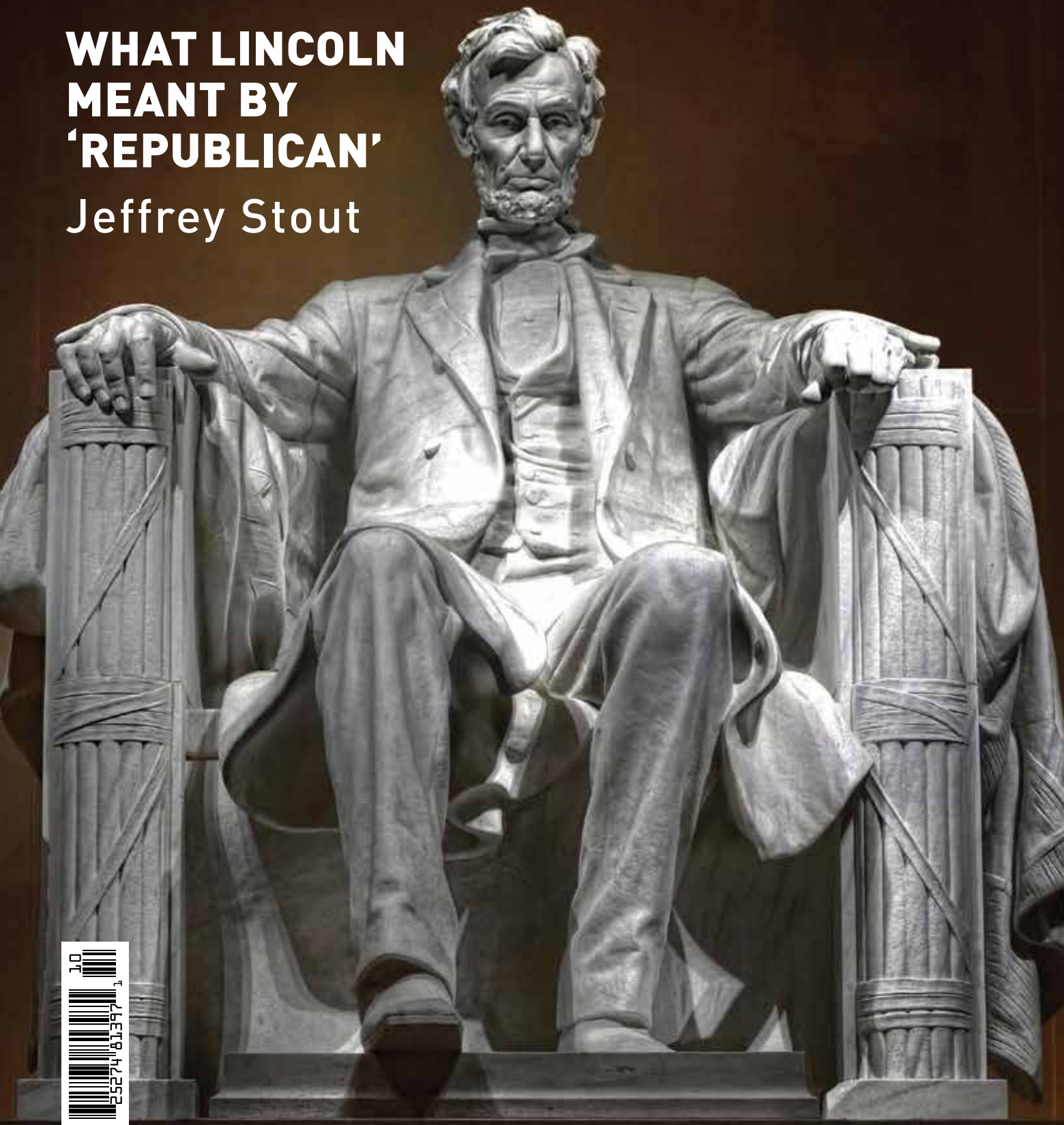
A Review of Religion, Politics & Culture

Commonweal

JUNE 3, 2016

WHAT LINCOLN MEANT BY 'REPUBLICAN'

Jeffrey Stout



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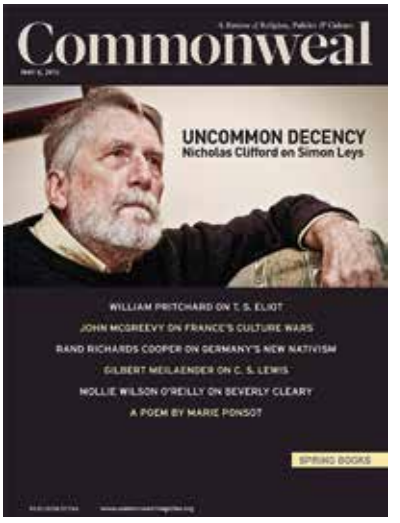
LETTERS

Mere Christianity, women religious, Donald Trump

A CANTERBURY TALE

I was interested to read Gilbert Meilaender's review of *Mere Christianity: A Biography* ("No Cheap Grace Here," May 6), which explored in some detail C. S. Lewis's famous work. This was partly because I am a former pupil of the great man, when I was up at Oxford in his time there, and partly because I have since published a book entitled *A Challenge to C. S. Lewis* (Associated University Presses, 1995), including a chapter devoted to a critique of *Mere Christianity*, in view of its essentially Protestant, if not Puritan, presentation (echoing the original words of the Puritan divine Richard Baxter). I contrast *Mere Christianity* with John Henry Cardinal Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, with its emphasis on the two Catholic doctrines of the primacy of Peter and devotion to the Virgin Mary, the acceptance of which led Newman from the Anglican to the Church of Rome. Those doctrines are prudently glossed over by Lewis.



PETER MILWARD, SJ
Sophia University
Tokyo, Japan

SISTER FACTS

I read with great interest Kathleen Sprows Cummings's review of Tom Roberts's biography of Joan Chittister, OSB ("Where She Stands," May 6). My interest turned to surprise when I saw my name in the review with a reference to "ideologically based judgments Carey and others make about women's religious life." Curious to see what this was all about, I obtained the book.

Roberts cites me extensively as "representative" of the view that many leaders of women religious—Sr. Chittister among them—greatly exceeded the renewal mandate of Vatican II and transformed their orders into organizations more like secular corporations than religious institutions.

To his credit, Roberts portrayed my *Sisters in Crisis* book fairly, writing that it is "an important book," which "is an invaluable source with its attention to dates, details, influential actors, and such."

He disagrees, however, with some of the conclusions I reach in the book, particularly my assessment that the religious orders that will do best in the future are those that have maintained what I call the "classic" way of religious life. That model is more attractive to modern young people because they tend to want to live and pray in community, maintain close ties with the hierarchy, and engage in a corporate apostolate in the name of the Catholic Church.

Roberts writes that this conclusion "is barely supported by the data." He goes on to cite a study that he said found that "almost equal numbers of women" have been attracted to the two different types of religious orders: (1) the classic orders that are represented by the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), and (2) those that Roberts terms "progressive" orders, rep-

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resented by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).

However, Roberts made a mistake unbecoming a veteran journalist by not checking the primary source for that study: "Recent Vocations to Religious Life," a 2009 report by the Georgetown Center for Research in the Apostolate (CARA) for the National Religious Vocation Conference.

Roberts does briefly mention, but then passes over, the study finding that entrants to LCWR orders tend to be over forty, and those to CMSWR orders younger. Worse, he does not engage the actual numbers, which were collected from responses of LCWR and CMSWR orders.

The LCWR represents 80 to 85 percent of all U.S. women religious, with most of the rest represented by CMSWR. Responding to the CARA survey were 274 (about 80 percent) of LCWR orders and 61 (about half) of CMSWR orders.

In other words, half of the classic orders (representing about 10 percent of U.S. sisters) received half of all new entrants, while over three-quarters of the progressive orders (representing about 65 percent of U.S. sisters) got the same number of entrants.

To conclude that both types of orders get equal numbers of new vocations, one would have to assume that none of the nonresponding orders—half of CMSWR orders and 20 percent of LCWR orders—received any new vocations, which is really a stretch.

Claiming that the trend is for young people to prefer the classic style of religious life for women, then, is a logical conclusion, not the result of ideology, and that trend was also noted in the CARA report.

What is needed to definitively settle this difference of opinion is an objective, comprehensive survey that covers all women's religious orders. I'm willing to bet Mr. Roberts and Ms. Cummings a tall latte that such a survey would indeed confirm my assessment.

ANN CAREY
from the website

WINNING ISN'T EVERYTHING

Yes, Trump should be heard ("Let Trump Be Heard," April 16). And listened to. Dislike is an insufficient reason to vote against him.

Trump is ill suited to the presidency precisely because of his self-proclaimed best credential: "winning." That is the worst quality for public office. In business, each party negotiates the best deal for his side. The businessman goes after what is best for his company, regardless of what happens to the other guy. In fact, driving competition out of business might be good for him.

In civic negotiations, many clients have competing interests. A railroad may be good for travelers, but bad for its neighbors. Since civil collaboration must work toward "the common good," all sides may have to compromise. A person focused on "winning" has the wrong skill set for a president. In fact, his skills are the exact opposite of those needed by a good public officer.

DONNA BOYLE
San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

Lights, Camera, Contraception?

The Little Sisters of the Poor, a religious order that cares for the dying and employs non-Catholics, objects to the contraception mandate in the Affordable Care Act, saying it violates church teaching and compels them to cooperate with evil. The Obama administration has properly given the Little Sisters an exemption from the mandate. The exemption requires the Little Sisters to file a one-page form that will transfer the responsibility of providing contraception coverage for employees to insurance companies or the government. The Little Sisters claim that even submitting this exemption form is a substantial burden on their religious liberty. The resolution of this conflict is now in the hands of federal appeals courts, which have been directed by the Supreme Court to find a compromise that balances the government's compelling interests with the least burdensome method of compliance on the part of the plaintiffs.

In the Middle East, Christians face threats to their lives as well as to their religious freedom. In Iraq, Syria, and Libya, Islamic State fighters have frequently murdered Christians, beheading them and sometimes crucifying them. What do the plight of the Little Sisters—whose case has been taken up by a host of conservative activists and given a sympathetic hearing by the highest court in the land—and the fate of persecuted Christians in the Middle East have in common? Besides a shared faith and a noble commitment to live out that faith, there would appear to be few similarities. But if you believe *that*, says the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, you just don't understand how precarious the rights of American Christians have become in the malign era of same-sex marriage and Obamacare. The USCCB has even made a slick video to educate Americans about those dangers.

The video is part of the bishops' ongoing religious-freedom campaign and commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of *Dignitatis humanae*, Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Freedom. It features a lot of ominous music, billowing American flags, many talking heads, impressive women religious, more American flags, scenes of violence, and Islamic State videos of Christian prisoners about to be executed. The Little Sisters case is presented as emblematic of a much broader governmental threat. Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore notes that while genocide is being carried out against Christians in the Middle East, similar forces are evident in the "increasing exclusion of religion from the public square here." The removal of a Ten Commandments monument from the grounds of the Oklahoma State Capitol is one example in the video. Since the monument was erected only in 2012, and clearly violated the state constitution's prohibition against using public property to support any church or "system of religion," its removal hardly seems a violation of the nation's heritage of religious pluralism and freedom. An important part of that heritage is state neutrality toward different denominations or religions.

After a commentator laments the Supreme Court's same-sex marriage decision, the theologian David L. Schindler, a critic of political liberalism, suggests that the threat to religious practice in the United States may look benign but is far from it. Schindler has written that "the state has a duty...to recognize religion and to favor conditions that foster its growth." The video is coy about the exact nature of the contemporary threat to the church. "The government lately has been forcing us more and more to cooperate with its views," according to law professor Helen Alvaré, an adviser to the USCCB. "But I see this as the flip side of the coin, of the government stopping us from practicing our faith." Curiously, this remark is used to frame a shot of a session of Congress in which Hillary Clinton appears. Alvaré also argues that in the absence of religious freedom, "there is no transcendent authority, there is only majority will, then the law is the only norm and the people in power now are always the only power." This is true enough in the abstract, but Alvaré seems to be suggesting that requiring the Little Sisters to submit a form *exempting* them from a law is really the flip side of stopping Catholics "from practicing our faith." In a pluralistic society, religious believers comply with laws they object to every day without compromising the practice of their faith.

Perhaps the oddest and most revealing aspect of the USCCB video is that the word "contraception" is never mentioned. Murder, torture, genocide, and riots all make an appearance, but contraception and the Obamacare mandate are evidently too complicated to bother explaining. Instead, the Little Sisters are being "harassed" by the Obama administration, "compelled to participate in an insurance program that is against the precepts of their faith." Is that an accurate, or even fair, description of the conflict, or of Catholic precepts about what constitutes cooperation with evil? Painting this issue in such black-and-white terms makes the USCCB once again look like the unreasonable party. That is hardly a sound strategy, especially if the bishops are convinced that grave threats to religious liberty are on the horizon. Serious threats deserve serious responses, not melodrama and hyperbole. ■

Charles R. Morris

Getting What We Pay For

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, U.S. TAX RATES ARE LOW—TOO LOW

Donald Trump, on a recent morning talk show, was asked to describe his tax plan. He opened with the statement that "this country has the highest tax rate in the world. Everybody knows that." While it is true that nearly everyone thinks that—or at least nearly all of a group of businessmen I recently put the question to—it isn't close to being true. The Organization for Economic Development (OECD) is an international think tank that publishes an annual tax league table for the forty-two countries deemed to have the world's most advanced economies. The data include all taxes actually paid to all levels of government. Your local school tax is in there, as are payroll taxes for Social Security and Medicare, and the taxes (if any) paid by the largest companies.

The final version of the 2013 data was just released, and it shows that the United States ranks thirty-ninth in the total tax bite imposed on its citizens. So far from having the highest effective tax rate, the United States has the fourth lowest. The U.S. total tax rate was 25.4 percent of GDP in 2013, which is up from 23.6 percent in 2011, against a median OECD tax rate of 34.1 percent. In 1965, when the OECD began tabulating tax rates, the United States was at 23.5 percent—almost exactly the same as it is now—and just under the OECD median, which was then 24.8 percent. Virtually all other countries increased taxes starting in 1975 or so, and by 1995 had reached the current median of about 34 percent, which has been pretty stable over the past couple of decades. It is amazing that, despite the tireless "reforms" of American taxes over the years, the United States has managed to get along without any significant change in total tax rates for fifty years.

Republicans have a consistent view of taxes: They are a drag on productivity, they reduce the rate of savings and investment, and they lower economic growth. The GOP's policy preference, therefore, is for low, flat (or near-flat) taxes for all. That's how Ted Cruz planned to "abolish the IRS" and turn your tax return into a postcard.

