary Magdalen.

also has a mentor, usually from a local university, who is an expert in dual-language education.

"Feedback is not meant to be threatening, but to improve you as a professional," Ms. Burns said.

The demand for dual-language schools appears to be growing in popularity.

Ms. Burns said she has received calls from parents with newborns asking if there is a TWIN-CS school in their neighborhood. A school in Omaha, Neb., made the switch last year with the support of Boston College. In Miami, a school offers dual-language education in different Spanish dialects.

The program is not always a good fit for schools. One school that wanted to implement the program carried too much debt, Ms. Burns said. Another changed principals and pastors during the first five years of implementation and seemed to lack the commitment to continue.

"We are not handing out a manual of how to do this," Ms. Barstow Melley said. "You know one Catholic school, you know one Catholic school. This process is very fluid and very challenging."

Hosffman Ospino, associate professor of Hispanic ministry and religious education at Boston College, said the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is home to the largest group of two-way immersion schools. The archdiocese currently has eight dual-language schools and is planning on opening three more in the coming years.

"One of the greatest things is that all of them have waiting lists," Mr. Ospino said.

The schools benefit from good superintendents, support from Archbishop José H. Gomez and a large Catholic population, he said, calling dual-language immersion "one of the most successful efforts in Catholic education right now."

Research has found that students who go through dual-language education achieve higher reading levels and demonstrate greater problem solving skills. The schools tend to have better relationships with parishes that have a Hispanic ministry, Mr. Ospino said.

"These children are being formed with the idea that being bilingual and bicultural is beautiful," he said.

Dual-language is not just about promoting a curriculum, but also about establishing relationships.

"Teachers have to have intercultural competencies to interact with the students and the parents and the parishes," Mr. Ospino said. "They are training students to be successful in a diverse church and society."

Truly Catholic Schools

In Verónica Duarte's classroom at St. Mary Magdalen, students are busy with playdough when Mr. Daily begins the announcements. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, he leads the school in prayer and in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance—in Spanish.

Araceli Rangel, a seventh grader, helps Olivia Delgado, a preschooler, get her backpack organized at St. Mary Magdalen.

"We had this underlying sense that what we were doing was the right thing," Mr. Daily said of switching to the dual-language model. "Catholic schools and the church should sort of look inside themselves to see how they can open their doors to more people, more cultures, more points of view. That's going to be messy. That's a messier church and a noisier church, but a better church and better Catholic schools."

Some of his students' parents drive more than an hour to drop their children off at St. Mary Magdalen. Some students come from stable, middle-class homes, with parents who are highly educated professionals. Others come from single-parent homes, where their caregivers do not speak Spanish and do not have high school degrees. Some families receive an archdiocesan discount and pay an average tuition of $3,000 a year.

"They're willing to make the sacrifice to give their kids this education and formation," Mr. Daily said, adding that the values are based in Catholic social teaching. His daughter, Kathleen, is a student at the school.

Elizabeth Brito works in downtown San Antonio and drops off her 8-year-old daughter at the school every day after a 45-minute commute. She said the dual-language approach was an important factor in her decision to send her daughter to St. Mary Magdalen. But there is more to it.

"You're not just learning the Ten Commandments or about the sacraments, but you're learning about dignity and respect and character," she said. "Those become a part of their conversation since they're 3 years old. So it's all this encouraging atmosphere from that standpoint."

During a school day, Mr. Daily takes a break from his other duties as principal and visits classes. In one, third graders are taking turns reading aloud. They are reading a Spanish-language book about sea animals. In the math class he visits, students are studying acute angles and their complementaries. The students are quick to show off their Chromebooks, on which they can play educational video games.

"We are a global church; we're a church that goes to the margins. We're a church that really reaches out to all, by going out beyond your neighborhood, going out beyond the walls of your school," Mr. Daily said. "You tell your story as a school, which is a story of being open to different cultures, to different languages, to different religions while you maintain your core of being a truly Catholic school. That's a vibrant charism and a vibrant mission, and I think there are benefits to be had."

J.D. Long-García *is a senior editor at* ***America.***

Watch the short documentary on dual-language schools at americamag.org/video/dual-language-school.

In Search of the Deeper Story

What does it mean to pay spiritual and moral attention to the conflicts of our lives?

By Pádraig Ó Tuama

Conflict reveals what is important to us. Sometimes I find myself in conflict because I have discovered something I did not know I cared strongly about. Someone changes the arrangement of furniture in the office, and I realize why I loved the previous arrangement; someone posts a social media message that infuriates me for some hitherto unarticulated reason; someone makes an assumption about my country, my religion, my politics, my language, my priorities, and up flares hundreds of years of resentment that I carry in me.

Conflict is powerful information; and this powerful information can be difficult to recognize, difficult to process, difficult to accept, learn from or act upon. Conflict can tell us a great deal about ourselves, and it can tell us a great deal about Jesus. He shows us why we should not fear it.

To listen carefully to an arguing group is to gain a peculiar glimpse into the desires and anxieties of that group. You also learn their tactics, their alliances, their threats, what they are willing to do to win and what happens to them when they feel they have lost. You notice fear, too, as well as skill. A person may demonstrate the capacity to sidestep or reframe an argument, or their alliances, or their unwillingness to engage, or their feelings about compromise.

What does it mean to pay spiritual and moral attention to the conflicts of our lives? So much religious energy seems to be spent imagining religious lives that are free of conflict: Adam and Eve pre-fruit; Jesus meek and mild in a manger; saints more focused on their purity than their politics. You get the picture.

But this betrays both the biblical literature and the human condition. The aim of our lives is not to skirt around conflicts and emerge unscathed, but to engage with them in a way that tests, hones and evolves our moral impulses toward an ethic of serious and creative engagement.

Fear of the Fear

For years, I was frightened of conflict. Not only was I in fear of conflict, but I also was in fear of the fear of conflict—layers and layers to keep me away from facing the invitation and information that conflict presents. Then two things happened. My health declined, and I accidentally learned how to pray.

The decline of my health was predictable. I was working in religious ministry, gay, closeted, scared and anxious. I did not have the resources to express the information of my life. So my body took over. I got a virus—a serious one that affected my immune system, making it overactive—and it did not leave. Something was calling for my attention.

And I learned how to pray. Accidentally. The real story is that I had decided to give up on my faith. And in an ironic move that was utterly lost on me, I decided to go to a monastery—Taizé—to give up on God. To make it formal, I decided to turn to the crucifixion scene. And I decided to imagine that I was one of the people along the way of the cross, and that I had an opportunity to say goodbye to the God I no longer loved. But in that prayer, Jesus said something to me, and I said something back to him, and I was in the middle of a kind of prayer I had never imagined.

I have decided that either you hate me, or it's time to stop caring, I said.

What do you care about? Jesus asked.

I don't know, I said.

Fresco by Giusto de Menabuoi (Photo credit: iStock/wjarek)

Neither do I, Jesus said.

I don't know what to do, I said.

I know, he said, looking at me.

I felt like the years of approaching Jesus had lacked one simple thing: respect. Respect from him to me, and from me to him.

So, right on the cusp of trying to divorce God, I found myself in conversation with Jesus with unexpected reciprocal respect. No longer did I think that what he thought dictated everything I should think. But I was curious. I wanted to know what annoyed him, what upset him, what moved him, what drove him. I started reading the Gospels, and I started writing letters to the Jesus I had not known. I had grown up with plenty of conflict around me: conflict from the legacy of the colonizing of Ireland, conflict from being gay, conflict from hating myself, conflict from violences I had known. So I paid most attention to the conflicts in the Gospels: the woman pushing through the crowd, confronting the crowd with its laws that she would not allow to confine her; the public arguments about religious adherents; the differing views on how to understand the role of foreigners in occupied territory; questions about the shape of marriage; arguments about sin, sins and sinners. Who should I touch? Who should I allow to touch me?

In each of these interactions, characters were communicating intimate information about their lives: the things they love about themselves; the things they refuse to consider; the prejudices about their lives; the rules they rule over but would never want to be ruled by; the laws they break because some laws should be broken.

In one story, Jesus arrives at a house. We are not told whose house, but it is possible it is Jesus' own in Capernaum. Jesus has his disciples with him; and when they arrive there, he asks them what they were arguing about along the way.

The question itself is intriguing. The Greek word for arguing is *dialogizomai,* from which we get the word *dialogue.* Were Jesus to have said, "What were you dialoguing about along the way?" the whole scene would have a different flavor. However, the translators are unanimous that the best translation into English is argue, not dialogue.

Anyway, you might know the rest of the story. The disciples are quiet because they are ashamed; they have been arguing about who is the greatest.

It is easy to think that we know the substance of this conflict, but it is worthwhile pausing for a moment. What would *greatest* have meant? The one who spent the most time with Jesus? The one who got praised the most? The

The kiss of Judas, and the conflicts he initiated and escalated, have been sources of artistic inspiration for centuries.

Left to right: By Barna da Siena. (Photo credit: A.M. Rosati/Art Resource, NY)

Fresco in Crypt of Siena Cathedral (iStock/Jorisvo)

By Fra Angelico (Photo credit: Nicolo Orsi Battaglini/Art Resource, NY)

one who was the strongest? The one with the greatest political insight? The one who looked most like him? The one who was the best at arguing? These are—we are to assume—men arguing. Are they arguing about size, strength, body? In any group, there are always tensions about the greatest, and each group has its own rubric for deciding what the greatest is. Comparison is like a spark to the fuse of conflict. Once we begin the comparison game, we are unlikely to end it until it ends us somehow—bringing us to aggression, exclusion, judgment and reduction; determining once and for all who the loser is.

Because that is what is happening in an argument about the greatest. Underneath it all, it is also an argument about who is the least.

The Gospels sometimes pay close attention to body language. In this scene, we see Jesus sitting down. What is this? An invitation to a close examination of their competitive addictions? Perhaps. It most probably is an indication of the posture for revered elders in many cultures. The disciples would have sat lower than him in all likelihood. So their body language is changed; they are called from a jostling crowd of bantering men into a posture of humility and hierarchy (sometimes hierarchy—when it is able to be trusted—has its functions). Then the most surprising thing happens: Jesus presents a child.

This, by the way, is a delicious part of the story. Where did the child come from? Someone will say—of course they will—that this child is Jesus' own. Or perhaps it was a child of a neighbor, or a nephew or niece, or a child of the household. If this is Jesus' house, it indicates that Jesus' house was a house that children ran through, ready to be scooped into an explanatory parable.