A recent statistical analysis carried out by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) shows why such claims are nonsense. The analysts looked at all tax years since 1945, when the marginal tax rate on the wealthiest taxpayers—the tax paid on the last dollar of taxable income—was 90 percent, and the average tax rate at which they actually paid was just above 60 percent. It turns out that those years were years of exceptional growth, while years with below-average tax rates for the wealthy tended to have somewhat slower growth. Conversely, changes in the capital-gains tax rate have a slight boosting effect. But none of the correlations comes close to being statistically significant.

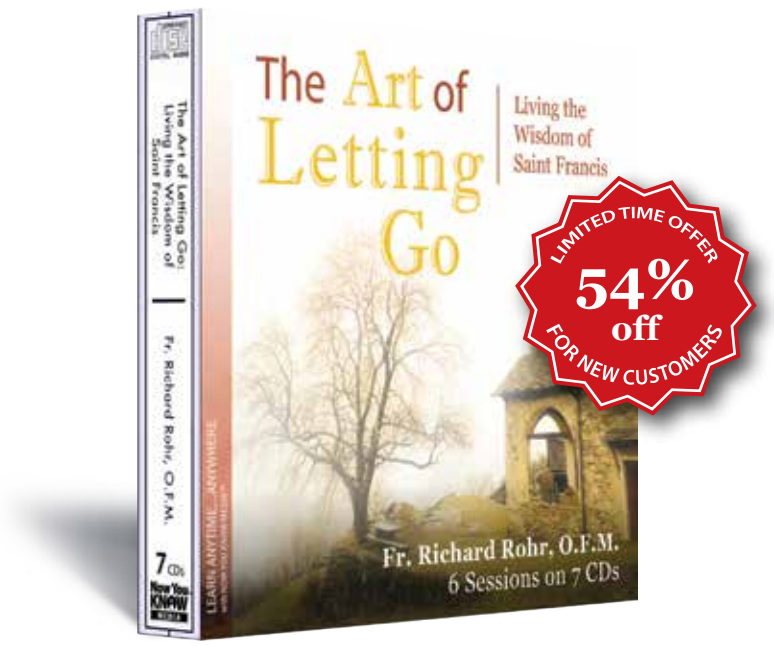
That shouldn't be surprising. The economy is a vast and poorly documented entity, and tiny changes in a single variable are lost in the noise. As the CBO analysts point out, a fall in tax rates may cause people to spend more or invest more and thus improve the economy. But if the fall in taxes causes budget deficits to increase, then the net result could be a slowdown. In a modern economy, all outcomes are "path-dependent": exactly the same policy may have quite different effects depending on where you start from, and because of the coarseness of economic data, and the long lag times involved in understanding them, the precise starting point is essentially unknowable.

But one effect of modifying the taxes paid by the wealthy is very clear, consistent, and statistically significant: low taxes on the wealthy mean that the wealthy keep a lot more of their money at the expense of the middle classes, while high taxes on the wealthy shift the income balance in the middle class's favor. The tax expert Edward Kleinbard has pointed out that when government's share of the economy increases, so inevitably do support and services for the middle and lower rungs of society.

Virtually alone among industrial countries, the United States has frozen its total tax rates for a half century—ignoring the increased complexities of modern society—while the rest of its competitors have increased their tax rates by about 40 percent. That is surely the underlying cause of our disgraceful physical infrastructure, the collapse of financial support for the public higher-education system, the ballooning of student debt, the still-gross inequities of our health-care system, and the staggering copayments often required even by the new health-insurance policies made available through the Affordable Care Act. Put those together—and add the looming dementia crisis as the boomer generation ages—and the impoverishment of the American public sector is exposed. Donald Trump is right that our airports and rail services and highways are increasingly like those of third-world countries. But cutting taxes is exactly the wrong prescription. ■

Bridge collapse in Minneapolis, 2007. Our low tax rates at work.

KEVIN ROFIDAL, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD



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Nancy Enright

Killed for the Cause

OSCAR ROMERO AND THE MEANING OF MARTYRDOM

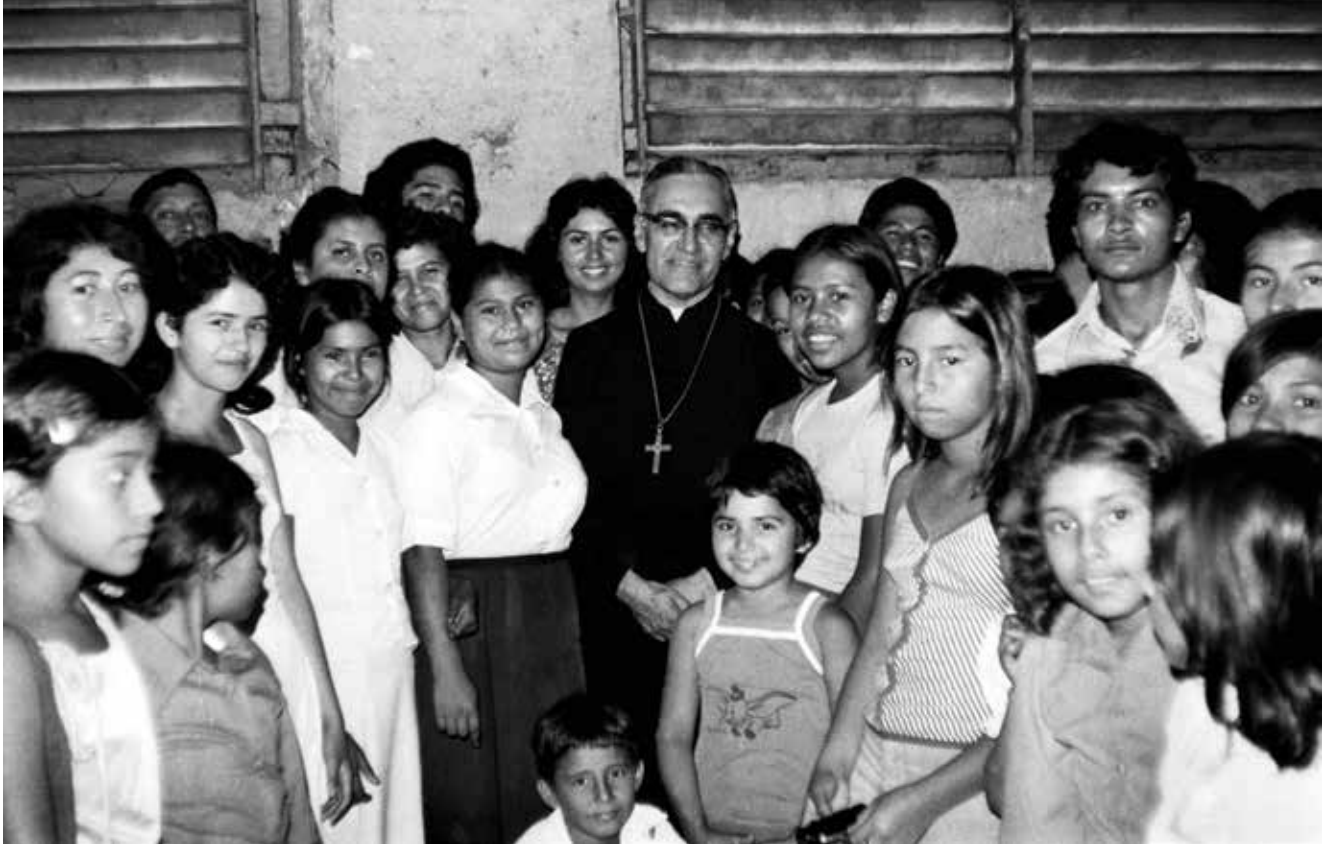
When Pope Francis announced in March 2015 that Oscar Romero, the slain Archbishop of San Salvador, would be beatified two months later, on May 23, I was in El Salvador on a mission trip with a group of students from Seton Hall University, where I teach. Excitement about the announcement was palpable: at the local church in San Miguel, where our group was stationed, the bishop saying our Mass that day must have mentioned Romero twenty times. Just four days earlier we had visited the Romero Center in San Salvador. There one can see the archbishop's simple residence, which has been lovingly maintained by the sisters who run the cancer hospital where he lived and served. Pope Francis has called Romero a martyr, and the title is fitting. His death, which resulted from his courageous defense of those who were oppressed and terrorized by the government during El Salvador's civil war, was not just a response to his "political" views, as some have argued. He was truly killed *in odium fidei* ("in hatred of the faith")—a requirement for formal recognition as a Catholic martyr. A refusal on the part of some of his brother bishops to acknowledge this kept his cause from proceeding for many years. So it is a question worth revisiting: How and why is Romero a martyr? In what sense can it be said that he died for his faith?

We can find the beginning of an answer in the history of the church. When I heard Romero was scheduled to be beatified, I happened to be teaching the passion narrative of Perpetua, the young North African martyr, killed under the Roman government of Septimus Severus in 203 A.D. Perpetua, whose journal is the earliest surviving text by a Christian woman, tells of her imprisonment with six others, five catechumens and their teacher, Saturus, while they await execution in the arena at Carthage. A nursing mother, she wrote that her initial separation from her infant son caused her great suffering. Soon, however, she was allowed to be with him in her prison cell—until her distraught father finally chose not to bring the child to her anymore because, despite his pleas, she would not recant her faith. She and her companions, including two slaves, Felicity and Revocatus, shared prison, meals, and impending death with a profound faith and solidarity that challenged the class structures of the Roman world. Like so many of her fellow Christians, Perpetua and her companions were killed not for believing in Christ, but because they refused to offer sacrifice—in this case for the emperor's son, Geta. This was interpreted by the Romans as a political and subversive act. Like Romero, Perpetua and her companions faced death with serenity. March 7, their feast day, was the day our group flew to El Salvador.

It was also the day we went to the Romero Center and saw his rooms, his desk with a Pietà and typewriter still on it, his bloody vestments from the day he was slain preserved in a glass wardrobe, his car keys and license and other personal items kept intact in the little museum that his house has become. We prayed in the church where he was killed, in front of the altar marked with a memorial of his death, and at the shrine outside his home, where the sisters secretly buried Romero's organs, received after his autopsy. The rest of his body is buried in the cathedral of San Salvador. Praying at the church and the shrine, I believe we all sensed the sanctity permeating this place where Romero lived and prayed. Here was the desk where he had worked each day and night, the narrow bed where he had lain. He had known he might be killed at any time, yet he continued to speak out on behalf of the poor and the marginalized. He refused to make a sacrifice of his conscience to his country's rulers and was therefore judged a subversive, like Perpetua. To be killed for doing right and speaking against evil in the name of Christ is to be a martyr.

Many other martyrs' deaths have also been linked to "political" concerns, or at least to reasons not directly related to a specific hatred of the church as an institution. Another early example is St. Lawrence, who, according to legend, was ordered by the Romans to show them "the treasure of the church." Lawrence, in a gesture connecting him to Romero, brought together many of the poorest Christians in Rome and presented them to the Romans. Infuriated, his Roman persecutors responded by burning him to death on a hot grill. Another martyr whose death was linked to political issues, "Good King Wenceslaus" (now known mostly because of a Christmas carol) was slain by his brother Boleslaw, who wanted to establish himself as king. Boleslaw was a pagan who wished to get rid of his brother, who sought to establish Christianity in their kingdom. Thomas Becket, the "holy blissful martir" who inspires the pilgrimage in *The Canterbury Tales*, was another bishop slain at the altar by people who considered themselves Catholic and believed they were punishing a traitor. According to legend, King Henry II asked, "Who will rid me of this troublesome priest?" and several of his henchmen volunteered.

Another Thomas faced off with another Henry several hundred years later, when King Henry VIII broke with Rome because the pope refused to annul his first marriage,



Archbishop Oscar Romero poses with women and children in an undated photo.

CNS PHOTO / OCTAVIO DURAN

to Queen Catherine of Aragon. When Sir Thomas More, who had been Henry's friend, would not sign the act granting the king the title Head of the Church of England, More was beheaded. His execution, like Thomas Becket's, was regarded by the king and his officials as the appropriate punishment for treason. They saw themselves as defending a just political order from foreign interference, and they saw More as one of the rebels (there were others, like Bishop John Fisher) who threatened the king's authority. Today, even the Church of England honors More for having been true to his religious beliefs, for being a martyr. But at the time his killing was intricately linked to a political crisis.

Martyrdom, being an act of witness, always involves testifying to the truths of the faith, but as these cases show, the truths in question are not always purely theological. And the expression of those truths always has a historical context, and often a political one. As his beatification by Pope Francis affirms, Romero follows in a long and glorious tradition. In more recent years, among those declared martyrs there have been others whose deaths were the result of hatred not for the Catholic Church per se, but for the martyr's personal witness to the values of the Gospel—and this, too, is *odium fidei*. Maximillian Kolbe, the priest killed in a Nazi concentration camp, willingly gave up his life for a fellow prisoner, the father of a family. Kolbe did as Jesus taught, laying down his life for a friend. Edith Stein, also known as Sr. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, is honored by the church as a martyr even though she was sent to Auschwitz because of her Jewish heritage, not just because she was a nun. (In the Netherlands, where Stein was living, the Nazis targeted Jewish converts to Catholicism as part of their retaliation against the Dutch bishops, who had published a statement against Hitler.) In the end, Stein understood her Catholic faith to require solidarity with the Jewish people; her conversion was not a renunciation of her ancestry.

In the complexity of the modern world, where the nation-state came to occupy more and more space, martyrdom has often involved what appeared, from another perspective, to be subversion or treason. More is at stake than the motives of those responsible for a martyr's death. Sometimes the value for which a martyr dies is the simple lived purity seen in the life of a saint like Maria Goretti, who was killed because of her courageous refusal to grant sexual favors to a neighboring youth. The young man who murdered her was not attacking "Catholicism," but responding in frustration to her refusal of his advances. St. Maria's clinging to her own purity, a value deeply honored in the Catholic faith, gives her death a religious significance her killer did not intend.

When Pope Francis unblocked Romero's cause and, soon thereafter, set the date for his beatification, he was not only honoring the slain archbishop but also reminding the world that the preferential option for the poor, like other crucial spiritual and moral values, is an integral part of the Catholic faith—so much so that someone who dies for it is, in fact, a martyr. As Romero himself said, in a sermon delivered in May 1978, "A church that does not join the poor, in order to speak out from the side of the poor, against the injustices committed against them, is not the true church of Jesus Christ." Romero was beatified because he not only spoke out from the side of the poor but was willing to lay down his life for them. His death is still speaking to us now. ■

Nancy Enright *is associate professor of English and Catholic Studies at Seton Hall University.*

Fred C. Tenover

Too Much of a Good Thing

WHY THE OVERUSE OF ANTIBIOTICS MAY HAVE DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES

Pope Francis's recent encyclical *Laudato si'* calls on us all to conserve our natural resources for the common good. But what exactly are our natural resources? One obviously thinks of energy, water, air, and other environmental basics. But I believe the list should include something that may surprise many people: antibiotics. After all, many antibiotics come directly from nature; streptomycin, cephalosporins, and tetracyclines, for example, are compounds recovered from soil-dwelling microorganisms that effectively kill other microorganisms. And, of course, antibiotics serve our common good.

The medicines listed above were discovered during last century's golden age of antibiotics, an era when new antibiotics were developed in such abundance that most people believed, as U.S. Surgeon General William Stewart put it in 1967, that "the time has come to close the book on infectious diseases." Stewart's vision of the future was triumphant: "We have basically wiped out infection in the United States."

Obviously, fifty years later, we have not wiped out infection—in the United States or anywhere else. In fact, we face a potentially explosive crisis of infection. Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, warned in his 1945 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech that indiscriminate use of penicillin might spur the development of penicillin-resistant bacteria. His prediction has proved accurate, and not merely for penicillin. For every antibiotic now used in human medicine, at least one fully resistant bacterial strain has been identified somewhere in the world. Indeed many bacterial species have become resistant to multiple antibiotics, making some infections virtually untreatable. These multidrug-resistant bacteria, christened "superbugs" by the popular media, have opened the door to what scientists are calling "the post-antibiotic era," threatening a return to the time when a diagnosis of pneumonia, sepsis, or meningitis was often a death sentence. Reversing the rosy predictions of fifty years ago, Dr. Margaret Chan, director-general of the World Health Organization, recently warned that the post-antibiotic era will be "the end of modern medicine as we know it."

So what happened? The simple answer is evolution. Not the evolutionary process, cited in *Laudato si'*, that took millennia to unfold and gave us fish, birds, mammals, and humans, but rather the short-term evolutionary process that occurs in microbial species over mere days or weeks. This process reflects the ability of all microorganisms to enhance their survival either by mutating their genetic code or acquiring additional genetic information from other microorganisms. Bacteria, in particular, are highly promiscuous microorganisms that readily share genetic information with one another, even across the barriers of divergent species. When antibiotics are used to treat an infection, resistant bacteria can survive and flourish and rapidly become the predominant bacterial population. As the infection spreads throughout a patient's body, the resistant organisms spread into the environment and often find their way to other patients. The infected patient may board an airplane, visit Disneyland, attend the Hajj, or simply head to a subway station, transferring the resistant bacteria to a hundred other

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis bacteria

people along the way. Meanwhile, the genetic information that enables the bacteria to be resistant to antibiotics can be transmitted to other bacterial species. Such is the story of the global spread of multidrug-resistant bacterial infections.

Containing this spread will not be easy. Although the antibiotic pipeline of new drugs for use against human infectious diseases is not dry, neither is it overflowing. Antibiotics no longer contribute as much to the bottom line of major pharmaceutical companies as they once did. It may take fifteen to twenty years for a new compound to be approved for use, and profits are often not realized until well after that. Furthermore, less than 3 percent of compounds make it successfully from early development to the market. Given the choice between developing an antibiotic that may be used for only one to two weeks and developing a drug for a chronic disease, like diabetes, which is taken for a lifetime, pharmaceutical companies typically choose the latter. For these reasons, companies around the globe are putting less effort into developing truly innovative new antibiotics; many have stopped developing antibiotics completely. To date, government incentives intended to boost development have seen little success.

The stark reality, then, is that instead of waiting and hoping for a new miracle antibiotic, we need to make much better use of the antibiotics we currently have. To this end, three points need to be understood: (1) antibiotics are a limited resource; (2) overuse creates resistant organisms and decreases the antibiotic's overall effectiveness; and (3) every person has a role to play in avoiding the onset of the post-antibiotic era.

Scientists acknowledge that antibiotics are required to combat serious infection in animals, plants, and humans. Antibiotics have revolutionized modern medicine, from fighting disease to decreasing childbirth risks to facilitating organ transplantation. But with use comes abuse. Patients diagnosed with viral infections often press their doctors for antibiotics; and since a physician's compensation is often based at least in part on patient satisfaction scores, some physicians will provide that prescription even when it isn't indicated. Many struggle to balance keeping individual patients happy against the societal need to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for the long term.

Progress in reducing unnecessary prescriptions means educating health-care providers to understand that their oath to "do no harm" precludes prescribing antibiotics indiscriminately. To that end, government health officials have recommended the establishment of antibiotic stewardship programs in all U.S. hospitals and long-term-care facilities by the end of 2017. Such programs encourage physicians to treat infections with the right antibiotic, at the right dose, for the right duration, and to avoid giving antibiotics when they are unnecessary.

As *Laudato si'* suggests, there is also a role for personal responsibility in preserving this natural resource—for patients as well as physicians. Both groups need to recognize their role in the big picture of preserving antibiotics for future use. The stakes are high. The economist Lord Jim O'Neill, in his report to the prime minister of the United Kingdom, noted that in the absence of new interventions, and given the current trajectory of infectious diseases globally, by 2050 antibiotic-resistant infections will claim 10 million lives at a cost of $20 trillion, far outstripping the number of lives and costs claimed by cancer in the same time period.

Thus, when we consider *Laudato si'* and the call to conserve our natural resources and strive for a just world, placing antibiotics on the list for conservation is not a stretch. Though we cannot close the book on infectious diseases, we can reduce their incidence—while promoting human health and dignity—by providing clean water, improved sanitation, vaccination programs, and better health-care globally. When infections do occur, we need access to a supply of reliable antibiotics. Currently, our ability to meet that demand on a global basis is being taxed. It should not be. We need to do better. ■

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Lincoln's Religion

An Ambiguous Legacy

Jeffrey Stout

People forget that it is the eye which makes the horizon, and the rounding mind's eye which makes this or that man a type or representative of humanity with the name of hero or saint.... By love on one part, and by forbearance to press objection on the other part, it is for a time settled, that we will look at him in the center of the horizon, and ascribe to him the properties that will attach to any man so seen.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

In 1850, when Emerson published *Representative Men*, his book of essays on great men from Plato to Goethe, Abraham Lincoln was not a candidate for inclusion. He was alive, of course, but he was not yet *our* Lincoln—not yet the representative figure exalted by our political tradition as a symbol of freedom, equality, and eloquence. And, to be sure, this iconic image we have fashioned over the course of a century and a half omits any number of inconvenient facts and paradoxes. Lincoln both defended the rule of law and suspended *habeas corpus*. He freed the slaves and yet thought them inferior. He had higher ideals on his lips—and more blood on his hands than any president before him.

George Kateb, an eloquent interpreter of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman—and also Nietzsche and Arendt—has written a wonderful book about Lincoln's political ideas. *Lincoln's Political Thought* (Harvard University Press, $24.95, 236 pp.) explores what the man stood for in the struggle against slavery and what he stands for in our collective consciousness. In the process it addresses the way Lincoln's actions complicate the relation between his life and what we want it to exemplify.

The story is a study in compromises no less difficult for their being thought necessary, an intricate weighing of ends and means. To stand for equality politically, Lincoln needed to acquire enough power to actualize the ideal. But how could he do that and be morally consistent? He could not become president without first promising to refrain from curtailing slavery where it already existed, and then taking a solemn oath to uphold a compromised Constitution. In trying to meet this challenge, Lincoln seems to have turned himself into a riddle. Can such a man end up standing for freedom and equality in our moral imagination if we acknowledge everything he actually did? Kateb's answer is yes and no. Lincoln was both a sincere advocate of his ideals and a cunning compromiser of them. We should not expect otherwise. The process of transforming ideals into practical power inevitably compromises them.

Admitting this need not entail flattening out the moral landscape. Compromise and betrayal are not the same thing; some marriages of ideals and powers, Kateb insists, are better than others. Lincoln altered the institutional terrain we occupy in respects that we cannot help regarding as progressive. This is what it means to call someone great. We cannot account for where we ourselves now stand without referring to certain predecessors who have changed our idea of what arrangements and commitments count as justified. We are who we are, ethically as well as politically, because the slaves were *actually* freed.

In Lincoln's case, the same life that helps explain a great transformation also includes deeply unsettling complications, costs, and strangeness. Kateb steadfastly resists making too much sense of all this; his essayistic style aims to get it all on one canvas while keeping any set of details from defining the whole. The writer remains unsettled, and works hard to keep us unsettled, because that is what thoroughgoing honesty about political life requires. The contradictions are not to be resolved, the horrors not excused. But Lincoln's greatness should not be explained away, either. The goods and evils he set in motion remain intertwined. Neither should be permitted to subsume the other.

What, in fact, were Lincoln's guiding political ideas? Kateb's account makes much of the phrase "political religion," which appears in the Lyceum Address Lincoln gave in Springfield, Illinois, at age twenty-eight. One of his earliest published speeches, the address expresses what Kateb calls a "quasi-religious" devotion to the law, encouraging citizens to regard the law as an entity that "genuinely religious people would call an idol, an object equated to divinity in fundamental importance." For reasons I shall explain in a moment, I doubt that Lincoln himself used the concept of political religion to refer to a sort of faith. But it is clear that the Con-

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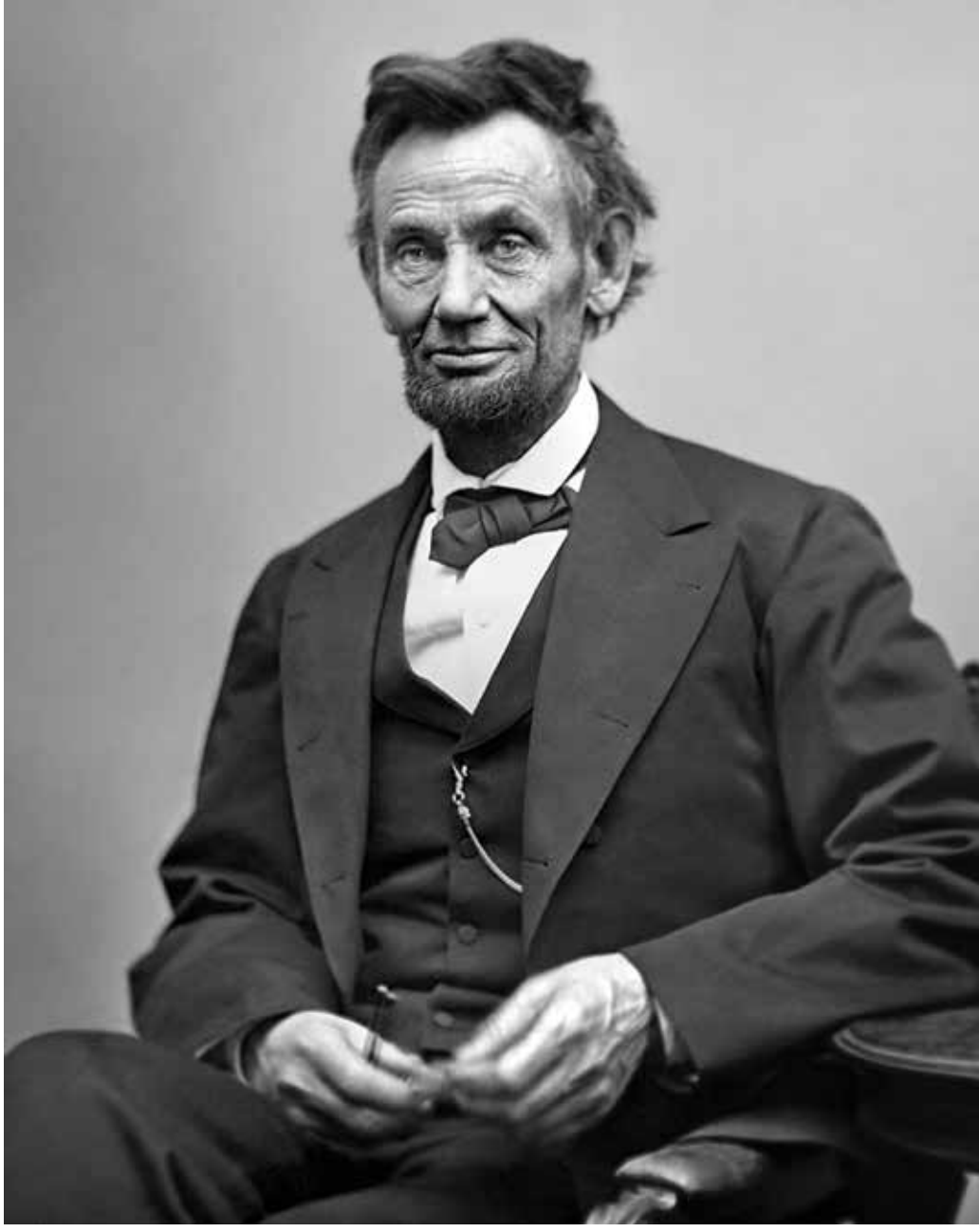
stitution, despite its crucial flaw, was sacred to him, even as a young man. Lincoln's political religion, however, also includes a "quasi-religious" devotion to something else—namely, human equality. How to honor both of these fundamental tenets? When push comes to shove, Kateb thinks, one of these apparently inviolable tenets must prove primary—and the other must yield—because the Constitution's permissive stance on the issue of slavery is a violation of human equality.



Abraham Lincoln in an 1865 photograph by Alexander Gardner

To see what the term *religion* meant to Lincoln, and what ideals informed his use of power, I think we first need to understand why he called himself a *republican*—a question Kateb leaves unanswered. Lincoln could have chosen some other name for the party he founded. Why did he choose this one, and what did it mean to him? A central purpose of government, for classical and early modern republicans, such as Cicero and Milton, is to protect citizens from arbitrary power. You are at the mercy of such power if someone else—a monarch, an oligarchy, an invading army, a dominant religious group, or a master—is in a position to treat you as he or she or it wishes, without being required to take your interests into account or give you due opportunity to influence decisions that bear on your life and concerns. Lincoln named his party republican in order to align himself with Cicero, Milton, and others who affirmed security against arbitrary power as a central purpose of government. The traditional republican names for such security are *liberty* and *freedom*.

Contemporary American politicians like Senator Ted Cruz and House Speaker Paul Ryan have a different notion of liberty. What these latter-day Republicans mean by it is not freedom from domination or tyranny, but from foreign and governmental *interference*. In this conception of liberty, which republicans long dismissed as mere license to do as you please, a free society is one with an army strong enough to protect its borders, a police force strong enough to protect the lives and property of its citizens—and a government small enough to drown in a bathtub. It holds that the fewer the constraints placed on citizens, the freer those citizens will be. And who counts as a citizen? Today's Republican candidates routinely warn that the rights of citizenship are not worth having if extended to the entire adult population actually residing in the country.