Anyway, a child is presented. And the child is embraced. The child is the physical embodiment of the exact opposite of greatness. Whatever the worldly measure of greatness has been, this child is not great. The child is small. The child is powerless. The child may not even be cute. The child is a child, away from the power-games of men. Hearing an argument about greatness conducted by males, Jesus makes them sit down to learn, and then faces them with an independent other who embodies the opposite of the thing that was consuming them. This child upsets the economy of eminence that has been their obsession. When I hear people say that theology should be objective, not subjective, I think of how Jesus interrupted objectivity. *We cannot comment on single cases,* corporations and governments say. *I only comment on individual cases,* Jesus seems to say, *otherwise what is the point?* He

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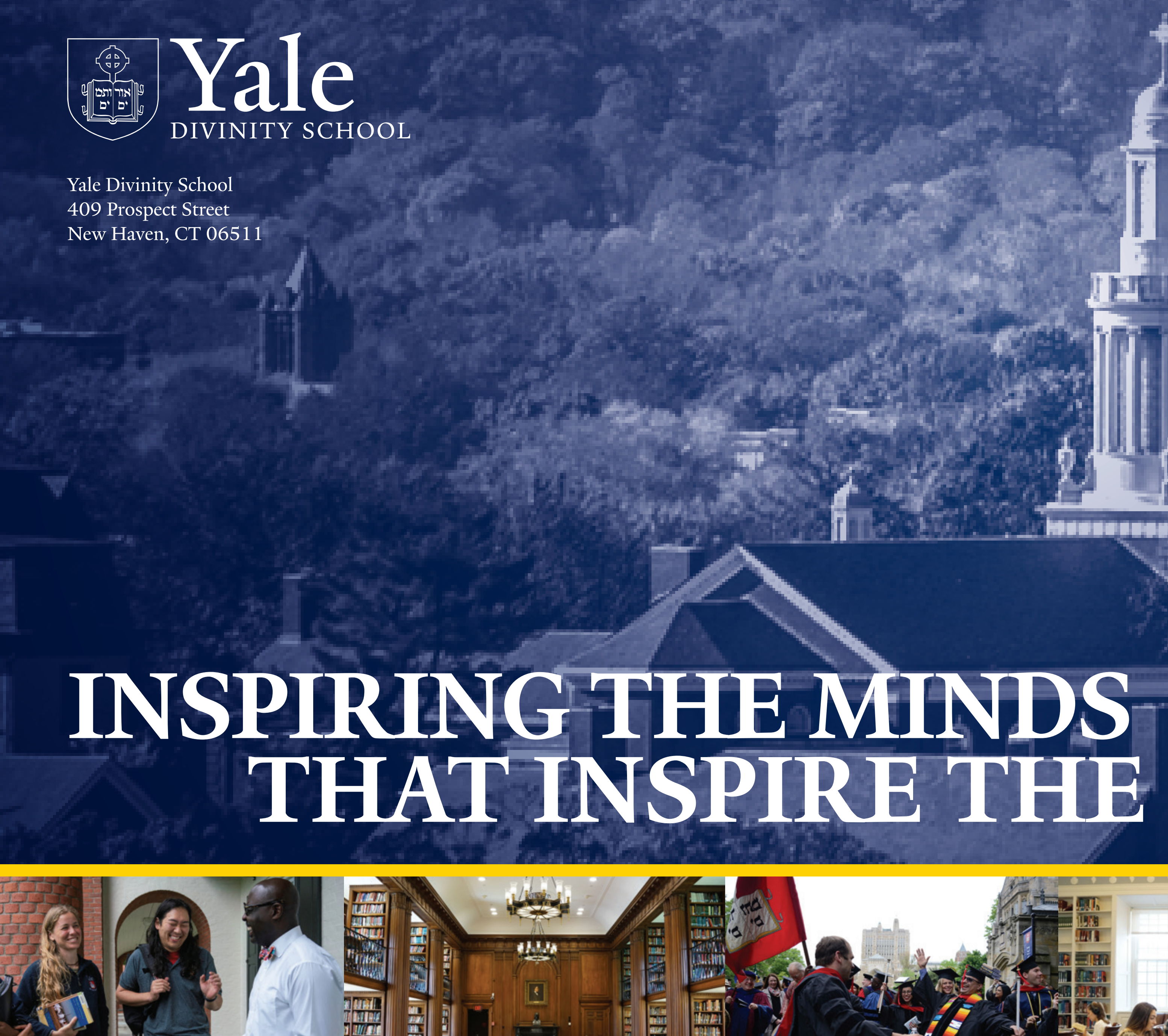

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> Some of us need to be dropped into the heart of the conflicts we are in denial about.

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speaks about hospitality; he links hospitality to virtue to valor to greatness. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Reframing the Picture

When training in conflict resolution, I heard the phrase "reframe" over and over. It is worthwhile to think of this word in a tangible way. To take a piece of art and reframe it can help the viewer see what is there. Perhaps the frame picks up on a hitherto hidden color lurking at the heart of the work. Perhaps the frame is big enough to show more of the photo. A recent photo by a political party in Ireland showed their representatives sitting with a Person of Renown. Someone on Twitter—it is always Twitter—showed the original. It showed representatives from two opposing parties sitting with a Person of Renown. The photo had been reframed, cropped. *Uncrop me,* conflict calls out; *show the inconvenient bits.*

Conflict is information, and often we do not wish conflict to reveal the information. So we tell the story that makes our colleague, or our boss, or our bishop, or the laity out to be irrelevant, ridiculous even. We caricature individuals so that the hearer of the conflict story immediately knows what a good hearer of the story is. The listener knows who the good person is and who the bad person is.

Do not get me wrong— it is fun. It is at the heart of all good "my boss is an idiot" stories. But stories do not always tell the truth; we know that. The Gospels do. Remember Judas?

- "Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him" (Mt 10:4);
- and "Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him" (Mk 3:19);
- and "Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor" (Lk 6:16);
- "He was speaking of Judas son of Simon Iscariot, for he, though one of the Twelve, was going to betray him" (Jn 6:71).

There are other Judases in the Gospels—one of them is a relative of Jesus (Mk 6:3)—and there is a follower called "Judas (not Iscariot)" in John's Gospel (14:22). We are set up to hate this person. *Iscariot* has become a swear word in some languages, and is certainly rarely used as a compliment in many.

From the introduction to Judas we are brought into a point of view about him. What would Judas say? What would he do? We know some of the story, but we recall little of it. It seems to me that Judas was a man seeking to escalate conflict. He sought to bring about increased conflict with the Roman occupiers. He was not alone. The disciples on the road to Emmaus told a stranger the story of their lament, disappointment and shock that Jesus had failed in their conflict project for freedom: "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Lk 24:21).

Judas is often cast as a money-hungry character, but he was not money-hungry. John tells us that Judas stole from the purse (12:6), but I am not sure that I believe that. What evidence is there in the text that the authors are reliable narrators of the motivations of Judas when they have introduced him without consideration for his point of view in the story? Matthew is the one who undoes it all. I should tell you that I am not always a fan of Matthew. He seems to favor long sermons, and he squashes great narratives into headline updates before rushing back into other lengthy sermons—Jesus seems to be a priest of the Order of Preachers in the mind of Matthew. But Matthew is concerned with justice, particularly narrative justice. He introduces the genealogy of Jesus by naming 42 men and five women, and he—alone among the Evangelists—ends the story of Judas like this: "When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders" (Mt 27:3).

The word *repent* has only been used a few times elsewhere in Matthew's Gospel. Twice Jesus calls on people to repent because of the proximity of the kingdom (3:2 and 4:17) and twice Jesus uses the word when speaking of cities whose policies need to change (11:21 and 12:41).

When I was a child, I saw images of Judas at the Crawford Art Gallery in Cork. "St. Brendan meets the Unhappy Judas" is the name of a stained-glass piece in that gallery—showing Brendan in a small holy boat sailing through the waters of hell, and Judas—walking on the water, but nonetheless being consumed in flames—holds himself to himself in perpetual agony.

This seems to ignore the insight of Matthew. The word *repent* is a rich one: the word used in Greek is *metanoia,* which means to change your mind or change your direc-

tion. Judas did not care about money—he brought the 30 pieces of silver back. Judas did not want Jesus to be condemned—this caused him to end himself. Sometimes conflict can be escalated to distract us from a deeper story, a truer story, a more inconvenient story.

Many of our liturgies do damage to Judas too. But the poet Nicelle Davis changes all that in a poem from her book *Becoming Judas:*

The Woman Who Cut Judas Down

had lost her son. This body strung
from a branch could be anyone—
even hers. She climbed the tree
to chew through the rope
and bring down the stopped
heart that had grown within her.

On the ground she gathered him to her—
whole self shaking as a baptism
worked its way out from in her
words beyond human articulation—
fever and a cry mistaken for pain.

Conflict is a peculiar economy. Some people will use conflict against one group in order to escalate conflict with another. In John's Gospel, a woman is being brought for stoning because she has been caught "in the very act of committing adultery" (8:4). How remarkably convenient. This whole thing seems so strikingly convenient that I think it is a setup. Anyway, some men are ready to enact the final conflict—murder—against this woman in order to escalate a conflict between themselves and Jesus.

Here is where body language comes into it again: The woman knew the body language of stones. They were almost up against her. Jesus also knows body language. He crouches down. In the face of a crowd of men being reduced to a primal sense of belonging, he sees a crowd swelling themselves. "Squared myself up" we say sometimes in English, showing how animal we are. We do not have fur that we can cause to stand on end, so we set our shoulders, taking up a little more space. Jesus took up less. He crouched. What was he writing?

In the face of conflict, Jesus makes himself smaller and does something nobody else can see. Conflict is confused by curiosity. When curiosity enters into a crowd of angry people, something might change. He might have been doodling, he might have been writing out sins, he might have been writing an interesting question—where is this alleged man?—or he might have just been demonstrating that the drama of these men's conflict was not a drama he was going to let control him. He made a moment. He took the attention. He stands up, he speaks, and he crouches down again.

The men go; Jesus stays and talks to the woman. He leaves her in conflict—after all, she now knows what these men are capable of. And surely some of these men are her acquaintances, or relatives. And Jesus tells her to sin no more. What was her sin? Falling for a man who lied about being married? Being deemed unmarriageable and courting a man? Being tricked into sex? Being a set-up for the theological obsessions of men projected onto her own body? I do not know. But I know I would want to question.

Language is at the heart of what moves me. For me, poetry, conflict and religion all circle around the same thing: the words we say, by body and tongue. Jesus liked words too. He praised one woman for hers. He was tired, he wanted to escape, but someone would not let him. *Don't give food to little dogs,* he says. And then he learns. *Oh but sir,* this foreign woman says, *even little dogs eat little crumbs.* She takes the insult of *little dogs* and doubles it. Little dogs. Little crumbs. Listen son, I can double any insult you give. You give from the overflow of your heart. He stops. He listens. He changes his mind. He praises her for her words. We remember her.

Some conflicts need to escalate so that those in power can realize they are the ones causing the conflict they are complaining about. Some conflicts need to escalate so that people can collaborate. Some conflicts need to decrease. Some of us need to be lifted out of conflict. Some of us need to be dropped into the heart of the conflicts we are in denial about.

We are surrounded by so many conflicts. It is worthwhile troubling the waters of the conflict with an incarnate waterwalker: the one who calls up storms and muzzles them, the one who reveals conflict where we thought there was not any, the one who was not possessed by the fear of the fear of fear. Our conflicts reveal something curiously intimate about us. These storms tell us things we do not want them to tell. Hover over this storm, Jesus of Nazareth. Stir these waters. Let us pray.

Pádraig Ó Tuama *is a poet and theologian from Ireland. He is a freelance teacher of poetry, theology and conflict resolution at universities and retreat centers around the world.*

Otto von Bismarck has the papal bull by the horns. ("The Berlin Bullfighter," John Tenniel, Punch, April 1875)

Church Versus State

When the culture wars came to Germany

By Grant Kaplan

Picture this scene: A group of Catholic priests move into a new neighborhood, just weeks after the latest scandal concerning clergy and sexual abuse. Their religious garb gives them away, and a group of neighbors protests their presence, claiming concern for the safety of their children against these sexually suspect priests. Tensions rise, the police get involved, and violence follows, all stemming from the conflation of the idea of "celibate clergy" with "sexual predator."

Such a scene did take place 150 years ago, and too few Catholics today know about it. In the working-class Berlin neighborhood of Moabit—in the heart of Protestant Prussia—a group of Dominicans attempted to open an orphanage for the growing population of neglected and abandoned children until the continued and real threat of violence led them to give up the project. The 1869 event, known as the Moabit Klostersturm, was a key precipitator for the coming *Kulturkampf* (culture war) that led to a series of laws targeting Catholics from 1872 to 1878. Among other things, the laws expelled the Jesuits, forbade criticism of the state from the pulpit (a prohibition that was eventually extended to Catholic newspapers) and banned members of the clergy from the education of children.

This "storming of the cloister" stands out amid nearly a century of tension between the dominant Protestant cultural and political powers and the minority Catholics in Germany. It would be a mistake, however, to view the event through the narrow lens of political power and minority religious rights. The event and surrounding events have much to tell us about modern identity formation.

Alamy

Despite the long and illustrious history of the Catholic Church in Germany—harkening all the way back to St. Boniface and punctuated by figures like Hildegaard of Bingen and Albert the Great—Catholics became the great Other to modernizing, secularizing forces. From the war against celibacy in the 1820s, through the imprisonment of the archbishop of Cologne over marriage policy in 1838, to hysterical fear in the face of rising monastic vocations in the 1850s, Catholicism presented a difficult-to-navigate social reality for the non-Catholic forces seeking to modernize German culture.

Recalling such events, historians have begun to theorize—with the help of Edward Said—how modernity and secularization required the creation of a Catholic Other in order to imagine itself and the community it wanted to create. In light of the growing chasm between Catholicism and 21st-century forms of social and political life, a deeper consideration of the 19th-century German context can help us imagine how Catholicism can be rejuvenated, rather than watching it continue to recede.

Imprisoned in the Cloister

In the summer of 1869, word got out that the Dominicans were moving in. The locals, stirred up by an anti-Catholic press as tawdry as the worst of Twitter and 4chan in our day, would not stand for this intrusion. They threw bottles, banged drums and made "rough music" with objects like pots and pans (*charivari*, or *Katzenmusik*), a custom associated with communal disapproval in the sexual realm. These fears did not come out of nowhere. Months earlier in a Polish convent, police discovered a woman, naked and deranged, who had been "walled in" inside a convent. This wall within walls had been constructed both to create solitary confinement and to keep this confinement a secret. The discovery of her imprisonment led to loud and continued outcries from the press. The incident had succeeded in firing the modern imagination about the immorality and backwardness of monastic life, not unlike today's popular image of the veiled Muslim woman, beaten and abused in her home. The lack of visibility increases imaginative fancy.

In a period increasingly fixated on the expansion of freedom—understood as political and religious emancipation—the monastery was already an antimodern prison and now one that created prisons within prisons. A leading genre in the dime-store novels of the day was the "cloister story," which told of a young woman who gave up the prospect of middle-class respectability to join a convent, only to be subjected to emotional, physical and sexual abuses.

A few months ago, a colleague asked a group of us whether allowing our children to be altar servers would be the equivalent of playing with fire. The success of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," known as the Dallas Charter, has been overshadowed by high profile cases involving bishops that date from before 2002. The fact is that the rules implemented in 2002 have been highly successful, albeit imperfect. My colleague is a faithful, practicing Catholic, yet the question caused me to wonder whether her vigilance was too narrow. Abuse occurs not just in sacristies but in schools and non-Catholic religious spaces, among scouting groups and on athletic teams, and even within nuclear and extended families. Is letting a child spend the night at a friend's house not also playing with fire, regardless of how well one thinks one knows the parents?

Whatever the current fear of the clergy might tell us, it is not hard to discern what it meant nearly two centuries ago in Germany. As Michael Gross describes in detail in his marvelous book, *The War Against Catholicism: Liberalism and Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany,* liberals feared Catholics for good reason. After 1848 and a near revolution in Germany that frazzled citizens both urban and rural, a boom in religious sensibility took place. All across Germany, different religious orders preached "missions," precipitating events similar to tent revivals in the United States. The missions drew a mixed confessional audience, and the preaching often led to mass outbursts of weeping and conversion. At some sites, members stood in line for the entire night to make their confession. Not just Jesuits but Benedictines, Franciscans and Redemptorists preached missions with surprising success. Concurrently, monastic vocations boomed, and secular leaders interpreted the incursion of monasteries into Protestant territories in near-military terms.

Parallels to Today

For contemporary Catholics trying to read the signs of the times, it is hard to tell whether the larger culture now truly despises the Catholic Church or merely finds it irrelevant. If it is the former, I suspect much of this has to do with the anthropology the church teaches that is so contrary to

> **By exalting celibacy, Catholicism threatened the model for progress advocated by the German nation-state.**

today's dominant norms. Gender, embodiment, autonomy, identity—these terms animate so many of our current concerns, and it is no surprise that critical theory touching on issues of gender and race form such a neuralgic point of concern for theologians today. A look backward, using those critical-theoretical lenses, offers insight.

By exalting celibacy, Catholicism threatened the model for progress advocated by the nation-state. Countries like Germany, with unstable, novel or what Benedict Anderson calls "imagined communities," felt this threat keenly. The state needed bodies to "man" factories and a growing population to defend new and porous national boundaries. It needed women's wombs and domestic care to carry and nurture new citizens. With no corresponding theology of celibacy, Protestantism presented much less of a threat than did Catholicism. And no major social group beside Catholicism presented the slightest challenge to this reduction of women to the national womb until the Third Reich's ideology of maternity came under scrutiny.

As society became more urban, the situation for women seemed precarious. Modernizing economic patterns made it more likely for women to be uprooted from their families of origin. Childbirth still presented a grave danger, as did domestic violence, which tended to correspond to the financial and social instability created by modern, liberal economics. No ideology challenged the modern ideology of "sexually natural" more than Catholicism, which rejected the claim that married life was the highest state one could achieve. And no institution challenged the values of productivity and work more than the monastery, with its nonprofit-oriented telos.

Anti-Catholic religious literature attempted to persuade both men and women of the importance of restricted gender norms. For women, this meant motherhood, and these tracts imagined their arguments to be rescuing naïve Catholic women from pointless and unproductive religious servitude. Since a woman would never freely choose the consecrated life, the argument went, she must be under the spell of duplicitous Jesuits. This same literature depicted the monk—shaven, tonsured, robed—as counter-masculine. In both cases, secular magazines and novels claimed to know what was natural, and it portrayed alternative ways of expressing one's personhood as forms of life that could not possibly be freely chosen. The anti-Catholic literature mocking celibacy and monastic lifestyles was not just describing masculinity but attempting to forge it. Yet can today's theorist of gender look back at these incidents and claim without qualification that the church was the oppressor and secularism the liberator?

The Rewiring of Desire

Catholic resurgence did not limit itself to the (still relatively small number of) people called to religious life. Lay organizations, publications like newspapers and books, and devotional practices all witnessed an upsurge. Over a six-week period in 1844, more than half a million pilgrims journeyed to the cathedral in Trier in order to see Jesus' seamless tunic, representing the largest mass mobilization of citizens in the decade. This was an energized, publicly engaged Catholicism, not a proto-Benedict option.

As the success of Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* shows, contemporary anti-Christianity would just as soon prove Jesus had sex or that he was homosexual as disprove the resurrection. In other words, the problem that Catholic Christianity presents to modern secularism lies not in its supernatural worldview but in its bold attempt to reorder all desire. Nineteenth-century German Catholicism presented such a threat because it catechized citizens into a different order of desires. Regardless of whether every pilgrim to Trier thought the tunic was authentic (and it would be even more naïve for us to think they did than for them to believe in the tunic), pilgrims found the trip meaningful and worth undertaking.

What would it take in the parish of today for one family to invite another to a nearby shrine on a weekend afternoon? Or what would it take for a Catholic family to deem a trip to Disneyland a failure of Catholic imagination?

It is clear what 21st-century neoliberalism wants for us: to swallow entirely and uncritically the anthropology of *homo oeconomicus:* that the human being is a free agent, unencumbered by family, culture or geography, liberated to pursue economic purchasing power in whatever way possible and maximally free to use that power to fulfill desires economically. All relations are contracts, and all sex is economic: liberated from constraint and ordered toward fulfillment understood as orgasm or something like it (perhaps the perfect Instagram post).

Neoliberalism's hope regarding the twin obstacles of religion and family is that both institutions can provide a thin

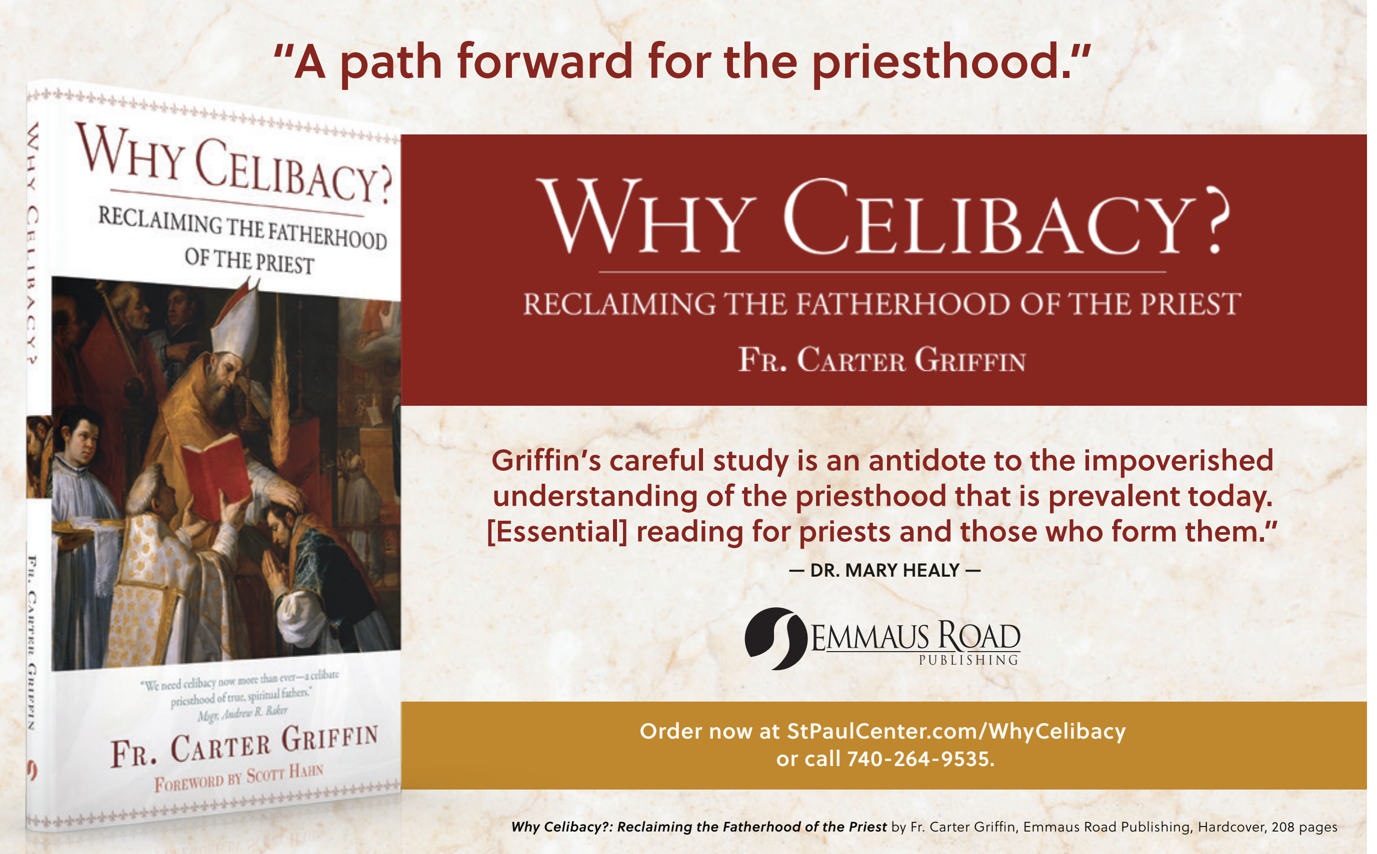
enough cover so that each individual can be unleashed as a consumer. The family with two teenagers simply becomes a "family" of four individual consumers, each on their own device, buying and streaming to come up with things to buy. Its hope for Christianity is that televangelist Joel Osteen wins and that zealous Christians really are the best consumers. Nothing salves the neoliberal fear that these institutions could be fueled by different, higher desires than scandal, the financial as much as the sexual. Priests and bishops and daily-Mass attending laypeople really are just like us!