This is roughly the same notion of liberty that slaveholders deployed against Lincoln. Today it is being used to persuade us that members of the economic elite are not oligarchs using their power to abscond with the fruit of our labor and to defeat all political attempts to constrain them, but rather are overtaxed, excessively regulated individuals whose heroic creation of wealth funds the lives the rest of us lead, and to whom we should therefore bow in pious gratitude.

The conception of liberty Lincoln invokes goes back to the philosophers of the Roman Republic, including Cicero, and to the historians, such as Livy and Sallust, who lamented Caesar's dictatorial usurpation of republican rule. These and other classical republicans contrasted citizens with slaves, and charged that the unconstrained powers claimed by monarchs, emperors, and oligarchs reduced citizens to a lamentable condition of servitude. For citizens

to possess liberty, in Lincoln's view, they have to create a legal structure that secures them against anyone's exercise of arbitrary power. And structural injustice is present not only when a powerful person or group *actually* interferes with others, but also whenever such a person or group is *in a position* to treat others at whim. A slave with a benevolent master is still a slave, because of what the master is *able* to do. This is a matter of unchecked power. I am not free in the republican sense unless I belong to a society constrained by laws that I myself have a role in shaping.

Such is the thinking behind the traditional republican distinction between a society of laws and a society of men. Any form of government, of course, gives powers to officials. But in a republic of free citizens, the laws constrain what everyone may do; officeholders are made answerable to citizens, and citizens to one another. To possess republican freedom is not to be able to do whatever one wants, but rather to be part of a society all members of which are constrained by wisely chosen and justly enforced norms. Leaders and citizens alike are free because laws of the right kind bind them.

In the Lyceum Address, Lincoln warned his fellow citizens to be on guard against the emergence of a new Caesar. Opportunistic men of talent and ambition are apt to take advantage of social unrest, and there is plenty of that in evidence. No state in the Union is free of it, according to Lincoln, but his examples are a wave of lynching in Mississippi that has left corpses "literally dangling from the boughs of trees upon every road side" like "Spanish moss" and a recent series of events that are all the more disturbing for having happened much closer to Springfield. The site of the latter example is St. Louis, where a mob had kidnapped a mixed-race man from the police, chained him to a tree, and burned him to death. Lincoln is concerned about vigilante violence, but also about the failure of local authorities to hold the mob accountable. The "lawless in spirit" are thus "encouraged to become lawless in practice." The judge who had presided over the grand jury in the St. Louis case was, believe it or not, named Luke E. Lawless, as Lincoln's audience would have known.

But there is more. When making public the grand jury's decision not to indict anyone, Lawless accused the mob's victim, Francis McIntosh, of associating with abolitionists, as proven by "his peculiar language and demeanor." Lawless then read aloud from a local anti-slavery newspaper, and incited his audience to ransack the paper's offices. When Lincoln referred to a printing press being destroyed and thrown into a river, he was describing the result. The paper's editor, Elijah Lovejoy, had taken flight across the river to Illinois, where he and his brother organized a statewide anti-slavery society and ordered a new printing press. Three months before Lincoln addressed the Lyceum in Springfield, another mob killed Lovejoy while he and his friends defended the warehouse in Alton to which the new press had been shipped. These are the signs of "mobocracy" that Lincoln feared would prepare the American people to accept a new Caesar.

"Having ever regarded government as their deadliest bane," Lincoln argued, the lawless in spirit "make a jubilee of the suspension of [law's] operations; and pray for nothing so much, as its total annihilation." By such means, the "bulwark" of liberty is torn down. He continued in words that permit us to glimpse the prescience and rhetorical power of the future president:

> Whenever this effect shall be produced among us; whenever the vicious portion of the population shall be permitted to gather in bands of hundreds and thousands, and burn churches, ravage and rob provision stores, throw printing presses into rivers, shoot editors, and hand and burn obnoxious persons at pleasure, and with impunity; depend on it, this government cannot last. By such things, the feelings of the best citizens will become more or less alienated from it; and thus it will be left without friends, or with too few, and those few too weak, to make their friendship effectual. At such a time and under such circumstances, men of sufficient talent and ambition will not be wanting to seize the opportunity, strike the blow, and overturn that fair fabric, which for the last half century, has been the fondest hope, of the lovers of freedom, throughout the world.

The twin dangers of mob violence and would-be strongmen led Lincoln to propose an absolute obligation to obey the law. Thoreau will soon refuse to pay taxes on the ground that the money would be used in part for immoral purposes. Lincoln's proposal, in contrast, admits of no exceptions for unjust laws, such as the Constitution's compromise position on slavery. Lincoln agrees with Thoreau on the immorality of slavery, but not on the justifiability of civil disobedience. In Lincoln's view, the fabric of society was too weak to survive widespread disobedience on the matter of slavery. The Constitution would eventually need to be amended, but the means to this end themselves had to be legal.

Because *classical* republicans considered being enslaved a horrible fate, yet did not oppose slavery as such, Lincoln regarded them as shamefully inconsistent. He took the American Founders to be guilty of the same inconsistency. His way of resolving this contradiction was to become a *democratic* republican. In a notebook entry of 1858, he summed up this modification of his republicanism in three crisp sentences: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy." By democracy, Lincoln did not mean unmediated rule by the commons. He meant a legally regulated system of security—for everyone—against subjection to arbitrary power.

To qualify as just, in other words, a republic would have to discard the Ciceronian and Jeffersonian willingness to accept a social structure divided between citizens, who have

the right to hold others accountable, and slaves, who lack that right. The liberty befitting a citizen could not be defended consistently, Lincoln held, if the scope of citizenship remained arbitrarily narrow. Social roles that have domination built into them need to be outlawed; the very roles of master and slave would eventually have to be ruled out as a matter of law, just as the Founders had formerly jettisoned the roles of kings, queens, nobles, and mere subjects. A society of laws must therefore be modified democratically, by the people and for the people. Liberty and justice must ultimately be granted to all.

This vision could be achieved in Lincoln's own day, as he himself grasped, only if two conditions were met. First, the flawed legal-constitutional framework then in place would itself have to provide the means for its own reformation. Second, the citizens carrying out the change would need to acquire and express the virtues of democratic citizenship.

In a republic, a just legal order and a virtuous citizenry are interdependent. The laws neither make nor enforce themselves, but need help from citizens. As Montesquieu pointed out, the tasks of ethical formation become all the more pressing in a democracy, which extends the status of a citizen to a large, potentially volatile group not typically possessed of learning, prior political experience, or the time needed to reflect. The constraints on arbitrary power achieved through the rule of law will have the desired effects only if ordinary citizens become sufficiently vigilant, courageous, just, prudent, and well-organized users of power to promote the common good. A democratic republic can become and remain a society of laws, in the full sense, then, only if it is also a society of relatively virtuous citizens. Among the virtues to be cultivated are a fitting respect for law and a disposition to change whatever laws are at odds with liberty.

How might such cultivation of political virtues be achieved? The political religion Lincoln called for in his Lyceum Address is a deliberately cultivated piety for the laws on which an inclusive republic of free and equal citizens depends. He thought of religion roughly as Cicero and Milton did. *Religio*, in classical Latin, has two main meanings. It designates the practice of honoring the gods, expressing gratitude to them, discerning their will, and seeking their favor. And it designates the virtue—a type of piety—ideally cultivated and expressed in that practice. In republican discourse, religion functions primarily as a political concept.

Religion was of interest to republican political theorists both as a public practice and as a virtue with political implications. True religion, for Cicero, Livy, and other classical republicans, cultivated a virtue essential to a civic life oriented toward liberty and the common good alike. From a republican point of view, a habitual disposition qualifies as an authentic virtue only if compatible with the full range of virtues required of free and equal citizens who wish to remain free and equal. Gerrard Winstanley, Milton, Wollstonecraft, and Emerson all insisted that true religion is compatible with republican self-reliance. Defenders of imperial dictatorship or monarchy, on the other hand, such as Dante, were also interested in the formative function and political consequences of public ritual, but not in promoting republican liberty or the rule of law. They favored using public rituals primarily to cultivate a habitual disposition of obedience to the divine and to divinely authorized authority.

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Understood as a virtue, whether from a republican or an imperial perspective, religion is not defined in classical thought as a set of faith commitments, but as one kind of piety. St. Thomas Aquinas, aiming to clarify the concept of religion that the church fathers had taken over from Roman sources, listed filial, patriotic, and religious piety as the three main species of piety. Each of these is a virtue of justly acknowledged dependence on the sources of one's existence and progress through life. Defined as a species of piety, religion is a subspecies of justice, the virtue according to which each receives his or her due, and as such is a political virtue, distinguished from the theological virtue of faith. Thomas treats religion and faith in different portions of the *Summa Theologiae*. When addressing the topic of religion, he takes as his authority the pagan philosopher Cicero. When addressing the topic of faith, he relies on Holy Scripture and the fathers of the church.

Lincoln's Lyceum Address makes sense once we see the religion he is recommending as a species of piety, a virtue and practice of acknowledged dependence, integrated with

republican political ends and self-reliance. He was not proposing state allegiance to a divinity, since doing so would have violated the First Amendment, a constitutional provision itself required in order to secure republican liberty. But he did consider an informal political religion essential to the health of the republic. The address asks what forms of piety are requisite for sustaining and perfecting a free society. Six decades after the American Revolution, Lincoln worried that his contemporaries were no longer moved by the anger against tyranny and love of the common good that had united the revolutionary generation. Those noble and rational passions had subsided. Meanwhile, despicable passions were rising to dominance. Many citizens were inflamed with hatred, nativist fear, and greed. Lynch mobs were leaving victims swinging from trees. Vigilante passions, inimical to the rule of law, were winning the day.

Lincoln's main concern in the Lyceum Address reflects a commonplace republican worry: the corrupting effects of vice on the people. In voicing this concern, he deploys the term *example* six times in the speech. Like other nineteenth-century American republicans, Lincoln was interested in the politics, ethics, and rhetoric of examples, a tradition of rhetorical analysis tracing back through Erasmus, Las Casas, and Machiavelli all the way to Cicero. Lincoln's use of examples expressed his republican commitment to *freedom as security from domination*. Such security can be achieved only in a society of laws, he insists. And without the widespread piety for the laws on which our freedom depends, there can be no bulwark of freedom for us to modify democratically, so as to constrain arbitrary power.

The trouble with such piety for the laws, of course, was that the Constitution permitted slavery. So Lincoln adds emphatically: "let me not be understood as saying there are no bad laws.... But I do mean to say, that, although bad laws, if they exist, should be repealed as soon as possible, still while they continue in force, for the sake of example, they should be religiously observed." He later mentions abolition of slavery as one such change, to be effected without violating existing law.

In proposing the law as a suitable object of piety—as something on which we depend for our political existence and progress through history—Lincoln is not, *pace* Kateb, presenting it as divine. Much as you can acknowledge your dependence on your parents without thinking them perfect, so too can we depend on laws that are often, in fact, alarmingly imperfect. The Constitution's preamble acknowledges such imperfections by expressing the perpetual need to make the political union "more perfect," subject to our wise, just, and vigilant help. It is in part because the Constitution provides means for its own amendment that citizens can depend on it even as they undertake to improve it. Milton had referred to public reason as a *process* of covenantal reformation. Viewing the social covenant as something forever fixed, as if changing it would necessarily violate it, would be idolatrous.

And so—along these lines—the thoughts that permitted Lincoln to make his campaign promise and take his presidential oath were republican, even if not entirely virtuous or transparent. A kind of racism had been baked into his bones, and because he never entirely overcame it, he is hardly a perfect personal exemplar of commitment to human equality. Kateb stops short of this conclusion. It is true, as Kateb says, that Lincoln could not imagine his countrymen soon freeing themselves from race prejudice, and this fact does go a long way toward explaining Lincoln's reluctance to abolish slavery immediately and his interest in setting up a colony in Africa for emancipated slaves. Yet on republican grounds he held that slaveholding, like monarchy and other forms of arbitrary power, wronged the slaves while corrupting the people who benefited from it. That corruption made the institution unsustainable over the long haul. Lincoln's abhorrence of slavery did not depend, in my view, on taking blacks to be his equals in intelligence, but simply on the claim that they had a right to the fruit of their labor.

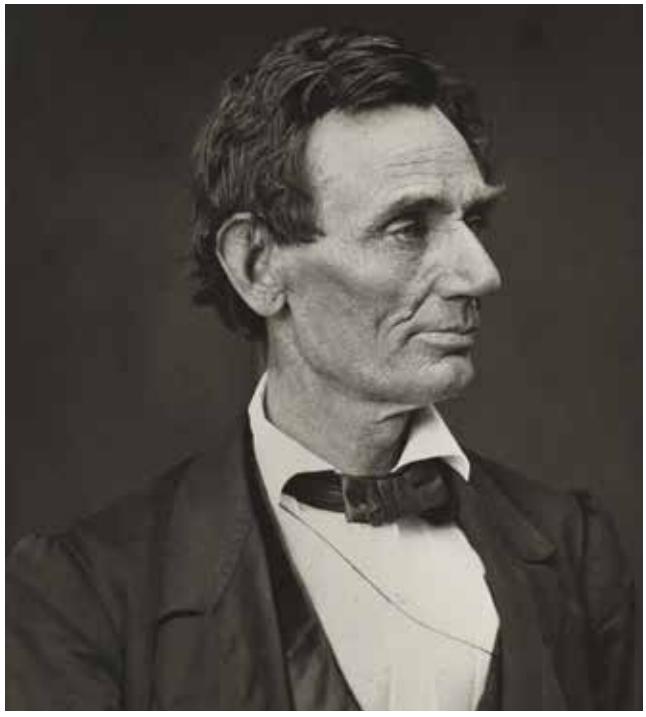
A civic nation divided against itself on a matter so grave cannot stand, Lincoln had told an Illinois audience in 1858. Slavery was ultimately doomed, bound to collapse under the weight of its own vice. But when? Lincoln was uncertain whether his nation would survive long enough to see this happen. This uncertainty worried and vexed him. The nation's historical vocation, he held, was to stand for freedom in the eyes of the world. The importance of such a vocation, for a republican conscious of examples, reflected a belief in the contagious nature of virtue and vice. Such qualities spread infectiously when individuals and societies stand for something, either good or bad.