A Community Extended in Time and Space

A deeper understanding of 19th-century Germany teaches us that there was a time, not so long ago, when the church persuasively taught a different order of desires that threatened modernizing hegemony. Study of this period also strikes a blow to the inevitability thesis that clings doggedly to theories of the secular. Secularism is not inevitable. The leading historians of secularism Olaf Blaschke and Todd Wier, among others, have persuasively demonstrated the abiding pull of confessional identity during this period. Catholic religious life did not just maintain its numbers during these decades; it experienced a rapid upsurge in vocations and a renewed enthusiasm for Tridentine practices that had been forgotten.

We have more familiar models that are nearer in both time and space, but the state-church strife in 19th-century Germany is just far enough away and the current wave of scandal is just close enough to our hearts for us to look back and see more clearly. The German example, then if not now, shows that decline is not inevitable. The challenge for the church, then and now, is to articulate and manifest the desires that led the disciples to drop their nets and follow Jesus. Renewal will not come, however, from wishing things to be as they once were. It will come from creative reordering and reimagining the Gospel into modern forms of life that make the life of the baptized believer—alive in Christ, experienced through a eucharistic community—morally, intellectually and aesthetically more compelling. We need to tell stories to remind us who we are: a community extended in both time and space, gathered around a risen victim, ordered by liberating love.

Grant Kaplan *is a professor of theological studies at Saint Louis University. His latest book is* René Girard, Unlikely Apologist. *He thanks Emily Kaplan and* Jeremy Wilkins *for improving earlier drafts of this essay, which has been generously supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.*



What the Christian Brothers gave me

The legacy of John Baptist de La Salle

By Paul Mariani

I am sitting in a small classroom in one of those World War II Quonset huts that line the hill along the rim of Manhattan College in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. It is the spring of 1962—the semester I will graduate—and this is Brother Luke Salm's religion class. We are blue-booking one of his quizzes, and he is off to one side, reading what looks like endless reams of galleys while the students in the class chew their pencil

Franco Folini, Flickr

Statue of St. John Baptist de La Salle sculpted by Bruce Wolfe at Saint Mary's College of California in Moraga, Calif.

erasers or scratch their heads before plunging back into the abstruse questions on church doctrine glaring up at them from the page.

For a moment my attention is focused on Brother Luke's absorption in those galleys of small print, and I am thinking: Yes, *this* is what I want to do someday. Forget myself and the humdrum world around me and, like some student of the Torah, study the world of words and someday—God willing—my own galleys. Ah, to become lost like him in the cosmic dance of literature, art, music, philosophy and religion, to watch as words form the mica chips of the infinite Word.

Then it is back again to the quiz in front of me whose questions long ago evaporated into the ether of history. In the late afternoon, I will walk through the tree-lined quad, past the chapel and the brick arcade, and head for my friend John Monahan's '57 hearse-gray Ford to make the trip back over the Throgs Neck Bridge and Northern Boulevard to Mineola, grab a bite to eat, then head down to the Garden City A&P, where I will stack shelves from 6 to 11, then head home to get my homework done before grabbing five hours of sleep. And then it will be up again and back to Manhattan College.

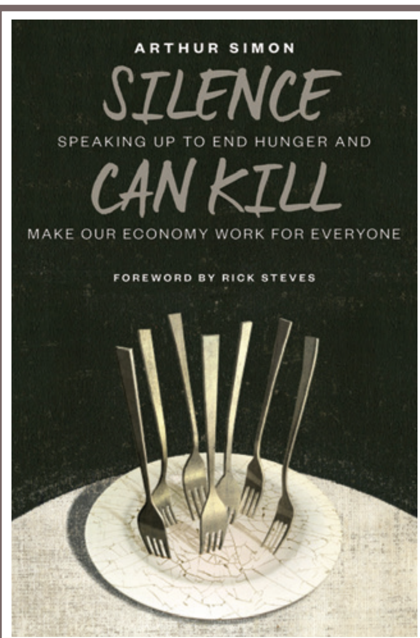
What a blessing those Christian Brothers in their black soutanes and my other teachers were as they taught so many young men like myself. Mostly we hailed from Irish-American working-class or lower-income middle-class families. There were Italian-Americans, too, and Latinos, African-Americans, Asian-Americans. We studied engineering, pre-med or pre-law, or took classes in the Great Books, beginning with the Egyptians and Greeks and Romans through the Middle Ages, then on to the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and through the Romantics and Victorians and the Modernists. How often the brothers were there for me, though I feared some of them a bit, especially after I joined a frat that made "Animal House" look tame. Most of them were gentle or funny and gave me sound advice by their example. There was Brother Anthony, for one, who volunteered to teach a group of us basic Greek to supplement our Latin. Once he heard me swearing as I ascended the steps of the library and suggested I refrain from what he called that "sub-Chaucerian" lingo.

In time, I graduated and got married and had three sons and earned a Ph.D. in English and comparative literature downtown at Hunter College, all of it possible because of what I learned at Manhattan. Years later, Brother Luke would invite me back to Manhattan to address the student body, now made up of women as well as men, and receive an honorary degree—the same brother who wrote a life of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of those same Christian Brothers, called *The Work Is Yours*. Reading it now, years after Brother Luke went to his reward, I better understand what de La Salle achieved in educating so many of the marginalized, myself among them.

I am the first in my family fortunate enough to go to college. Because of the Great Depression, neither of my parents went beyond the second year of high school. My father's parents came from northern Italy and settled in the shadow of the 59th Street Bridge, had 11 children, six of whom survived. School was something you endured until you were 16; then you went to work. For my father, the youngest of the lot, that meant driving a grocery truck or working at gas stations. Then came the war, when he learned to fire an M-1 and drive half-ton trucks and Shermans.

After the war, my family moved to Long Island—Levittown, then Mineola—where I worked at my father's Sinclair gas station. When I turned 16, my father thought it was time for me, too, to drop out of school and work full time. "Over my dead body," my mother told him, and she meant it. In high school, I took classes in pre-engineering because my father insisted it would lead to a good job, though my heart was not in it. Manhattan College had a strong reputation as an engineering school, so I applied there.

But when I arrived for my interview, one of the brothers told us about a four-year curriculum in the humanities based on the Great Books, and my heart melted. It seemed almost too good to be true: a chance to study Plato and Aristotle and Aquinas and Dante and Shakespeare and Cervantes and Milton and Dostoyevsky and on and on. I had



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$100 in the bank, and there were still six younger siblings at home to feed and clothe. But here was my chance, and with the help of God, I had to believe it would all work out.

Which is what de La Salle himself, it turns out, had believed. And so, despite sickness and exhaustion and the difficulties of getting to and from college, it did in fact work out. And not just for me but for so many young men.

Teacher of Teachers

Who was this brilliant, saintly priest who founded the Christian Brothers? Perhaps now, on the 300th anniversary of his death, it is time for those of us who have benefited so richly from our educations to remember who he was. John Baptist de La Salle was born to a wealthy family in Reims, France, on April 30, 1651. Like his namesake, he heralded the coming of a new order by reaching out to the marginalized, founding the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Educated first at the College des Bons Enfants, he went on to Paris to study the classics and theology at the Sorbonne. Then, at 20, he lost both his parents and had to return home to oversee the education of his younger siblings. Finally, in the spring of 1678, he was ordained and went on to earn his doctorate in theology.

At first, he oversaw the establishment of an order of nuns who had dedicated themselves to the education of the poor. Then he worked with young men, teaching them how to teach. And thus began his life's work. The idea never occurred to him, he admitted years later, "that what I did out of pure charity for the poor school teachers would make it incumbent upon me to live with them." Had he realized the many sacrifices he would have to undergo, he would have given up the idea at once.

Fortunately for hundreds of thousands of us, he stuck to his vocation to educate the underprivileged as, step by step, the way opened before him. And yet, try as he might, he kept failing for lack of money or because of the infighting among the educational guilds who insisted on being paid handsomely for teaching. Then, too, there were those bishops and prelates who insisted on maintaining rigid control over their schools. Still, he worked tirelessly alongside his brothers, looking for the best means of educating the poor to prepare them for the world, both practically and spiritually. And when the teachers themselves became discouraged because they lacked the necessary education and teaching skills, he supported them, going so far as to find them rooms in his own home, feeding them, teaching them how to teach and often stepping in to teach when teachers became ill or simply abandoned the project.

As his mission became ever clearer to him, he resigned his priestly canonry and then, at 34, sold his home and possessions and distributed the money to the poor. When his friends advised him that this time he had gone too far, he told them that this was the work God had given him to do and that, if worse came to worst, he would beg for alms.

In time, the Christian Brothers took the shape by which they would come to be recognized. He trained one young brother, Henri L'Heureux, in the hopes that he would succeed him, sending him to the Sorbonne to study for the priesthood with a specialty in theology, only to

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> **Like his namesake, John Baptist de La Salle heralded the coming of a new order by reaching out to the marginalized.**

see L'Heureux die shortly before his ordination. After much prayer and discernment, de La Salle came to see that the priesthood was not essential for the Christian Brothers. Educating the young, he insisted, was the work the brothers had been given and to which they must devote their lives. As expected, many among the church authorities did not agree with his decision. In 1702, de La Salle was deposed by a cardinal and his leadership role was transferred to another priest. He bit his lip, endured it and moved on.

For 10 years he struggled to preserve the institution even as he continued to be vilified and brought up on trumped-up charges. At one point, he was left with only two brothers he could rely on. Still, he soldiered on, visiting the schools he had established from Rouen to Marseilles, spending more and more time in prayer as he grew older. Approaching 60 and worn down by the incessant work of maintaining his schools, he convoked a chapter to elect one of the brothers as superior general to carry on the work of the institute after he was gone. Brother Barthélemy, a solid choice, was elected, and de La Salle continued to work alongside him.

And the work went on. Finally, bedridden and nearly blind from his incessant labors, de La Salle, after receiving the sacraments, died at St. Yon on the outskirts of Rouen on the morning of Good Friday, April 7, 1719, just short of his 68th birthday. It would take six more years before the Vatican approved the Christian Brothers as a teaching order and another 175 years before de La Salle was recognized as the saint he was. Finally, in 1950, Pius XII declared him the Special Patron of All Teachers of Youth in the Catholic Church.

A Practical Education

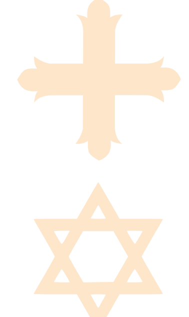
A classical *and* practical education, along with the cultivation of a spirit of faith, piety, self-discipline and obedience, came to characterize the Christian Brothers. The lower classes, de La Salle understood, were every bit as entitled to be taught as the wealthy. This meant free schools led by well-educated teachers. Rather than teach Latin, he insisted, classes must be taught in the native language as the best way for the student's advancement. And reading in the vernacular was the best way to speedily acquire new knowledge—that and the ability to write clearly. Those skills achieved, students could then turn to the study of Latin and thus enter law, politics, engineering and church affairs more quickly.

But how to educate so many—French in his time, Irish, Italian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian in ours? In Europe's universities, lectures were given in Latin, followed by disputations on the subject (again, in Latin). But de La Salle insisted on the "simultaneous method," which allowed large groups of students to study the same books, thanks to printing. The teacher learned to adapt his language and explanations as necessary, moving from the simple to more complex ideas and concepts, all in the common vernacular.

Let the method's record speak for itself. In 1719, the year de La Salle died, the number of brothers teaching all over France had risen to 274. By the French Reign of Terror, even after the institute had been dissolved by the French National Assembly, the number stood at 900. Eighty years later, there were over 10,000 brothers. By 1900 there were over 14,000 teaching in schools and colleges and universities worldwide.

Today, there are 560 high schools and colleges run by the brothers around the world. And though the number of brothers teaching has dwindled to 4,000, they are aided by some 73,000 lay colleagues who teach nearly a million students in over 80 countries, from impoverished nations like Nigeria to colleges like Bethlehem University in the Holy Land, La Salle University in Philadelphia, St. Mary's University in Minnesota and Manhattan College in the Bronx, whose green quadrangle so many of us walked each day and where we learned to love the classics. Some of us, in turn, went on to teach and write, freely giving of ourselves to whomever we were fortunate enough to reach.

Paul Mariani, *a poet and biographer, is a former poetry editor at* ***America*** *and University Professor Emeritus at Boston College.*



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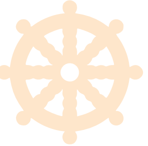

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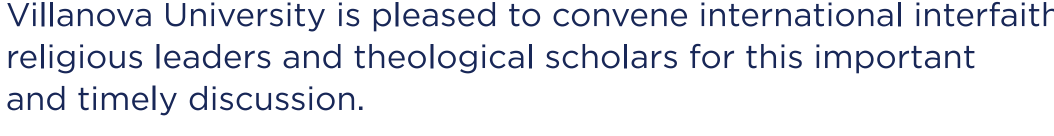

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Art on the Catholic College Campus

By Leo J. O'Donovan

When Yale College opened the first American college art gallery in 1832, its fundamental mission was much the same as the university now describes it: "to encourage appreciation and understanding of art and its role in society through direct engagement with original works of art." Fifty years later a museum of art was established at Princeton, founded largely on the model of European universities. There the history of art was a new academic discipline, and museums served to offer students as well as the public wider access to original works of art while also teaching art history through increasingly encyclopedic collections. At the close of the century, similar missions guided the establishment of successive campus galleries at Harvard: the Fogg Art Museum in 1895, the Busch-Reisinger in 1901 and the Arthur M. Sackler in 1985. (All three are now united in Renzo Piano's newly designed building built in 2014.)

At Catholic universities today there are a number of distinguished descendants of their colonial predecessors. The University of Notre Dame opened its Snite Museum of Art in 1980 and on another part of its campus will soon begin construction of the additional Raclin Murphy Museum of Art, to be designed by Robert A. M. Stern Architects. Boston College's

The Museum of Contemporary Religious Art

"Cruz for Bishop Oscar Romero, Martyr of El Salvador," by Michael Tracy, at the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art at St. Louis University.

McMullen Museum of Art opened in 1993 and is now newly located on the university's Brighton Campus. (It has had over 60 exhibitions, including widely praised presentations of Caravaggio and Rouault.)

Loyola University Chicago boasted the Martin D'Arcy Collection of Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and under the inspired leadership of Pamela Ambrose broadened its mission as the Loyola University Museum of Art "to explore and promote the spiritual in art of all faiths and cultures." (Unfortunately, the university announced earlier this year that the museum was "closing to the public" and would potentially be restructured for alternative uses.) Smaller galleries also play important cultural and educational roles at other schools: Loyola Marymount University's Laband Art Gallery has mounted "Confess: An Installation by Trina McKillen," giving voice to young victims of sexual abuse, and Fairfield University's new Art Museum (2010) had a stunning show on the art of the Gesù Church in Rome as part of the university's 75th anniversary celebration.

Among them all, the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art at St. Louis University, known as Mocra, stands out for its singular focus on contemporary religious art that is genuinely interfaith—ecumenical in the widest sense of the term. While studying at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., in 1985, Mocra's founder, Terrence Dempsey, S.J., imagined a thesis in art history that would explore the religious dimensions of German Expressionism. A chance remark from a former student caused him to shift his focus to the art of the present, and soon a succession of encounters with like-minded curators and gallerists led him to discover a whole catalog of artists engaged with the religious dimension of experience, 11 of whom he discussed in his doctoral dissertation, "The Pursuit of the Spirit: The Re-Emergence of Spiritual Concerns in American Art in the 1980s."

After he began teaching at St. Louis University, Father Dempsey continued to develop his contacts with a wide range of artists whose practice was variously open to what he called "the religious and spiritual dimension" of human experience. He saw the fulcrum of his vision in the dialogue between artists and their audiences. When the local Jesuit community sold their former house of studies to the university in 1989, the build-

> The Museum of Contemporary Religious Art has been reliably and regularly exploratory.

ing's chapel proved an ideal space for a museum—5,000 square feet, with a ceiling 28 feet high, a nave that measured 66 by 25 feet, a spacious sanctuary, two side aisles whose 12 intimate chapels were perfect for smaller pieces, and a balcony as well. The new Museum of Contemporary Religious Art opened there in 1993 with an exhibition called "Sanctuaries: Recovering the Holy in Contemporary Art."

To celebrate its 25th anniversary earlier this year, the museum exhibited 25 artists, a good many of whom had been shown from the beginning as well as others who were newer to its walls: a remarkable photo weaving entitled "Cambodia," by Dinh Q. Lê (1995); a haunting color photograph by Erika Diettes (2008) that evokes forced disappearances during the violence in her native Colombia; an example from 2011 of Jordan Eagles's unsettling work that uses animal blood as a painting medium and takes you from surface beauty to troubling questions as you contemplate it.

The spacious nave was divided into two bays. The first celebrated a range of styles: a visionary landscape by the Native American painter and poet Frank LaPena (1988); the dazzling calligraphy of a text from the Quran by Salma Arastu (2014); the elegantly minimalist abstraction of Daniel Ramirez's "Celestial Manger" (1989-90); Jim Morphesis' large painting of a skull (a traditional memento mori piece in Abstract Expressionist style, 1985); and Michael David's representation of the Star of David ("Missing in Action," 1985) covered with chunks of red encaustic wax (roses? flesh?).

The second bay offered some stunning, explicitly Christian iconography. The now well-known installation by Helen David Brancato, I.H.M., "Crucifixion—Haiti" (1999) derives from a newspaper photograph of Guirlande Louis, who lost five members of her family in a ferry accident off the coast of Port-au-Prince, and is, the artist says, "a universal image depicting the suffering of women in our world and a reflection on Jesus' solidarity with women." Eleanor Dickinson's "Crucifixion of Dountes" (1988) is an overpowering depiction of an African-American man, painted in deep shadow, with acute foreshortening, in place of Jesus. Frederick J. Brown's "Madonna and Child," from his "Life of Christ Altarpiece" (1994-95), would seem at first a more serene counterpoint to these plaintive pieces. But it has its own pathos, his African-American and Choctaw background asserting itself challengingly in the child's melancholy face and his mother's sphinx-like, inscrutable visage.

The two most memorable pieces in the exhibition are by the socially engaged American artist Michael Tracy, who has lived for many years in San Ygnacio, a small border town on the Rio Grande, whose work, in the words of Peter Selz, "confronts the viewer with a combination of beauty and terror." That is certainly the case with his "Cruz for Bishop Oscar Romero, Martyr of El Salvador," one of a series of processional crosses he made between 1977 and 1983. Like the *pasos* (elaborate floats) of Holy Week in Hispanic cultures, the Romero cross has carrying poles and a gold-painted platform. It is skirted with house-shaped *iconitos* inspired by the frames of early Renaissance Sienese paintings, surrounded by bouquets of flowers and several telling photographs, and surmounted by 16 bull horns as symbols of strength and bravery.

Perhaps even more viscerally arresting is Tracy's "La Pasión" (1981-88), an enormous triptych (22 ft. x 31 ft.) hung before what was once the back wall of the chapel's sanctuary, with three panels representing the 11th, 12th and 13th stations of the cross, topped by a decorative crown of hammered tin that has three fans above bright roses at its center and corners. Purely abstract, the panels are nevertheless, in "Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross," evocative of tortured life, in "Jesus Dies on the Cross" of desolation and death, and in "Jesus Is Brought Down From the Cross" of the remains of life (scattered pottery affixed to the canvas), relics and some-

MOCRA, Saint Louis University

"Rio Abajo # 7," by Erika Diettes

Jeffrey Vaughn

"Crucifixion—Haiti," by Helen David Brancato, I.H.M.

how also reverence. With the great weight of the canvases, sags have developed in some of their lower parts. They belong there, the paintings' material itself expressing for a weary world its greatest sorrow. Spend an hour before the great work, and it will become part of you. Spend a day, and you will long always to return.

The 25th anniversary exhibition had been preceded by other standout shows following the museum's opening in 1993. "Consecrations: The Spiritual in Art in the Time of AIDS" (1994-95) was the first group exhibition that sought to put AIDS within a spiritual framework. (Father Dempsey remembers the opening, which included the dance companies Pilobolus and Alvin Ailey, as "the most glorious" in the museum's 25 years.) The mid-career retrospective "Bernard Maisner: Entrance to the Scriptorium" (1998-99), exploring the artist's quarter-century of work in manuscript illumination, traveled to multiple subsequent venues. Andy Warhol's "Silver Clouds" (2001-2), again with dancing in the central gallery, was probably the biggest hit with the public—and one of the largest installations of the 1966 original.