What the nation exemplified, to a world witnessing the American experiment, was crucial for Lincoln. To stand for freedom in the eyes of the world, the United States would need to avoid dismemberment even as it struggled to outlaw a form of domination that violated its ideals. There was a risk that democratic republican ideals would perish from the face of the earth if this experiment failed: this was Lincoln's Gettysburg nightmare. His address at Gettysburg piously acknowledges indebtedness to "the brave men, living and dead, who struggled" there. The only fitting way to honor those men, who had sacrificed so much to the "unfinished work" of achieving a country officially and truly dedicated to liberty and equality, was to see the task through.

Kateb eloquently depicts the Civil War as a nightmare, both in the unprecedented, awful, massive sacrifice of human lives it exacted—which only intensified as General Sherman took license, with Lincoln's permission, to vanquish the plantation economy that was the basis of Southern slaveholding—and also in the ominous manner in which it set aside legal constraints on the arbitrary use of presidential and military power. Looking back, we can see that in sus-

pending such constitutional provisions as *habeas corpus*, Lincoln's government took a giant step toward the modern, bureaucratic, militarized nation-state.

Kateb wants these facts to register fully in our consciousness, without mitigation or minimization. It is clear that in his view, the positive legacy of the war is more limited, the picture more mixed, than Americans have traditionally been taught in school. Yes, freeing the slaves brought a particular form of domination to an end in a particular time and place. It did not however free those persons or their descendants from the lasting effects of slavery or from the lingering vices of race prejudice and hatred. The reckoning was complex, and remains so. Both the human beings who would have been slaves if Lincoln had not acted, *and* the human beings who have been or will be crushed by the forces Lincoln unleashed, ought to count for something. Kateb will not let us forget that each and every one of those lives matters.



Abraham Lincoln in an 1860 photograph by Alexander Hesler

Lincoln's Political Thought ends with a disturbing reading of the Second Inaugural, in which Kateb shifts our attention from Lincoln's moving and celebrated plea for "malice toward none" and "charity for all" to the less famous paragraph that precedes it. There, noting that North and South "read the same Bible" and asserting that neither side's prayers have been answered in full, because neither side's purposes coincide wholly with God's, Lincoln quotes a fiery passage from Matthew 18: "Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" In Kateb's reading, Lincoln here is "blaming providence or God for ordaining moral evil in the form of slavery and bringing about moral evil in the form of [an] atrocious war to end slavery." "Charity for all," Kateb sums up, "is hatred of God or his providence." After first appealing too easily to necessity as commander in chief, the president has projected his responsibility for carnage onto a divinity too perverse to be loved.

Is that really what Lincoln implies? I do not see it. The verse quoted from Matthew is followed, in Lincoln's address, by two conditionals. The first is a rhetorical question: *If* American slavery is an offence which God "now wishes to remove," and *if* the war is "the woe due to those by whom the offense came," would God then be shown unjust? The implied answer is no. The second conditional asserts that *if* God wills that the war continue until all the wealth gained from slavery "shall be sunk," and until "every drop of blood drawn by the lash, shall be paid by another drawn by the sword," then the *righteousness* of God could not be questioned. That doesn't sound like blaming God to me. Indeed, it sounds like the opposite.

What then was Lincoln's point? In a line Kateb doesn't mention, Lincoln advises fellow citizens to "let us judge not, that we be not judged." At war's end, neither party is entitled to avenge the injustices of the other, because both have contributed to the evil that caused the war. The implication can be restated in explicitly republican terms: Southern vice and Northern vice jointly brought the woe of civil war on the nation. Slavery harms the innocent slave directly, but also—morally and otherwise—harms the slave trader, the slaveholder, the complicit consumer of cotton and sugar, the idealist who is too pure to take effective action against slavery, and the soldier or commander who does what he thinks he must. Vice begets vice, and a plague of vice begets woe. That is how the world works.

The natural tendency of grave injustice is to rend the common good, thereby making the entire society suffer. In slavery's case, Lincoln insists, the responsibility for the rending is too widely shared to justify finger-pointing, let alone vengeance, once peace finally comes. The rending is its own retribution; a just God has no need to pile on. If our happiness in this world consists in virtuous, free, and equal union with our fellows, and we act against that good, thus destroying it, why wouldn't woe be our lot? Lincoln has led his fellow citizens into a purgatory of ethical self-recognition, and he leads them out again by pleading for mutual charity. Mercy is the path from purgatory to reconciliation. The Second Inaugural uses immanent criticism in the conditional mode to focus attention on the need for reconciliation. If Lincoln wished to stand for republican virtue rather than theological skepticism, that is how the speech must go.

And that is how it does go, as far as I can see. Lincoln's political religion is republican from first to last. It is

FISH BAIT

—for JBV

Night after night, the fish in my aquarium
pull me in to a school of thought
ancient and deep, over my head.
So far I've learned that they're hooked on life
as something intertwined with death

so I thought they should hear about the aquarium I made
in third grade, in memory of my sister-to-be
who arrived too early to survive: a shoe box lined in aluminum foil
with a fish of red construction paper
hung on black thread
one eye on each side, sparkling with glitter.

As I told the fish, even thinking about it
makes me swallow
like I did the other day
when I saw my friend ripple by
in memoriam, his entire life
in one thin column
filling my eyes
with his death.

The fish swallowed too—there wasn't a dry
eye in the group.

—Jo-Anne Cappeluti

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concerned with marrying ideals to powers and with who exemplifies what and how. It expresses and cultivates piety for the admittedly imperfect constitutional framework, the public virtues, and the sacrifices on which a society of free and equal citizens depends. One of those sacrifices turns out to be the abandonment of any theology that inhibits the work of reconciliation after a terrible civil war. In the end the horrors of that war cannot be fully explained. Lincoln neither claims knowledge of a providential plan, nor exempts himself from responsibility for the suffering. But the war had lasted too long and cost both sides too dearly for a one-sidedly chauvinistic theodicy to be true. That much is certain. What Kateb really wants to know is why offenses need come in the first place. But that is Kateb's question for God, not Lincoln's for his fellow citizens.

More important than my quibbles with Kateb over the interpretation of Lincoln's political thought is the need to confront the ambiguity of Lincoln's legacy that Kateb's analysis exposes. Lincoln is a riddle because, in our politics, we are a riddle to ourselves. We are his heirs, for good and for ill. We cannot escape his legacy, and we don't know what to make of it.

On the one hand, if slavery is the paradigm of domination, and we are committed to overcoming domination in all its forms, we have strong reason to institute and maintain what the Lyceum Address calls a "political edifice of liberty and equal rights." To be free in the relevant sense is to be secure against domination in a way that only a society of laws (of the right kind) could guarantee. All legal protections are, by definition, enforced coercively. No coercion, no law. No law, no security against domination. The sort of freedom worth having is to live in a society of justly and wisely chosen, justly enforced laws. That is why most of us continue to take politics seriously, why we cling to the hope for emancipation from arbitrary power.

On the other hand, the very political edifice we invented to provide security against domination evidently tends to produce a massive apparatus of coercion, surveillance, and violence that no one any longer knows how to control. Our laws are enforced in a spirit of lawlessness. Some of our politicians pander to billionaires, while another seems to be a Caesar exploiting popular anger in an attempt to seize power. Militarized oligarchy appears to be what Lincoln's ideal of a society of laws comes to when actualized. The legal mechanisms we have devised as means of protection from domination were from the beginning the spoiled fruit of a wicked compromise with slavery. They have repeatedly failed to constrain capital's tendency to concentrate power in the hands of a few. And they have unleashed bureaucracies, markets, and empires that have thus far defeated all attempts to tame them.

Lincoln commands our attention because our politics exhibits these two prongs of his legacy. It is a delicate moral exercise, Kateb's attempt to affirm Lincoln's greatness while nonetheless chastening our idolatry and leaving us with a troubling image of ourselves. There are few writers since Emerson who have even attempted this sort of thing, let alone succeeded at it. Many readers of *Lincoln's Political Thought* will resent the chastening, while others will prefer a harsher unmasking. But Kateb refuses to simplify. The words in his book both bleed and provoke; his double-edged honesty cuts repeatedly against his own druthers, as he says what idolaters and debunkers alike wish not to hear. A reader need not agree with the book's ambivalent conclusions to be challenged and changed by it. George Kateb has added a splendid and bracing chapter to *Representative Men*. ■

Two Steps Back

Why the Bishops Ousted an Editor

John Gehring

Tony Spence, editor in chief of Catholic News Service (CNS) for more than a decade, abruptly resigned last month at the request of an official at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The reason? Spence had posted tweets about legislation to protect religious liberty passed in North Carolina, Mississippi, and Tennessee, which would deny legal protections to LGBT people. "Stupid evidently contagious," Spence wrote in one tweet that linked to a Reuters article about a Tennessee law allowing mental-health counselors to refuse treatment to patients on religious grounds. In response to Spence's tweets, self-appointed Catholic watchdog groups that in the past have targeted other conference officials unleashed a flurry of blog posts accusing the editor of "promoting the LGBT agenda." This proved too much for the U.S. bishops' conference, which has made religious liberty issues a priority in recent years and puts significant institutional muscle into promoting its annual anti-Obamacare "Fortnight for Freedom" campaign.

"That was the only imprudent tweet," Spence told me in an interview last week. "I was so upset because Tennessee was my home state. The legislature lost its mind. But it's not imprudent to say what has been happening in North Carolina. LGBT rights and other rights just went out the window. It's just a fact."

Spence, who in 2010 won the top award given by the Catholic Press Association and has been a consultant in the past to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, said he was "shocked" to be forced out and told to leave his post immediately, without the chance to address his colleagues. "I've heard from staff and from people all over creation. There's been a lot of support," he said. The former editor has observed a growing tension and anxiety among some Catholic leaders. "I think it's a very tense time in the American Church and some things are off limits for discussion in any kind of rational way," Spence said. "It's difficult to talk about religious liberty, sexuality, women's issues. But we don't live in a Catholic bubble. We're a country of 320 million people."

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann speaks during a religious-freedom rally in Kansas.

The forced resignation of a widely respected journalist with a long history of serving the Catholic press raises questions about the larger, systemic changes at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in recent years. Interviews with former conference officials confirm that a shift in culture and priorities at the conference's Washington D.C.–based headquarters has taken place, and the changes have been especially notable in the midst of Francis's reform-and-renewal papacy. The pope's major U.S. appointments—Archbishop Blase Cupich in Chicago and Bishop Robert McElroy in San Diego—signaled a desire to nudge the American hierarchy away from the culture wars. Some leaders at the bishops' conference seem resistant to this new way forward.

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CNS PHOTO / LORI WOOD HABIGER, *THE LEAVEN*

Whether it's decrying as "extreme" President Obama's 2014 executive order prohibiting federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation, comparing American disputes over religious liberty to the persecution of Christian martyrs, or publicly opposing the bipartisan reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act for including LGBT protections, the conference often seems determined to box itself into a corner. Pope Francis, of course, also cares about religious liberty, challenges a "throwaway" culture that includes abortion, and isn't changing church teaching on marriage. But as Cathleen Kaveny recently noted in these pages ("Bookending a Culture War," May 6), Pope Francis's call for "a new balance" in how the church articulates its teachings includes a clear desire to recalibrate the Catholic public voice in a way that doesn't reduce those moral teachings to a short list of hot-button sexual issues. But many in the U.S. hierarchy don't seem eager to follow this example.

Over the past decade, a new generation of conservatives replaced longtime conference staff forged in the heady afterglow of the Second Vatican Council and inspired by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin's "consistent ethic of life" framework. As these younger staffers began to fill leadership positions, the prioritization of issues at the conference has tacked in a different direction—one that also diverges from the new pope's priorities. Perhaps the clearest sign of these changes is the bishops' inability to address effectively what Francis calls "an economy of exclusion and inequality." While the bishops' domestic-justice office sends letters to Congress on budget issues and is part of an ecumenical "Circle of Protection" campaign to protect the social safety net, the conference has not spoken boldly on these matters since its 1986 pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All*.

In 2012—not long after launching a national religious-freedom campaign against Obamacare's contraception mandate—the bishops ditched an effort to release a letter on the economy. The draft, *The Hope of the Gospel in Difficult Times*, provoked an unusually testy debate during a public session of the bishops' national meeting in Baltimore. The document's demise underscored generational and ideological fissures in the hierarchy. Older bishops, many of whom grew up in working-class families with strong union ties, panned the statement for its failure to address—through the lens of traditional Catholic social teaching—the structural causes of poverty or to offer a compelling response to growing inequalities and assaults on workers' rights.

Some "Francis bishops" have emerged to challenge the conference to embrace more fully the pope's call for a "poor church for the poor" and to prioritize addressing income inequality. Bishop Robert McElroy, appointed to lead the San Diego diocese last spring, acknowledged in an interview with *Vatican Insider* that this will require realigning political priorities. "In recent years, the conference of bishops has labeled abortion and euthanasia as the preeminent issues in the political order, but not poverty," he said. "This has had the effect of downgrading the perceived importance of poverty as a central focus for the Church's witness." McElroy has argued that Francis's emphasis on global poverty and inequality "demand a transformation of the existing Catholic political conversation in our nation."

Bishop Robert McElroy has argued that Francis's emphasis on global poverty and inequality "demand a transformation of the existing Catholic political conversation in our nation."

During interviews with former senior conference staff for my book, *The Francis Effect*, many lamented the all-consuming focus on religious-liberty fights, and expressed concern that a hunkered-down approach is limiting the bishops' effectiveness. "There came a point when you could not distinguish between the agenda of the Beckett Fund and the bishops' agenda," said former *America* editor Rev. Drew Christiansen, SJ, who led the U.S. bishops' office of international justice and peace for seven years in the 1990s and is a professor at Georgetown University. The Beckett Fund for Religious Liberty represents the Little Sisters of the Poor and other plaintiffs challenging the Obama administration in a case currently being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Fund also represented the evangelical owners of Hobby Lobby, a chain of retail arts-and-crafts stores, who won a controversial victory at the Supreme Court when they sued for an exemption from Obamacare. In that case, the justices ruled for the first time that for-profit corporations have religious-conscience rights. A former legal star at the Beckett Fund, Anthony Picarello, was named general secretary of the bishops' conference in 2007 and later promoted to associate general secretary for policy and advocacy, a position that gives him a powerful role in shaping the bishops' strategies.

Further details about the changes at the bishops' conference come from Dolores Leckey, who spent two decades at the conference before retiring in 1997. The founding director of the Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth, Leckey

worries that the conference has embraced a narrow view of Catholic identity that draws stark dividing lines instead of approaching politics and public policy as the art of the possible. "For most of the time I was at the conference we could get someone from the government to come and give a talk, but there came a point when there was almost no woman in Congress who could pass muster with the pro-life office," Leckey said. "There is now a kind of unspoken test, and if anyone has a perceived taint of not being on target with every single element of Catholic doctrine, it just doesn't fly. The church gets cut out of all kinds of effective partnerships. It's crimping our ability to make a difference."