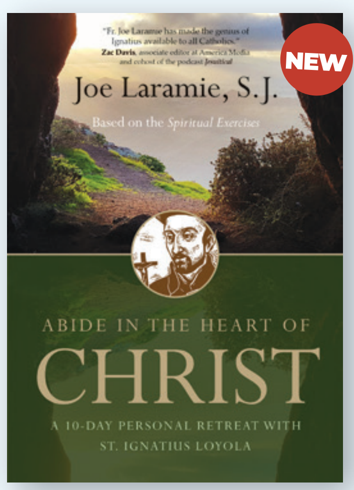
Mocra in our new century has been reliably and regularly exploratory. Erika Diettes's "Sudarios" (2016) took her compassionate camera into war-torn parts of Colombia and, after photographing women who had been forced to witness the torture and murder of loved ones, then printed the images on silk panels over seven feet high. Suspended from the high ceiling of the main gallery of the museum, they formed a procession of shrouded figures recalling Christ's own—a testimonial to pain and death yet also a testament to dignity and the search for justice. Last year Mocra was selected to present an exhibition at St. Louis Lambert International Airport exploring contemporary artists who extend the tradition of manuscript illumination.

At a time when the energy of the ecumenical movement has faltered and many artists seem preoccupied with the market and the marketable, the breadth of Mocra's worldwide ecumenism and its sensitivity to new forms of artistic expression seem more important than ever. On June 30 of this year, Father Dempsey retired from St. Louis University and stepped away from Mocra; David Brinker has been named the new director. Father Dempsey is curating an exhibition this fall that he describes as a thank-you to the many artists who have played a formative role in Mocra's development. Friends and visitors can take this as a hopeful sign that St. Louis University will keep its vitally creative little museum alive well beyond its 25th anniversary.

Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., *is president emeritus of Georgetown University and director of mission at Jesuit Refugee Service/USA.*

"This wisdom is meant for the whole Church."

—Zac Davis
Associate editor at America Media



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Cloistered

By Ronnie Sirmans

When I was a boy, I considered
becoming a nun because I didn't
want to shave part of my scalp
like I saw the monks had to do.
I never told anyone but God.

But one night after I'd prayed,
I heard Him giggling about it,
sounding like the muted laugh
of my daddy through the flimsy
wood-panel walls of our trailer.
Then I heard the Benny Hill
theme song Yakety Sax, and
so I realized that my daddy
had gotten back up in the night
and was watching TV alone.

I kept quiet to listen, but then
rain on the trailer's metal roof,
like God drumming His fingers
impatiently—how long would
He have to wait for me to give
a prayer that wasn't so nunnish?
A plea for a girlfriend? A plea
for muscles? A plea to be me?
The rain was brief, like spittle.

As I lay in the dark on my bed,
I couldn't hear God's chuckles
at a country boy's prayers about
growing up to be a Protestant nun
nor hear the sight gags making
the unseen TV audience laugh in
jubilant testimony with my daddy.

Ronnie Sirmans *is an Atlanta newspaper digital editor whose poetry has appeared in Sojourners, The Behemoth, Jewish Currents and elsewhere.*

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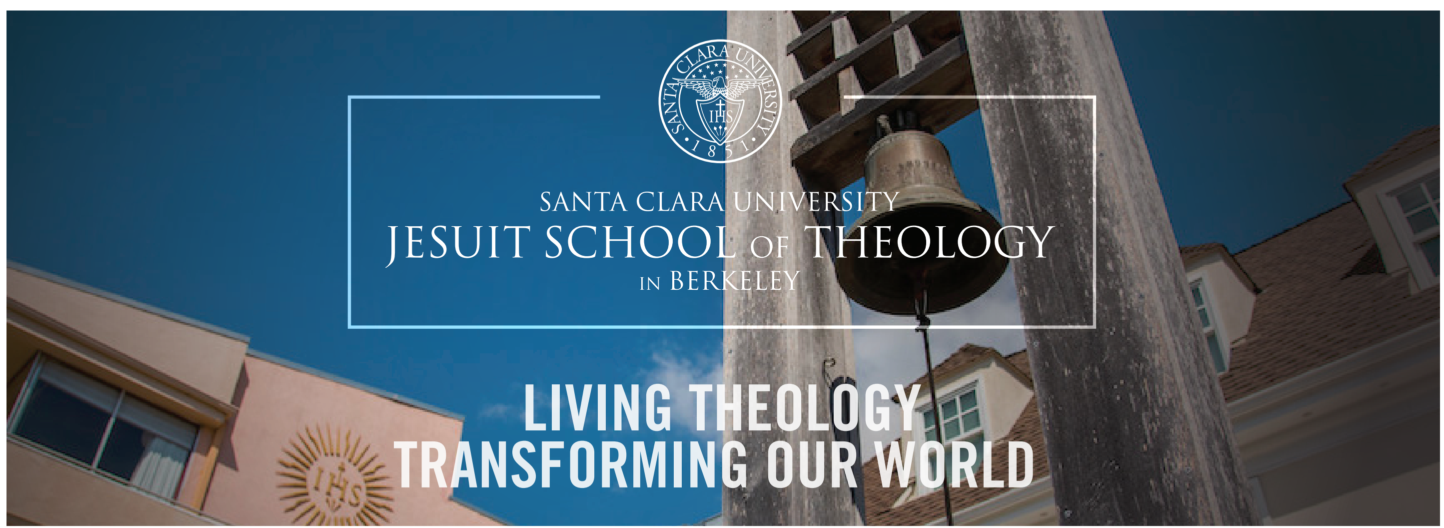

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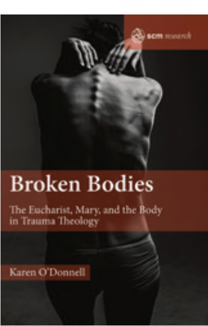
This is my body

By Megan K. McCabe



Broken Bodies
The Eucharist, Mary and the Body in Trauma Theology
By Karen O'Donnell
SCM Press
224p $38

"I hated my body. It fundamentally let me down. The trauma of miscarriage, reproductive loss and infertility changed who I was, changed my whole life, and I blamed my body. My body had failed to do the one thing I felt, as a woman, it ought to be able to do." With these words, Karen O'Donnell opens the final chapter of her book on trauma theology. "Months after my last ectopic pregnancy, one that cost me a fallopian tube and almost cost me my life, I lay, face down, on the cold wooden floor of the hallway of my home and screamed. I beat my fists on the floor, I bashed my knees. I made inhuman and unearthly noises. I threw things. I was so incredibly angry."

"Not at God. But at my body. I hated my body. It had let me down."

As O'Donnell names her own experience of trauma, she reflects: "Why did God let this happen to me? The theology I knew gave me no answers." Her experience of surviving and healing from trauma led O'Donnell to examine theologies of trauma and prompted her to write her own trauma theology as a "survivor's gift that is offered as both a comfort and a challenge."

O'Donnell, a research fellow in digital pedagogy and theology at St. John's College, Durham University, England, directs her attention here not to violence perpetrated within the church itself, like ecclesiastical complicity in racism or the abuse crisis, but instead to a recognition of the many traumatized bodies within the body of Christ. She hopes that the work can serve as a gift to those who have suffered trauma and can offer potential pastoral implications for trauma recovery in an ecclesial and liturgical context.

Theologically, the traumatized body is the body of Christ, which demands theological reflection. The task of trauma theology is to reread the Christian tradition through the lens of trauma. O'Donnell names this task: "If trauma is primarily concerned with rupture(s), then so too am I." Viewing the Christian tradition through the lens of trauma gives way to rupture within texts, doctrines and theologies, ultimately making "space for the construction of something that is new and fresh." Given this approach, O'Donnell's work is both project of *ressourcement*, examining the richness of the tradition, and one of construction, prompting new ways of thinking about ordained ministry, the sacraments and Mariology.

The experience of trauma involves a rupture of bodily integrity, potentially as a feeling of being unsafe or as an experience of injury. Also experienced by the survivor is a rupture in

time, such as a gap in memory caused by a traumatic event or as the intrusion of the traumatic event into the present (experienced as flashbacks or nightmares). A final rupture is one of cognition and language; the traumatic event cannot be understood.

Trauma recovery, then, involves a response to each of these three ruptures. The survivor must establish bodily integrity. The survivor must make sense of the experience by constructing and remembering a narrative of the trauma. And, having been alienated from the surrounding world, the survivor must reconnect with society. Trauma is carried as somatic memory, with the body, not the verbal part of the brain, holding the memory of trauma. The healing processes of remembering in recovery must also, then, be bound to bodily experience.

What then is the somatic memory at the center of Christianity? What are the ruptures in the experience of trauma in the church?

"The place in which body and memory come together, for Christians," O'Donnell writes, "is in the celebration of the Eucharist." While it may be an easy assumption that this memory is the violent crucifixion and death of Jesus, a brutal experience of traumatic suffering, O'Donnell argues that what is remembered in the Eucharist is instead best identified with the Annunciation-Incarnation event.

"The term Annunciation-Incarnation event is used in order to remind us that the Incarnation stretches beyond the one moment in time," she writes, "and instead encompasses the whole of Christ's life from the moment of conception, his birth, his childhood, his adulthood, his ministry, his death, and his resurrection." In her examination of the early Christian church, this emphasis on the Annunciation is exactly what was said to be remembered in the celebration of the Eucharist. Indeed, if God became flesh in the Incarnation, then of course the Eucharist is a nonidentical repetition of that same God-becoming-human. This move connects Mary to the story of Jesus, confirmed by the work of early theologians who drew on natal and maternal imagery to communicate the incarnational memory of the Eucharist for the early church.

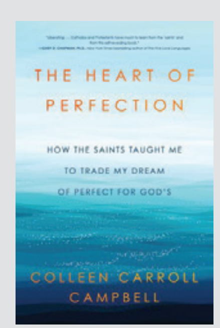
Given Mary's *fiat* to collaborate with God's work at the beginning of the Annunciation-Incarnation event, the priest acts in the role of Mary in addition to the role of Christ: "The priest births the elements as Mary birthed Christ." And given that the Annunciation-Incarnation event has been identified as one of trauma, the Eucharist as nonidentical repetition is traumatic as well, as are the other sacraments. As O'Donnell observes, "All sacramental experiences cause ruptures" within the recipient. As a result, the reception of the Eucharist requires a new "assembly of self and reorientation of person in line with the Divine," which "releases believers to mission as a recovery from trauma."

O'Donnell's theological reflection challenged her to come to terms with Mary's embodiment in a new way, which ultimately "has meant naming her experience 'trauma.' To become suddenly and unexpectedly pregnant as Mary did was surely a traumatic experience—frightening and puzzling." This approach does not imply that Mary was victimized by rape but rather that her experience was a rupture of her bodily integrity "to make way for the flesh of another."

It was an event that broke into her life suddenly and miraculously and one she could not fully understand. Consequently, Mary is a figure who must heal from trauma. And, as O'Donnell argues, she heals from it in ways that are typical of those who suffer from PTSD. She reclaims her bodily integrity and constructs a narrative that gives meaning to the Annunciation-Incarnation event through the Magnificat. Finally, she reclaims her world by offering a survivor's gift of her trauma through the person of Christ carried within her.

Broken Bodies offers a significant contribution to theological reflection on questions of bodily rupture by taking experiences like miscarriage seriously—as well as by pushing for a theology that can ground ecclesial practices that support trauma recovery. Yet in a context in which we witness the trauma of the body of Christ in the harms of the Catholic abuse crisis, a question hovers in the background that is unanswered by O'Donnell's text: What would a trauma theology look like that starts with the concrete experience of trauma rather than the "life-giving" event of the Annunciation-Incarnation?

Megan K. McCabe *is an assistant professor at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash.*



The Heart of Perfection
By Colleen Carroll Campbell
Howard Book
256p $26

Your grace is enough

I am not a Type A person—my dusty baseboards can confirm this. In fact, I would never have pegged myself as having a perfectionism problem until I picked up Colleen Carroll Campbell's new book, *The Heart of Perfection: How the Saints Taught Me to Trade My Dream of Perfect for God's.* Delving into Campbell's journey is like looking in a mirror revealing our own fears, pride, shame and fantasies of control that hold us back from accepting God's grace. Her book reveals that spiritual perfectionism is not just a problem for helicopter parents and driven careerists. It is something we all struggle with.

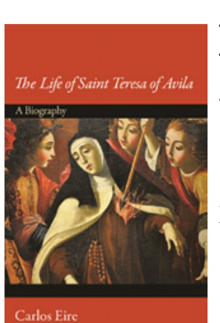
In the midst of a successful career as a journalist, author and presidential speechwriter, Campbell hit a breaking point. Drowning in the demands of young motherhood, she could no longer trick herself into believing she could maintain control over her life—particularly her spiritual life. The thought of passing this burden of perfectionism on to her children motivated her to find a remedy.

The Heart of Perfection offers insight into the heart of the matter in the exhausting battle of spiritual perfectionism: the vicious pride that keeps us from facing the reality of our imperfections and the fear that deceives us into believing we are unworthy of God's love if we cannot keep up appearances. Campbell pairs her own story with those of saints like St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, whose grace-filled victories over perfectionism inspire her.

Campbell also includes the story of Angélique Arnauld. Although friends with St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, Angélique refused to follow them into their embrace of God's mercy and love and instead clung to a path of self-dependence and scrupulosity that led her into the arms of joyless heresy. Her life is a sobering warning for all of us who struggle to accept our own weakness and need for God's mercy.

The Heart of Perfection is full of insight into what motivates us to attempt to reach holiness through our own strength and how this obsession holds us back from spiritual progress. But Campbell does not invite us to a watered-down spirituality that resigns us to a "You're okay, I'm okay" mentality. Instead, she opens up a world of radical dependence on God's grace and the patient, humble obedience that draws us close to the heart of Jesus. The wise advice she offers can be a catalyst for self-reflection and acknowledgement that while we are weak, God's grace is always sufficient.

Haley Stewart *is the author of* The Grace of Enough: Pursuing Less and Living More in a Throwaway Culture. *She blogs at Carrots for Michaelmas and co-hosts the Fountains of Carrots podcast.*



The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila
A Biography
By Carlos Eire
Princeton University Press
280p $26.95

Saintly optimism

The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila is termed an "autohagiography," a self-justification of saintliness, by Carlos Eire, a professor of history and religious studies at Yale University. Titled *El Libro de la Vida* by its first publisher, it was written at the command of the Spanish Inquisition, which required proof of the sacred attributes of a sickly nun in 16th-century Spain who also experienced seizures and trances.

Eire offers empathetic details of how Teresa was born into a family that had converted from Judaism, like her contemporary St. John of the Cross. The legends of both *conversos* include stories of them levitating involuntarily as a sign of divine intervention. Artworks often show them together, hovering in the air.

After one vision, Teresa recounted how a handsome angel pierced her heart with a flaming lance, causing both pain and rapture. The baroque sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini's "Ecstasy of Saint Teresa" in the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome is "at once very faithful to Teresa's text and also highly imaginative and metaphorical. She is not anticipating a painful wounding; she is already enraptured," Eire observes.

Expressing this rapture, Teresa

communicated pride in authorship and her literary abilities. "She really loved writing, and excelled at it," Eire reminds us. She was also aware of her singular status as a recipient of holy attentions and therefore as one permitted (despite lifelong ailments) to establish convents and urge other Spanish *conversos* to a stricter Catholic piety.

With some irony, Teresa was deemed a quintessentially Spanish saint centuries later by the fascist government of Generalissimo Francisco Franco, who was presumably ignorant of her origins. Had her family's *converso* identity been known during her lifetime, she never would have been admitted to a convent and probably would not have been canonized so promptly.

As Eire notes, Teresa's analytical mind when reflecting on mental prayer and mystical theology overshadows her potentially inflammatory words about confessors: "I do not fear Satan half so much as I fear those who fear him." Eire looks to the larger significance of *The Life*'s "audacious, unrestrained optimism about the human potential for love and divinization, and its affirmation of the ultimate triumph of good over evil." Small wonder that later writers, from Francis de Sales, Vincent de Paul and Richard Crashaw to George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and Gertrude Stein, were captivated by this powerful and delightful autohagiography.

Benjamin Ivry *has written biographies of Francis Poulenc, Maurice Ravel and Arthur Rimbaud and has translated many books from French.*

Us vs. Them
The Failure of Globalism
By Ian Bremmer
Portfolio
208p, $27

Hiding behind walls

When the Berlin Wall fell, it seemed the era of walls had come to a close. Three decades later, from the U.S.-Mexico border to Hungary, walls are back in fashion. There can be no doubt about it: globalization is experiencing backlash. In *Us vs. Them: The Failure of Globalism,* Ian Bremmer, a writer for Time and a respected foreign policy analyst, argues that the worst is yet to come. Though it does not provide a comforting analysis, this concise book is crucial for understanding how the post-Cold War triumph of free trade and democracy spiralled so quickly into a global rebirth of populism.

Bremmer focuses much of his attention on the developing world, finding clues of the instability to come in political turmoil in South Africa and Brazil, in unexpected protests and dissent in Turkey and China, and in religious and ethnic conflict in India and Nigeria. Bremmer's thesis goes like this: Thus far, globalization has largely benefited the developing world, raising standards of living and promoting investment in poorer countries. But paradoxically, success in raising standards of living has only made citizens demand more. And with new technologies like automation on the horizon, globalization's ability to bring better jobs to countries like Mexico may be very short lived.

Bremmer predicts that soon Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Egypt, China and many others will all have their own Marie Le Pens and Steve Bannons. Populist and nationalist backlash to globalization will hit all the harder in countries with fewer social safety nets and less-established political institutions.

The backlash against globalization often overlaps with racial resentment and ethnic hatred. President Trump claims to stand for the forgotten men and women of America, but it is not the rich coastal elites who have suffered most under the Trump administration. Instead, it is immigrant families not so different from mine that are shattered while much of the country cheers. The question of how a democracy should respond to bigotry among its electorate will be the among the most challenging of our time.

Can the post-Cold War vision of globalism survive? Bremmer's prognosis is grim; but his writing makes clear that if globalism is to survive it will need to do a better job listening to real grievances of those left behind. Otherwise globalism will consume itself.

Upheaval is coming, and it will take the best of who we are to overcome it. All of us will have to resist the temptation to retreat behind our social and physical walls.

Antonio De Loera-Brust *is a first-generation Mexican-American writer and filmmaker from Davis, Calif., and a former Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., fellow at* ***America.***

Evil is out there

By Nick Ripatrazone

"Evil" is the rare television show that has a black Catholic as a main character. Mike Colter plays a seminarian.

Early in the pilot episode of "Evil," a new primetime series from CBS, the psychologist Kristen Bouchard (Katja Herbers) is questioning Orson LeRoux, a man charged with several grisly murders. Smug and sarcastic, Orson parries Kristen's procedural questions.

After grilling Orson for more than 18 hours, Kristen is desperate. She stands and asks him a strange question: "Are you Catholic?" He says no and asks if she is herself. "Not anymore," Kristen says, before dragging her finger across the dusty table between them, forming the sign of the cross. She sits and then calmly recites the Our Father—until Orson leaps across the table, tackling her to the floor. He mumbles something in Latin while it takes several guards to pry him away.

Moments before that dramatic scene, Kristen had been offered a crucifix by a mysterious man "for your own protection." She soon learns that man is David Acosta (Mike Colter), a Catholic seminarian who is also working as an "assessor" for the diocese. His job: investigating unexplained phenomena in order to recommend whether an exorcism is appropriate. After seeing Kristen testify in court about Orson's disturbing case, David shows up at her house later that night to ask for her help.

It is a great set up for a television series—and yes, comparisons to Scully and Mulder from "The X-Files" are warranted. Yet Dana Scully, the skeptic, was the Catholic, and Fox Mulder, the believer, was an atheist. The two main characters of "Evil" are in varying places on the spectrum of Catholic practice, but they are both Catholic in culture and identity.

The result is a tense, engaging and fascinating story dynamic. The show fronts the word *evil* in its title, its action and its morality. In doing so, a primetime show on mainstream television names that which is evil and invites a discussion about it—acknowledging that evil is a real force in our world.

Kristen thinks evil exists in the world—but the type of mundane evil that she testifies about in court trials, not demons and possession. "I want your skepticism," David tells her. She is willing to help, but mostly because she needs the money.

David has great lines—and Colter is a fine actor. "Science is only good for repeatable phenomena," he says to Kristen, "and most of life, the most interesting parts, don't repeat." "Evil" doesn't quite claim that we need to choose between science and faith; after all, David needs Kristen's help and skepticism. But the show demonstrates what many Catholics already know, but what many others do not know about Catholics: that faith and science are symbiotic.

The show's theology is interest-

CBS

ing, but viewers beware: this is not simply television catechism. "Evil" is frightening. As Kristen becomes more involved with Orson, she starts experiencing horrific night terrors. Frozen in bed, she sees a demonic, incubus-like figure prowl across her room. "Evil" does go for the jugular, and yet the scares are strangely affirming: the show takes evil seriously.

The demon physically harasses Kristen, but his mental abuse is possibly worse. He knows that she is attracted to David. It might seem like a predictable television trope, but both Kristen and David have secrets that complicate her feelings.

Demonic possession is not new to television. The recent, short-lived reboot of "The Exorcist" probably faltered because it paled in comparison with the original film, but "Evil" has a different element. It is the rare mainstream television show that has a black Catholic as a main character. David's Catholicism is neither tokenized or exoticized in the show—it is a welcome shift from the absence of black Catholics in narratives.

David Acosta centers the moral sense of "Evil." "The world is getting worse," he says late in the episode, "because evil is no longer isolated. Bad people are talking to each other." Something has to be done to fight back. His words feel true; they are the words of a believer.

Nick Ripatrazone *has written for Rolling Stone, The Atlantic, The Paris Review and Esquire. His latest book is* Ember Days, *a collection of stories.*

'GLOW' reveals the truth of female friendship

Now in its third season, Netflix's series "GLOW" at first seems heavy on plot—veering almost into soap opera—as it sets up the off-beat situation in which it takes place. "GLOW" (the titular acronym for Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling) follows a rag-tag band of Los Angeles fringe actors and misfits who find their way into the surprisingly wholesome passion project of the trust-fund-baby-turned-producer Sebastian Howard, known as Bash.

The protagonist of "GLOW" is Ruth (Alison Brie), an actor without agent or insurance, who has been lucklessly trying to break into stardom for 10 years. How could it get worse? Then Ruth commits the unforgivable sin of sleeping with her college best friend Debbie's husband—not once, but twice. At callbacks for "GLOW," Debbie (Betty Gilpin) bursts into the boxing gym and vents her fury on Ruth. The director, Sam Sylvia (Marc Maron), watches their catfight with gusto, and promptly casts the ex-best friends as wrestling rivals.

At first, "GLOW" seems to cater to this male gaze, as Sam and Bash create W.W.E.-type, super-sexualized wrestling personae for the actors. Slowly but surely, the women of "GLOW" co-opt the objectified (and often racially offensive) roles handed to them. As the women begin to see their work as their own, not as an avenue of their own objectification, the camera begins to see this, too. Their work becomes collaborative, empowering and meaningful.