Frank Monahan, the longtime director of the bishops' government-relations office, noticed that same mood of suspicion. He points to the 2004 presidential election as a tipping point. A Catholic who endorsed abortion rights, Sen. John Kerry sought the Democratic nomination in the face of public criticism from some bishops—including those who implied they would deny him Communion. "Kerry was just not seen as acceptable," said Monahan, who retired from the bishops' conference in 2007. "I think that was the beginning of a serious effort on the part of some in the conference's leadership to say the conference is being run by liberal staff, and it's time to rein everyone in."

"What blows my mind is these groups are given so much credibility and have influence," Tony Spence told me. "We're only talking about a few hundred people in a very big church, but church leadership sometimes doesn't have confidence in its own voice and these shrill challenges make them jump for cover."

Spence, the former CNS editor, also watched the atmosphere at the bishops' conference grow testier in recent years. The tension was palpable when Sen. Barack Obama campaigned for the presidency in 2008 and even more so when, a year later, bishops publicly denounced the University of Notre Dame for inviting Obama—by then the sitting president—to give its commencement address. The honoring of a pro-choice president sparked outrage among some prominent conservative Catholics. Mary Ann Glendon, a former U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, refused to attend the graduation ceremony to receive the Laetare Medal, one of the U.S. church's most prestigious awards.

This mood of division and suspicion raised particular challenges for a Catholic news entity, Spence said. While CNS is an office of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, it's also a wire service that is financially independent of the conference and provides content to both secular and religious news outlets. "Catholic News Service always prided ourselves on covering things fairly, and we wanted to give Democrats and Republicans an even playing field, but the focus on pelvic issues sent all that askew and it became very difficult," Spence recalled. "When Obama ran it was a challenging time. It almost became impossible to cover that election in a decent way. He was so vilified. When you reported on positions that politicians took on health care or issues of sexuality even neutrality was seen as an implied endorsement. We really had to be careful about the language we used and how we wrote things. Eventually you start to do that so much you look up and you're self-censoring and you almost don't realize how you got there. There was never any direction from the leadership of the conference not to report on something. We had editorial freedom, but there were a lot of battles fought over it."

Along with internal shifts at the conference over the years, Spence also watched an increasingly emboldened group of activists use blogs, websites, and social media to pressure bishops and conference staff. In fact, he might be still editing Catholic News Service if not for an aggressive network of right-wing Catholic activists that has been relentless in going after individuals for expressing supposedly heterodox views. The Lepanto Institute, Church Militant, and LifeSiteNews.com, all three of which kept up a steady drumbeat of criticism against the editor, perceive themselves as guardians of an embattled church. The Lepatano Institute, for example, describes itself as "a research and education organization dedicated to the defense of the Catholic Church against assaults from without as well as from within." They warn on their website that "whether in the form of armies, heretics, or traitors, the church has always faced enemies seeking her destruction." Church Militant, which has challenged Pope Francis, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, and the Knights of Columbus, used to be called Real Catholic TV—that is, before the Archdiocese of Detroit challenged the organization's right to call itself Catholic under the Code of Canon Law. LifeSiteNews.com frequently includes content produced by far-right pressure groups, and describes its mission as providing "balance and more accurate coverage on culture, life, and family matters than is usually given by other media."

The groups that targeted Spence launched a campaign to fire Rick Estridge, the former vice president for overseas finance at Catholic Relief Services (CRS), because he is in a same-sex marriage. The Lepanto Institute included screen grabs of the employee's Facebook page and published a copy of his Maryland marriage license. CRS consistently defended Estridge, who is not Catholic and worked in a specialized finance position. In the wake of those attacks, he resigned last June after sixteen years at the agency. Michael Voris,

TWO POEMS BY MARIE PONSOT

WILD

Even the eagle is deep
into dailyness

acts as if safe, & is silly
during its courtship rituals

spends days inspecting
impregnable building sites
before choosing one
with a view of fat meadows,
water, & the right neighbors

clucks at stubborn children
to hurry them up, models
high tricks of survival
for their benefit

wakes in the night
when the wind shifts hard north,
& tunes in hastily
to the weather reports.

FIBONACCI

Around the inner rims
of these sunflowers one by one
small yellow petals pop open,
in obedience to the sun.

    On some the inmost circles,
    bright yellow, is almost complete,
    circumspect around the seeds
    that are still virginal, tight, neat.

Their elegance is in the way
they fill their places, in dumb-show
greening the ghost life of mathematics,
their order cosmic, their time to come.

Marie Ponsot recently received the Aiken Taylor Award in Modern American Poetry, given annually by Sewanee Review. *In 2013, she was awarded the Ruth Lilly Prize for lifetime achievement by the Poetry Foundation. Her* Collected Poems *will be published in August by Knopf.*

who leads Church Militant and inveighs frequently against homosexuality and gay rights, recently acknowledged for the first time that in the past he had been in sexual relationships with men. He accused the Archdiocese of New York of preparing documents to publicly discredit him, a claim the archdiocese denies.

Other church employees targeted in recent years by watchdog groups include John Carr, who directed the U.S. bishops' domestic-justice portfolio for more than two decades before leaving in 2012 to launch the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought & Public Life at Georgetown University. The American Life League denounced Carr for being part of "a systemic pattern of cooperation with evil" because he once served on the board of the Center for Community Change, which the American Life League views as a "pro-abortion" organization.

While these fringe groups are far to the right of many other conservative Catholic organizations, the networks are having an impact on the American Church. A consistent target of theirs has been the U.S. bishops' anti-poverty effort, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). A "Reform CCHD Now" coalition, launched in 2009 by the American Life League, includes many of the same groups that agitated for Spence's ouster. The coalition—which exists to document CCHD funding allegedly going to organizations that promote abortion, gay rights, and contraception—produces reports, videos, and websites that are sent to bishops. Even as the bishops' conference has dismissed these groups for having "clear ideological and ecclesial agendas," the pressure campaigns have led to effective organizations losing church funding. This is rarely because these organizations directly advocated for a cause at odds with church teaching; more often, they were faulted for being part of broad coalitions that included non-Catholic organizations that do oppose some church teachings. This kind of guilt-by-association hurts the church's credibility in a pluralistic public square, undermines effective partnerships that help the poor, and erodes faith-based community organizing that has long been a powerful instrument for putting Catholic teaching into practice.

"What blows my mind is these groups are given so much credibility and have influence," Spence told me. "They are destructive. We're only talking about a few hundred people in a very big church, but church leadership sometimes doesn't have confidence in its own voice and these shrill challenges make them jump for cover."

The bishops' conference, and the American hierarchy more broadly, face a crossroads. Self-appointed guardians of orthodoxy will only grow more emboldened now that they can claim another scalp. There is nothing joyful, inspiring, or authentically Catholic about any of this. Catholics on the left and right don't have to agree on everything to recognize a better path is possible. The ideological purity tests and ugly character assassinations that sicken our secular body politic should be a cautionary tale for our church. ■

Still Two Cities

Mayor de Blasio & the Homeless

Paul Moses

Early one morning last August, television host Joe Scarborough livened up his show with a rant against the homeless people he could see on his way to and from the MSNBC studio in New York's Rockefeller Center. "Have we noticed what's happening to the city?" he asked. "The homeless are all over, increasingly so. All through Central Park. They're all on the Upper West Side.... This is what it looked like in the '80s and the '70s."

The former congressman, who is reported to make more than $5 million a year, insisted that he only wanted to help homeless people, but he seemed much more concerned about having to look at them. Blaming their presence on the city's mayor, he said: "I have no idea why Bill de Blasio—and I don't know if the police commissioner has anything to do with this—but why they are allowing a homeless epidemic to start spreading across New York again? I've had a lot of friends saying they're going to move out if this continues."

It is such an inconvenience to have to lay eyes on the poor begging like Lazarus for the scraps from one's table. Polls have indicated that New York's growing and increasingly visible homeless population has become a major political problem for Mayor Bill de Blasio, a progressive who campaigned on the theme of ending the "tale of two cities."

"I think he inherited a terrible problem," said Monsignor Alfred LoPinto, chief executive officer of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens. "It wasn't as though homelessness just occurred with him becoming the mayor. It's never been dealt with in an adequate way."

New York is not alone in having to contend with an increase in homelessness. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and a number of cities in Florida are also facing spikes in the homeless population. Falling income and rapidly rising housing costs have forced an unprecedented number of the lowest-income families—seven out of ten nationally—to spend half or more of their earnings on rent, according to the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. This puts many at risk of losing a place to live. "Housing is just ridiculously expensive," said Megan Hustings, interim director of the Washington-based National Coalition for the Homeless. "It's out of reach for so many people. We're not going to see a change until we invest in affordable housing, especially for people who are lower income."

With the federal government's long withdrawal from subsidizing low-income housing, Hustings says that some localities are offering vouchers to prevent homelessness. Indeed, this is one of a number of approaches that de Blasio is pursuing as part of a plan that also includes a recently approved initiative to build significantly more affordable housing. LoPinto, who said that programs for addressing homelessness in New York have been largely hit-and-miss, gives the mayor credit for trying to put together a long-term strategy. But it remains to be seen whether a progressive-minded approach can work in a city where the more severe measures of the past failed to prevent a steady increase in the number of homeless people.

The rise in homelessness that de Blasio faces resulted in part from decisions by the previous mayor, Michael Bloomberg, and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. Bloomberg, who held office from 2002 to 2013, had set out with high hopes for reducing homelessness and some thoughtful ideas for how to do it. He launched a huge program to build affordable housing, similar to one that de Blasio is now pursuing. He also rolled out a rent-voucher program, called Advantage. But Cuomo, pursuing a tax-cutting agenda, canceled state funding for the Advantage subsidy in 2011. It is the kind of political gamesmanship Cuomo is known for, and Bloomberg responded not only by refusing to pick up the state's costs, but also by canceling the city's portion of the funding. Advantage collapsed, and chaos ensued for those enrolled in it.

According to the Coalition for the Homeless, at least half of the families that lost the Advantage program's rent aid ended up in city shelters. From the summer of 2011 until de Blasio took office in January 2014, the homeless population in shelters increased by 37 percent, to more than 53,000 people. The number continued to rise under de Blasio, to more than 60,000, including 24,000 children. The mayor initially responded to the increase in homelessness by offer-

Paul Moses *teaches journalism at Brooklyn College/CUNY. He is the author of* An Unlikely Union: The Love-Hate Story of New York's Irish and Italians.

ing a much larger program of city rental subsidies. It wasn't as effective as he hoped, though. Having seen Cuomo and Bloomberg end the Advantage subsidy, many landlords feared that de Blasio's rent aid would also be canceled. They refused, illegally, to accept vouchers.

But the mayor has introduced a number of other measures, including a $62-million-a-year program to provide lawyers to tenants who face eviction (a 2014 study by the city's Independent Budget Office found that eviction left homeless 37 percent of families admitted to shelters). Under de Blasio, the city has also paid rent for tenants in arrears—53,000 households in a year. It worked out to $3,400 per family, which, city officials said, is far below the cost of providing shelter. De Blasio also came up with a plan to create 15,000 units of supportive housing that would provide substance-abuse and mental-health services, as well as job counseling. Advocates commend de Blasio for taking such steps.

"He might be the best mayor we have had in a long time for the homeless," said Marc Greenberg, executive director of the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing. He has praised de Blasio for his "enlightened and ambitious vision for addressing the crisis of homelessness and the affordable housing shortage."

It's a vision that differs from the one Rudolph Giuliani pursued as mayor of New York—one Giuliani continues to celebrate while assailing de Blasio's. "When I was mayor," he wrote in a *New York Post* op-ed last summer, "we did all we could to remove the homeless from the streets, not only for safety and sanitary reasons, but out of love and compassion for each of the homeless as persons, as children of God."

But Giuliani's approach was characterized much more by toughness than by love; it was compassion at the end of a night stick. Police were ordered to arrest homeless people if they refused shelter, which had the effect of "cleaning up" central business districts only because it forced homeless people to the peripheries of the city. In addition, he tried to require parents in the shelter system to work or risk having their children placed in foster care. "We all know that this strikes terror in the hearts of people who have children," a judge said in blocking that policy. Giuliani also implemented mandatory workfare for welfare recipients, with the stated aim of instilling a work ethic in a welfare population that had grown to more than a million people. Many welfare recipients were required to leave job-training programs to go to workfare assignments. But workfare workers had none of the job protections other city workers had, and as a result thousands were kicked off welfare. Many of them became homeless, according to city Human Resources Administration Commissioner Steven Banks. Under de Blasio, one of the first requirements to go was mandatory workfare for welfare recipients.

And yet, as de Blasio's critics note, homelessness has increased. Conditions remain dangerous in the shelters, explaining why some homeless people prefer to live in cardboard encampments or take to the streets and subways. And de Blasio faces the same daunting demographic trends Bloomberg did. With the city's rapid gentrification, rents have risen even more sharply in New York than in other parts of the country. According to a report from the city comptroller, there was a significant increase during the Bloomberg years in the number of families living in overcrowded housing (defined by the federal government as more than one person per room)—another condition that often leads to homelessness.

Under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, police were ordered to arrest homeless people if they refused shelter, which had the effect of "cleaning up" central business districts only because it forced homeless people to the peripheries of the city.

As for the increase in the population now in shelters, there's an immediate reason that hasn't gotten as much attention: the de Blasio administration has been more likely than the Bloomberg administration to allow entry to applicants. According to the Independent Budget Office study, three out of five families applying for shelter during the later years of the Bloomberg administration were rejected. Advocates for the homeless contended the process was heartless. Bloomberg, who retained some of Giuliani's strict social-service practices, tightened eligibility rules to discourage families from entering shelters as a way to secure permanent housing. But the stringent screening process may have ended up turning away families truly in need.

De Blasio's campaign for office included a pledge to "reform unfair and overly punitive eligibility review rules that deny shelter to too many needy families." The doors have hardly been thrown open; about one out of two families were turned away during the mayor's first year in office, according to the Coalition for the Homeless. Still, it was a significant change, and enough to account for the continued growth of the shelter population. But, if advocates for the homeless are correct, the change was overdue.

Another obstacle is the political feud between de Blasio

and Cuomo that began almost immediately upon de Blasio's election. While Cuomo bears much responsibility for the surge in homelessness, he remains a sharp critic of the mayor's handling of the problem. "Many of the programs, to be successful, require the support of the state and that's where, unfortunately, some of the difficulties are arising at this point," Monsignor LoPinto said.