"GLOW" examines the mechanisms of competition and forgiveness within a relationship by pushing Debbie and Ruth's friendship to the limits. Desperate to make up for shattering her friend's life, Ruth makes tentative peace offerings. Debbie sometimes accepts, sometimes rejects. Amid the toxic dance of danger and distrust between Ruth and Debbie, we see moments of real partnership. On the mat, in the ring, on the stage, Ruth and Debbie work together not just as consummate professionals, but as true teammates—listening, communicating, working with one another in the easy flow that comes from love and trust.

"GLOW" celebrates female strength: on the mat, in the producing studio, along the thankless gauntlet of the Los Angeles auditioning circuit. But the women of "GLOW" are at their strongest when they are caring for one another—even when knocking each other to the ground.

Renée Darline Roden*'s writing has appeared in Howlround, Church Life Journal and Image Journal's Good Letters.*

"GLOW" examines the mechanisms of competition and forgiveness within a relationship.
Netflix

Disciples and Servants

Readings: Hab 1:2-2:4, Ps 95, 2 Tm 1:6-14, Lk 17:5-10

In the short term, it is easy to fake being a follower of Christ. Discipleship requires action and conversion, the engagement of both hands and heart. Christ's disciples do not earn God's love by living out the Gospel. Instead, they are invited to live out the Gospel as a testament to their faith. To live it out with joy requires faith; to serve without faith is fraudulent and will yield only exhaustion.

Discipleship requires action. This linkage has deep roots in the religion of ancient Israel. Believers had to practice their faith, and traditions arose that identified certain practices as particularly righteous. These included specific and carefully managed forms of worship, as described in the first five books of the Bible, as well as a whole host of personal practices, including male circumcision, care for widows and orphans, proportional demands in matters of equity and retribution (only an eye for an eye, no more than a tooth for a tooth). By Jesus' day, the supreme action was the observance of the Sabbath as a day of rest not just for oneself, but also for one's family, one's slaves and even one's animals. By acting according to these laws and precepts, many of which were quite public, followers of the God of Israel gave glory to God through their public display of faith.

Discipleship requires a transformation of heart as well, and Jesus identified this as a problem for many. If he often singles out the Pharisees for criticism, it is only because they were the ones most concerned with right action before God. Faith is the necessary first step in following God. Jesus notes on more than one occasion that right action without an interior transformation becomes a parody of righteousness. The laws and traditions of Israel existed as a means to give glory to the God on whom one had set one's heart in faith. Without that action of the heart, one's righteous activity served only to bring glory to oneself.

One must never forget that the life of discipleship is the life for which humans were created. Jews call the law of Moses Torah, a word better translated as "instruction." It is God's instructions on how to be human. The Gospel fills this same role for Christians. God's followers take on an active life that at first can feel quite new, even alien. This is not the case, however; discipleship is a restoration to the life for which we are all originally made.

'Is he grateful to that servant because he did what he was commanded?' (Lk 17:9)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Do your actions symbolize your faith?

Do you follow Gospel teaching to give glory to the God who loves you?

This realization marks the difference between a disciple and an unprofitable servant. Disciples follow God's commands in order to discover their true humanity. Servants follow commands in hopes of receiving a reward. Servants act without faith; disciples act as a testament to their faith.

Servants can be great frauds, sinners who destroy the faith of many. More common, however, are those who, with good intentions, undertake the works of God with insufficient faith. The tasks are endless and the labor all-consuming. Servants sometimes burn out quickly; they can also linger for years in growing cynicism and despair. By contrast, disciples know that the smallest act, done in faith, gives glory to God.

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

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A Life of Thanksgiving

Readings: 2 Kgs 5:14-17, Ps 98, 2 Tm 2:8-13, Lk 17:11-19

Last Sunday, the Gospel reading encouraged us to consider the difference between disciples and servants. A servant, lacking faith, works to receive thanks, but gets none, whereas a disciple with faith lives out the Gospel as a means of giving thanks. Luke follows that lesson with the miracle story in this Sunday's Gospel, which warns against another mistake disciples can make: treating salvation as an entitlement. Whereas the missing ingredient in last week's Gospel was faith, in this Gospel reading, the missing element was gratitude.

At first glance, the miracle story in this Sunday's Gospel reading is similar to a healing recorded in Lk 5:12-16, early in Jesus' ministry. The traditions are similar enough that they may have actually influenced each other as they were told and retold. But there are some significant differences, which draw our attention to the role of faith.

Jesus encounters these lepers on his trip to Jerusalem. This is a time during which he gives extensive instructions in discipleship. Also, in contrast to the healing in Lk 5:12, Jesus does not reach out, touch or pray over the stricken men. They remain at a distance the whole time, and his only word to them is, "Go show yourselves to the priests." In this Luke foreshadows Jesus' statement, "Your faith has saved you."

Such faith entails openness to God's grace. All 10 lepers believed Jesus could heal them. Their mistake was in taking that healing for granted, forgetting that faith, although it gave God an opportunity to act, did not entitle them to a display of divine power. Only one realized that his healing was an unmerited grace, the one who returned to give thanks.

God does not make deals or offer transactions. Faith is not a thing God demands from us; it is a spiritual stance, an open heart that gives God room to maneuver. If discipleship without faith is servitude, then faith without thanksgiving is commerce.

It is easy to fall into this trap, especially for those who work for faith-based organizations or struggle to advance in discipleship. It might become easy to feel that we have built up some kind of credit with God, that our acts of discipleship are like cash deposits in a bank. It is easy to forget to give thanks when a subtle whisper in our psyche suggests that God owes us.

True discipleship, as demonstrated by the Samaritan leper, is an expression of thanksgiving. He was the only one who recognized the utter freedom of divine grace, and the only one who acknowledged his own need to respond by giving thanks. In that, he was a model disciple, someone with faith enough to give God room to act and humility enough to be grateful.

This remains the case. The grace we receive every day is a free gift from the God who loves us. It is the power with which we overcome obstacles, find healing, resist temptation and serve the needs of the kingdom. That we can receive that grace and act out of it is cause for a lifetime of thanksgiving.

'One of them, realizing he had been healed, returned and fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.' (Lk 17:15-16)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How can you make sure you remember to give thanks?

What saving deed has God done for you or someone you love?

What tasks of discipleship can you use to give thanks to God?

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

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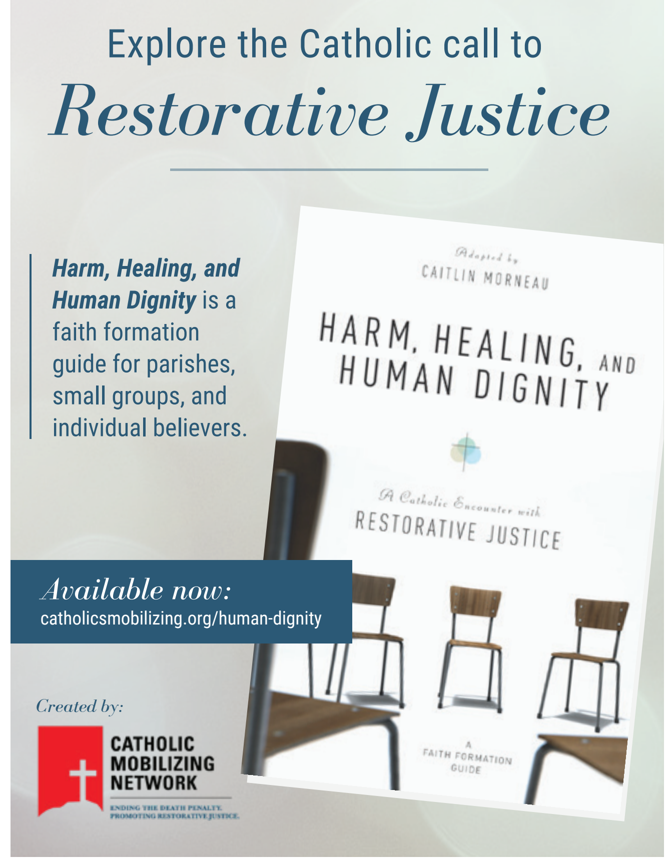

Music at the Margins

Seeing God through the eyes of hip-hop

By Alex E. Nava

When I first proposed a course on religion and hip-hop at the University of Arizona more than 15 years ago, it raised some eyebrows. There are, I argued at the time, courses on rock 'n' roll, jazz and the blues but nothing on the youngest genre of black music, which arose in the South Bronx in the 1970s.

Today there are hundreds of college courses on the subject and numerous dissertations and books tackling different facets of hip-hop. It has even secured the imprimatur of the Pulitzer Prize committee: In 2017, the prestigious award went to Kendrick Lamar for the album "DAMN.," the first work to win the Pulitzer for music outside the classical and jazz genres.

The album is deeply theological. In "DAMN." Lamar is no longer the struggling artist of his mixtapes and early albums; he is now rich, successful and trying his best to identify, and avoid,the many traps of fame and fortune. The album focuses on the integrity and preservation of his soul, a journey that takes listeners through social and spiritual mazes. Even the sonic architecture of the album, a sparse and unadorned soundscape stripped of the posh samples and jazz riffs of Lamar's previous works, mirrors the rapper's ascetical and introspective mood.

Lamar has become the voice and conscience of today's hip-hop generation. In a 2015 interview with The New York Times, he said that for many of his listeners, "I'm the closest thing to a preacher they have." Though as a Catholic theologian, I believe in the anchoring beauty of traditional rites, pageantries and theologies, there is more than a little truth in Lamar's observation. It is largely true among many of my students. They, too, seem more attuned to the street testimonies of the hottest rapper of the day than to the voices within the churches. While there is something to lament in this, I also see an opportunity to consider the question of God through the eyes and aesthetics of hip-hop. Instead of binding theology to the ethereal and meditative music of classical or liturgical compositions alone, as numerous modern theologians have done, hip-hop offers an opportunity to enliven theology with a shot of rough and raw grace. Isn't this, after all, consistent with Jesus' mandate to go to the streets and invite the poor and outcast, rather than the wealthy and honorable, to the table of God's bounty? Theology is too refined and honorable as it is. It can use the rumbling sound of African drum beats more than Bach or Beethoven, the booming and rattling of 808-drum machines more than the music of conservatories and symphonies, the dembow rhythms of reggaeton more than disembodied harmonies.

Don't get me wrong. I love the stuff of theology, and I remain committed to liberation theology's "preferential option for the poor," in particular. I find, though, that the exclusive focus on literary and bookish learning in academic theology is too constricting of the Catholic imagination. Hip-hop offers the opportunity to consider the lives of the poor and marginalized from the perspective of the arts, from the vantage point of music, dance, graffiti and the spoken word.

Millions of young people throughout the globe—from Latin America and Africa to Europe and Russia—have now embraced hip-hop as a medium of fun and festivity, defiance and dissent, self-expression and liberation. If it is an ambiguous and flawed genre, filled with wild sins and considerable flaws, there are also countless cases that redeem its spirit and soul. In the hands of its best practitioners, it can be remarkably clairvoyant and prophetic, a snapshot of the many cracks and blind spots in our world that remain unseen and unloved by the privileged and powerful—a species of humble beauty, as Kendrick Lamar has noted to wide acclaim.

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