Homeless man in New York, 2008

JMSUAREZ

Will de Blasio's policies help reduce homelessness over time? It's a great urban experiment—and one that de Blasio's critics declared a failure from the start.

The *New York Post*, abetted by the police sergeants' union, made a campaign out of exposing the increase in street homelessness while de Blasio foolishly denied for months that there were more homeless people in view. Those not familiar with New York might assume that the *New York Times* is the city's most influential paper, but diminished as they are, the tabloids—the *Post* and the *Daily News*—still have the power to make life miserable for anyone targeted in their page-one crusades.

The *Post*'s "campaign"—its word for the steady beat of one-sided coverage—ties in with the larger political agenda of de Blasio's foes, who assert that the city's progressive mayor is bringing New York back to the bad old days of the 1970s and '80s by rejecting the more sensible policies of Giuliani and Bloomberg. Their argument is really rooted in a battle over policing. The central claim of de Blasio's opponents—that crime would go up unless police continued making thousands of legally questionable "stop-and-frisk" searches—has turned out to be wrong. Crime rates remain low. Also wrong is the prediction that de Blasio would wreck the economy: jobs are being added at record levels. The recent disclosure that federal and local prosecutors are investigating fundraising by the de Blasio campaign has given the mayor's critics some material to work with, but before that they were working the increase in homelessness for all they could. Homeless people themselves have become collateral damage, with the *Post* targeting them individually: it has published photos of bedraggled people, some obviously mentally disturbed; one man was framed on the front page urinating in public. The paper has consistently referred to the homeless as "bums."

The Sergeants Benevolent Association, the union representing police sergeants, took matters a step further. It asked its members to photograph homeless people, preferably those engaged in "quality of life offenses of every type," and to post the images on Flickr. "Our political leaders have done nothing other than ask the people of this city to retreat from the sense of the common good," the union's president, Ed Mullins, wrote to members in launching the campaign—called "Peek-A-Boo, We See You Too." Thus, supervisory officers paid to protect the public were sneaking up on the most vulnerable New Yorkers, often as they slept, to exploit their misery—just for some imagined advantage in a political battle with the mayor and the New York City Council.

That was last August. In September, Pope Francis visited the city and offered his understanding of the "common good" and of how to look at the homeless—to really see marginalized people and to recognize their human dignity. At Mass in Madison Square Garden, he spoke of how the homeless and others on the margins of urban life can be taken for granted "in our eyes, and especially in our hearts." In big cities, he said, "so many faces pass by unnoticed because they have no 'right' to be there, no right to be part of the city."

New Yorkers cheered the pope, and de Blasio—a religious "none" who says he has been influenced by Catholic social teaching—sought to capitalize on Francis's call for compassion. It didn't seem to help. The next month, a Quinnipiac University poll found that New Yorkers reported they were seeing the homeless more often on the streets and subways—and that three out of five disapproved of how de Blasio was handling the issue.

To find out how this looks from the perspective of people on the periphery, I decided to visit Life Experience and Faith Sharing Associates. It's an organization that has worked with the homeless at street level since 1986, when two Sisters of Charity, Teresa Skehan and Dorothy Gallant, ventured into the shelters to gather homeless people into Bible discussion groups that emulated the Christian base communities of liberation theology. Scripture touched the participants, many of whom grew up in the black church, and awakened something vital in them. The Bible groups helped raise self-esteem and encouraged some members to get involved in political action on behalf of the homeless.

Today the program continues under the leadership of a man it saved, James Addison. From his teens to his mid-thirties, Addison was involved with drugs, spent time homeless or in jail, and was alienated from his family. He's now a minister and is reconnected with his family, and for more than twenty-three years he has devoted himself to saving homeless persons the same way he was saved. He speaks of being "an instrument of God's compassion and love" toward the homeless. But his understanding of how to apply these virtues is the polar opposite of Giuliani's. "Giuliani, what he did, he just chased people away and moved them from place to place," he said. It should be understood, he added, that "just going into a shelter can be frightening. It looks bleak. You're in a place where everybody has loss. Everybody's grieving." The task of his ministry is to help the homeless recognize their inherent dignity—which is why he joined in protesting the sergeants' union's photo campaign against homeless people at City Hall last year.

The city bureaucracy for dealing with the homeless remains a forbidding and bewildering one, Addison and his volunteers told me. One volunteer in street ministry, Aidan White, said police had been moving the homeless out of Manhattan locations such as Madison Square Garden and Penn Station, especially when events were planned. Facing pressure, de Blasio also began dismantling homeless encampments around the city. But, said White, Mayor de Blasio was doing more for the homeless than his predecessors. "He's taking a lot of heat for what's happened under Bloomberg," he said.

Addison later brought me to a men's faith-sharing group. The members had experienced the alienation that comes with homelessness; one had spent twenty-five years on the street, and still seemed a little astonished to have found housing. After a lunch of barbequed chicken and cornbread, the men took turns speaking about what they were grateful for. "How do you be grateful when you've lost everything?" Addison asked them. "That's why we've come here—so we can get what we need, because life isn't fair." ■

Alfred Thomas

Cromwell the Humanitarian

PBS'S 'WOLF HALL' TURNS A PITILESS OPERATOR INTO A HERO

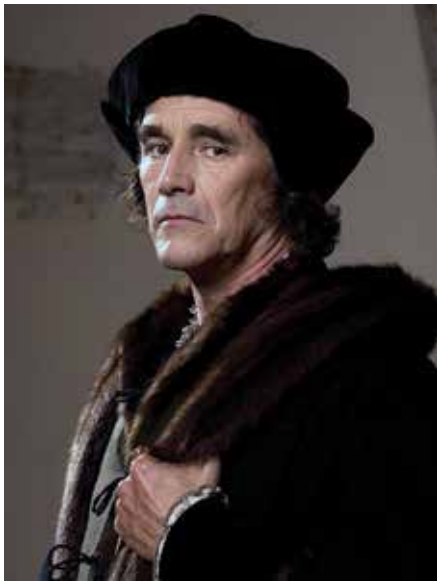
Caught up in the flurry of interest in Hilary Mantel's award-winning novel *Wolf Hall* and its sequel *Bring Up the Bodies*, I watched the six-episode PBS mini-series, based on the books. The novels and its TV adaptation begin with the fall of Thomas Wolsey, continue through the rise and eventual execution of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn, and conclude with the triumph of Mantel's unlikely hero, the lawyer and chief minister to Henry, Thomas Cromwell.

The series, directed by Peter Kosminsky, is beautifully shot, featuring authentic historical interiors and exteriors and painstakingly recreated period costumes. Some of the scenes, in particular Cromwell's interactions with Sir Thomas More (brilliantly portrayed by Anton Lesser) and Anne Boleyn (Claire Foy), are in fact breathtaking; the trial of More is a tour de force, and the execution of Anne Boleyn made my heart pound so hard I thought I was about to suffer the same fate as Henry VIII's hapless wife.

And yet, in spite of the brilliant acting and exquisite sets and costumes, something about the series troubled me—not so much the liberties it took with historical accuracy as its abandonment altogether of the facts concerning Thomas Cromwell. From his portrayal by the telegenic Mark Rylance, to his depiction as a loving family man, to his presentation as a reasoned humanitarian who eschews torture and comforts Henry's victims, Cromwell actually emerges as the sympathetic hero, when in fact he was a ruthless and pitiless operator who did not hesitate to eliminate political opponents in his desire for wealth and power.

Rylance is a distinguished British theater actor best known for his work at the reconstructed Globe Theater in London. Unlike the corpulent and ungainly Cromwell of history, Rylance is slim and attractive, one reason why he was so convincing and successful as Countess Olivia in the Globe's recent production of Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night*. Rylance's Cromwell comes across as kind and almost caring, not only in his early incarnation as a devoted servant and friend of Cardinal Wolsey, but also at the height of his power as he orchestrates the downfall of Anne Boleyn. For example, in a scene where he visits Henry's first wife, Katherine of Aragon, he is courteous and considerate, even providing a chair for the distressed Princess Mary to sit on. Later, as Boleyn nervously fingers her blindfold in preparation for the axman's blow, he whispers to her to lower her hand in order to make the grim task of decapitation smoother and less painful. In historical fact, Cromwell ostentatiously stood in the front row in order to gloat at Boleyn's death and, moreover, to be *seen* to do so.

This was not out of keeping for the actual Cromwell, who also presided over the creation of a Tudor police state aimed at imposing conformity through terror. More than three hundred religious dissidents were executed between 1532 and 1540, years coterminous with Cromwell's tenure. Yet in *Wolf Hall* we have Cromwell assuring other characters (and thus the audience) that "we do not do such things"—by which he presumably means torture. If his contention was simply presented as political spin—if we saw him practicing what he says he doesn't do—that would be one thing. But in fact we never do see Cromwell torturing his victims, whereas Thomas More is shown positively relishing the experience.



PBS

Mark Rylance as Thomas Cromwell in Wolf Hall

There's another problem with *Wolf Hall*: Kosminsky's direction reduces the sinister dialectic of watching and being watched to a one-way process. Cromwell is always located in the shadows and in the margins, not merely observing the others' actions but practically manipulating Henry's courtiers with his powerfully expressive eyes. In some ways these scenes of surveillance are among the finest and best-observed in the show. But they have the unfortunate effect of making us identify with Cromwell, rather than letting us view him objectively. And inviting viewers to identify with a man who enabled Henry to tyrannize his subjects and force on them a religion they didn't want is ethically problematic. The show comes perilously close to reproducing the Whiggish view of the Reformation as a much-needed sweeping away of a corrupt and outdated form of medieval Catholicism.

In recent years, that one-sided view of the English Reformation, best exemplified by the work of the historian G. R. Elton, has been revised by scholars like Eamon Duffy and Alexandra Walsham, who offer a far more complex picture of medieval English Catholicism. Their work reveals a thriving religion whose

focus on the socially cohesive rituals of parish life and the church calendar appealed to the mainstream population. But in *Wolf Hall*, this Catholicism is largely presented as the realm of cranks and fanatics, epitomized by a dotty Elizabeth Barton, the so-called Holy Nun of Kent, and a distinctly donnish Sir Thomas More intent on eradicating all forms of heresy. Cromwell and his son, by contrast, are shown as distinctly rational and reasonable in their ridicule of the relics of saints as objects meant to deceive the English people.

Then there's the show's portrayal of Cromwell as family man and loyal attendant to his fallen master Wolsey. In fact, Cromwell was loyal to Wolsey only as long as it served his interests. As soon as the cardinal fell from power, Cromwell dropped him and offered his talents as a lawyer and bureaucrat to the king. Perhaps there's no reason why a writer of fiction can't take liberties with the historical truth. After all, Robert Bolt in *A Man for All Seasons* transforms Thomas More into a modern humanitarian from the complex figure who, as Lord Chancellor of England, presided over the torture and execution of a handful of Protestants. But in the TV series *Wolf Hall*, the tables have simply been turned to present Cromwell as the modern humanitarian, while More is portrayed as a religious zealot—this despite the fact that state violence under Cromwell was far more extensive than anything inaugurated by More.

Further, *Wolf Hall* has it, whatever cruelty Cromwell did engage in was somehow necessary, or at least unavoidable. For example, his framing of Anne Boleyn as an adulteress is not presented as a preemptive strike to save his own neck in a kill-or-be-killed struggle for power, but as the reluctant concession to King Henry's fanatical desire for a son. The opening salvo in the campaign to remove the queen is the forced confession of Mark Smeaton, a member of Anne's entourage and a court musician. As the TV series correctly indicates, the interrogation of Smeaton (who was probably homosexual) took place in Cromwell's own house in Putney. The scene brilliantly shows the tipsy young man falling into Cromwell's trap as he boasts over a glass of wine that Boleyn is in love with him. What starts out as harmless banter soon turns into lethal self-incrimination. Yet what the segment doesn't show is the torture Smeaton in fact endured, torture that also led him to incriminate the queen's other courtiers—including her brother, Lord Rochford—all of whom went to the block. What we're asked to believe instead is the rather improbable notion that Smeaton was simply locked up overnight in a storage room until, like a naughty schoolboy, he was moved to confess.

The implications of the audience's identification with Cromwell are particularly disturbing insofar as the architect of the English Reformation was the henchman of a tyrannical king intent not only on making himself Supreme Head of the Church of England, but also the master of his subjects' consciences. It was both of these factors that led men of conscience like Thomas More and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, to oppose Henry's Reformation. For all their faults, they rightly saw in it not only the death-knell of medieval Catholicism but also the inauguration of a political tyranny unprecedented in English history. More's execution caused shockwaves throughout Renaissance Europe and led to the isolation of England, helping it earn its status as a pariah nation.

In the end it should be remembered that Cromwell was not a decent sort of chap merely caught up by circumstance. He was a man who, instead of transcending his violent age, typified it. It would be better if *Wolf Hall* acknowledged this, rather than serving up for its audience a view of Tudor history that most historians no longer accept. A final installment in the series is due from Mantel, and thus presumably a corresponding television version. Can we expect it to set the record just a little bit straighter? ■

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Karen Kilby

But What about Justice?

The Name of God is Mercy
A Conversation with Andrea Tornielli
Pope Francis
Random House, $26, 176 pp.

On April 11, 2015, Pope Francis issued *Misericordiae vultus*, the formal "bull" instituting the current Year of Mercy. *Misericordiae vultus*, reproduced as an appendix, makes up the final third of this slim book. The rest is an extended interview with the Italian journalist Andrea Tornielli. As Tornielli says in a preface, the interview was his idea—he hoped to get a personal angle on the theme of mercy for Francis, "to analyze what those words mean to him, as a man and a priest, away from the tensions of church debates, to "reveal the heart of Francis and his vision."

As a result of the interview format, what is to be found here is not as balanced or multidimensional as most of what has emerged in Francis's name. Nevertheless, there is a good deal that is familiar. The Francis recorded here has the fresh, direct, and immediate quality we meet elsewhere. He has some of the same verbal ticks ("God never tires of...let us never tire..."), and a proclivity for a language that is earthy, bodily, tactile: if we prefer to remain locked up in our own sin rather than to seek God's mercy, we "behave like a dog… licking our wounds, and they stay open and never heal," while Jesus, by contrast, "forgives by caressing the wounds of our sin"; the corrupt person may not realize the state he is in, "much as the person with bad breath does not know they have it." There is an emphasis on tenderness; a focus on the outcast and marginalized; a revisiting of his favored image of the church as field hospital. If one were in any doubt about who actually did most of the drafting of Pope Francis's other documents, this volume would put that doubt to rest. It contains, too, a touch of the same asperity we meet elsewhere: Francis is full of sympathy for the sinner, who falls again and again and can turn again and again to God's mercy, but not so much for the one who is "corrupt," who elevates sin into a system, ceases to understand it as sin, sees no need to seek mercy, and is "closed off and contented in the complacency of his self-sufficiency."

There is quite a lot that touches on confession in particular. We learn of Pope Francis's own early experience as a penitent, of confessors he has known who have been particularly important to him, of the significance for his priestly life of hearing confessions. We are given a general account of the importance of going to confession, of why it is necessary: true, "I can talk to the Lord and ask him for forgiveness, implore him. And the Lord will forgive me immediately" but confession to a priest is "a way to be real and authentic: we face the facts by looking at another person and not in the mirror." There are instructions about how a priest should dispose himself in the confessional: he "needs to think of his own sins, to listen with tenderness, to pray to the Lord for a heart as merciful as his.... He needs to try to resemble God in all his mercy." One might quibble that this set of instructions seems contradictory—to be thinking about one's own sins seems to point in one direction, and to be trying to resemble God in quite a different one—but no doubt the best confessors are indeed the ones who can do both these things at once. All in all, the portrait Francis paints of the confessional is a moving one: a humble priest, listening intently and tenderly, offering advice "delicately" and finding a way to communicate to the penitent the loving, merciful embrace of God. How often the experience of the confessional lives up to this portrait is, of course, another question.

The confession-centered quality of the book—by my count ten out of eleven chapters touch in some way on the confessional—may be something of an accident, the product of the questions Tornielli asked and the particular

CNS PHOTO / *L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO* VIA REUTERS

A priest hears the confession of Pope Francis during a penitential liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica.

angle on the topic of mercy he chose. In the more balanced *Misericordiae vultus* only two out of the twenty-five paragraphs concern the sacrament. This is fortunate, I think. If the Year of Mercy turned out to be nothing but a call for a return to the practice of confession—as an incautious reader of this book could easily suppose—it might seem a touch unpleasant: a triumphalist church, convinced it has all the answers, calling her "children" to return to her as penitents.

Is there in any case—even if it is not all about calling us back to confession—something unsettling in the current emphasis on mercy? Francis quotes John Paul II's comment that "The word and the concept of 'mercy' seem to cause uneasiness in man." Is he right? Cardinal Walter Kasper, in a 2013 book on mercy that influenced Francis, similarly suggests that "words like 'mercy' and 'pity' have largely gone out of fashion"; they seem "sentimental"; they "have been used up and appear old and dusty." In the passage from John Paul II quoted in Francis's bull, a diagnosis is in fact offered of our unease with mercy: there is a sort of Promethean quality to modern humanity—scientific and technological progress mean we are used to control, to dominion over nature, and don't want to acknowledge dependence on God's mercy.

I think the popes are right that we are uncomfortable with too much emphasis on mercy, but not quite right in their identification of the source of discomfort. We pray at every Mass "Lord have mercy," and I've yet to meet a Catholic who objects to doing so. It is not God's mercy that causes disquiet, in my view, but the proposal that mercy become the fundamental pattern for how we relate to other people: mercy at the center of the divine-human relationship we are at ease with; mercy as the core of human-human relationships not so much so.

Part of the problem is that we can associate mercy with and imbalance of power—it's a word that can call to mind images of a king graciously deciding not to chop off the head of his prisoner. Perhaps this is just the "dustiness," the dated feel of the word—"compassion," after all, doesn't tend to put us off in quite the same way. (Peter Steinfels made a similar point in his contribution to the *Commonweal* symposium on *Amoris laetitia*, "Balancing Act," May 20.) Perhaps we could learn to use "mercy" differently—to think of what merciful colleagues, or a merciful bureaucracy, or a merciful attitude on the part of young adults toward their parents might look like. We might think of mercy not as an act of condescension, but as treating others, in their moments of weakness or fault or vulnerability, as we ourselves would like to be treated.

There is also the worry that a focus on mercy might imply a failure to think about justice. Does the "Year of Mercy" encourage us to respond to the needs of others in a way that ultimately leaves them where they are, without addressing structural problems that brought about their distress? It's one of the shortcomings of *The Name of God is Mercy* that, read on its own, it might lead one to this view, though a wider look at Pope Francis's writings quickly dispels this impression: in *Evangelii gaudium*, for instance, Francis speaks about things such as the danger of unfettered markets and the structural causes of inequality, and in fact goes out of his way to reject the possibility that "our response to God be seen simply as an accumulation of small personal gestures to individuals in need."

That the emphasis on mercy cannot mean the abandonment of the search for justice is something on which Kasper, too, insists: "Mercy," he writes, "becomes pseudomercy...when it does not exceed, but rather undercuts the demand for justice." Perhaps the most persuasive voice suggesting that a pursuit of justice can take place within, and not in opposition to, a commitment to mercy, is that of the liberation theologian Jon Sobrino. More than twenty years ago he wrote powerfully of the "principal of mercy" as that which lay at the heart of the life of Jesus and which lies, or

ought to lie, at the center of the church's identity. When the church truly lives by the principle of mercy, and does not espouse mercy as mere sentiment—when reacting to eradicate the suffering of others is at the very core of its identity, and is lived out fully—then the church will be led not only to tend the wounds of victims, but to "denounce robbers who victimize, to lay bare the lie that conceals oppression, and to encourage victims to win their freedom from culprits." Then the church, Sobrino writes, will be "decentered" by mercy, its focus shifted away from itself, and then indeed it will find itself "threatened, assaulted, and persecuted" by the forces of "anti-mercy."

So mercy can be a richer and more challenging concept than we tend to suppose. But even so, there are limits to the usefulness of its invocation. If I come across someone who is harmed, someone who has tripped and fallen and gashed her head, let's say, I can respond with mercy—I can help her get up, speak to them kindly, and tend the wound. But if I have *caused* the harm—I was the one who left the oil on the sidewalk that brought about the fall—while I may still need to help her get up and tend the wound, mercy is not quite the category for thinking about my obligations. Invoking mercy in this context would be an evasion of responsibility. Similarly, if something in church teaching is out of whack, if there is something that is not quite right, then a call to be merciful in its application strikes a false note. Suppose as a matter of fact, for example, it is not true that homosexual unions are (in the language of the synod of bishops, recently quoted by Francis) "not even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family"; in this case no redoubling of a merciful pastoral style toward gay people will undo the injustice the church does to them. ■

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David Cloutier

An American Prophet

Dorothy Day
Love in Action
Patrick Jordan
Liturgical Press, $12.95, 144 pp.

I first discovered Dorothy Day when, in college, one of my best friends from high school responded to my increasing infatuation with Thomas Merton by sending me *The Long Loneliness*. Merton's combination of contemplation and social commentary seemed much more attractive to me at the time. So did his affinities for Buddhism, making him (and me) a good fit for the pluralistic culture of my college. But over time, I became much more taken with Dorothy Day. She is more difficult, challenging, and powerful. Today, when I read Merton's journals, his long struggles with his vocation, born of understandable frustration with the leadership of Gethsemane Abbey, and his retreat to his hermitage remind me too much of the escape fantasies produced by routine battles of academic life. When I read Dorothy Day's journals, I am struck by something different: a relentless dedication in the face of every challenge—a total refusal to retreat and a remarkable lack of bitterness. Nearly every page of her journals testifies to her commitment to live the Gospel where she already is, and to discover joy there.

This juxtaposition of personalities is appropriate, because one of Day's great gifts—and one of the best things about Patrick Jordan's new biography of her, in Liturgical Press's People of God series—is her unexpected and ever-challenging personality. Jordan, a longtime *Commonweal* editor, writes as one who knew her well, and so the book is able to convey a vivid sense of Day as a person. The Day we meet had a remarkable ability to be attentive to everyone she met and to the beauty appearing in ordinary life. Yet she could also be "short, overbearing or even cantankerous." She possessed a kind of worldliness that enabled her to accept all things with mercy and love, but also a severity of perspective, never more severe than when she trained it on herself. She was a person who loved as few have loved, and yet, Jordan writes, "in a very real sense, she remained a single, solitary figure."

Jordan brings an ease to his subject that comes from genuine friendship—it has the honesty of a companion, not that of a reporter. His book is not hagiography, but neither does it pretend to an objective distance. He remarks on the first page, "She was delightfully down-to-earth and a pleasure to be with—most of the time." Such a remark, combining knowing and heartfelt praise with a gentle poke, typifies the book.

It isn't only Jordan's tone that hits the mark. Instead of offering a chronological narrative, he weaves together his living sense of Day's personality with some of the major themes of her work. The result is illuminating, even for those who already know a lot about Day. Jordan includes not only what you might call "Day's Greatest Hits" but a wide set of lesser-known insights and episodes from her diaries, letters, archives, and acquaintances. Still, the book's very brevity requires him to focus on the essential—on what mattered most to her, and about her.

And what was that? In a closing chapter on Day's candidacy for sainthood, Jordan calls her "a complex, compelling, and sometimes contradictory person," and these qualities made her a "real" rather than a "plaster" saint. Jordan's biography draws attention to three aspects of Day's life that, taken together, make it impossible to understand her either as a standard-issue social-justice activist or as just another libertine-turned-ascetic on the model of St. Augustine. She was not reducible to any Catholic stereotype.

First, Day's love of others, the poor,

and the church was remarkably lacking in sentimentality. Jordan quotes her saying she "cannot bear the religious romantics," preferring a realism that "prays to see things as they are and to do something about it." Too often, we are presented with a false choice between a tug on the heartstrings and a presumably hard-nosed realism. Tough and tender are treated as opposites, even in terms of ecclesial style—for example, in the frequently drawn contrast between Popes Benedict and Francis. Day combined toughness and tenderness, giving us a compelling example of the challenges of real mercy. Her toughness began with a stringent self-awareness: "I see only too clearly how bad people are," she said. "I wish I did not see it. It is my own sins that give me such clarity." Jordan writes that Day was "the most self-reflective and consistently self-aware person I have known."

Dorothy Day picketing in support of United Farmworkers in Lamont, California, August 2, 1973

The same lack of sentimentality was related to a second unusual quality: Day's ability to communicate love and attention to all, even to those with whom she had clear disagreements. Jordan often describes Day as "inclusive" and illustrates this quality with a story of a Catholic Worker who enlisted in World War II, fought bravely, and—despite Day's consistent pacifism—was encouraged to rejoin the Catholic Worker community afterward. He went on to become "a mainstay of the movement" before becoming a Trappist monk. The story is remarkable in an age of blog and Twitter "flamewars," in which strong commitments like Day's pacifism invariably come with a desire to castigate and expel those who are unfaithful to the cause. Too often, being "inclusive" can seem to require an abandonment of strong principle. For Day, it did not. Jordan emphasizes her principled respect for conscience, but she also seems to have been able to imagine a Catholic Church in which forthright disagreement did not require anathemas or schisms—a characteristic especially apparent in her ability to combine both charitable respect for bishops and vocal disagreement with them.

That brings us to a third remarkable trait: Day's life was guided by firm principle and animated by an extraordinarily deep passion. As a 1969 profile of Day put it, her daily life embodied "the truth of a love that categorically refused to deny the irreducible humanity in every talking creature." This makes it sound like a bloodless doctrine, but Jordan notes a diary entry from the same year in which Day compares her experiences at the Catholic Worker to "falling in love," a "quality of in-loveness that may brush like a sweet fragrance," a feeling that "may be an intuition of immortality." Many of the stories about Day in this book reflect a level of Catholic learning that is almost miraculous, given her lack of any formal Catholic education and her lifetime of daily activism. Where did she learn all this spiritual wisdom? More to the point, how did she manage to embody it with a practical immediacy most of us can't match? In another remarkable diary entry, Day attempts to sum up the Catholic Worker, noting that some say it is about peace, while others "go deeper" and see the mystery of voluntary poverty and still others move beyond that to a recognition of the profound trust in Providence that voluntary poverty requires. But finally, she says, "love is the reason for it all." There is a simplicity and a fierceness about this passage that almost embarrasses me as an academic theologian. In Day, piercing intellect and passionate practicality build on each other.

Jordan sheds some light on these three aspects of Day's life when he writes about her sense of certainty about her vocation. It was not the sort of certainty that sought to lord it over others or to bully them. But, as Jordan indicates, Day herself never seems to have been in serious doubt about her mission—her struggles had to do with how to carry it out. Such a sense of stability looks more and more remarkable in the context of a culture that celebrates, or at least accepts, perpetual transition. In an era when people are expected to cycle through many careers and even many selves, Day's example is compelling precisely because, once she found her calling, she stuck to it, even as many others in the Catholic Worker movement came and went. Day thus exemplifies the virtue of "sobriety" as Pope Francis describes it in *Laudato si'*: people with this kind of spiritual sobriety are not "dipping here and there, always on the lookout for what they do not have"; instead, they live out the conviction that "less is more" and "experience what it means to appreciate each person and each thing."

Day's own ideas, grounded both in her activist background and in the "personalist communitarianism" of Peter Maurin, continue to challenge

PHOTO BY BOB FITCH

the tendencies of both conservative and progressive Catholics. She was critical of usury, pacifist even during "the good war," skeptical of government welfare programs, averse to institutionalizing the Catholic Worker, and insistent on the importance of personal responsibility. Jordan quotes something she wrote in 1969: "Necessary for people to change. Quit worrying about popes, cardinals, bishops, structures, institutions." The statement "we begin with ourselves" appears twice in the book.

Jordan, whose voice remains admirably muted throughout, concludes by suggesting that Day be seen as an "American prophet"—with prophecy understood not only as offering an urgent message but also as embodying a whole "way of being in the world." Day's prophetic message, Jordan writes, sought "a closing of the gap between private and public morality…and questioned both our materialism and militarism." She was, he concludes, "someone who kept pushing us." But Jordan's biography also suggests why Dorothy's significance is not reducible to the Catholic Worker program: she succeeds in pushing even those whom she does not entirely persuade. Her real significance is to challenge us at a level more fundamental than policy. One is tempted to call it "holiness" even though that word, so easily misunderstood, may make her sound like a "sacristry Christian." It should instead indicate her willingness to treat as a daily imperative what most of us treat as a noble but impractical ideal: seeing Christ in all others, affirming their dignity with every fiber of one's being, and living totally for God. Jordan's book is a very fine introduction to Day's life and work, and an outstanding reminder of the challenge she still poses to Catholics everywhere. It helps us understand why she was one of the two American Catholics Pope Francis cited last year in his address to Congress. The other? Thomas Merton. ■

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Gerald J. Russello

Beef, Beer & Books

The Fellowship
The Literary Lives of the Inklings
Philip and Carol Zaleski
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $35, 656 pp.

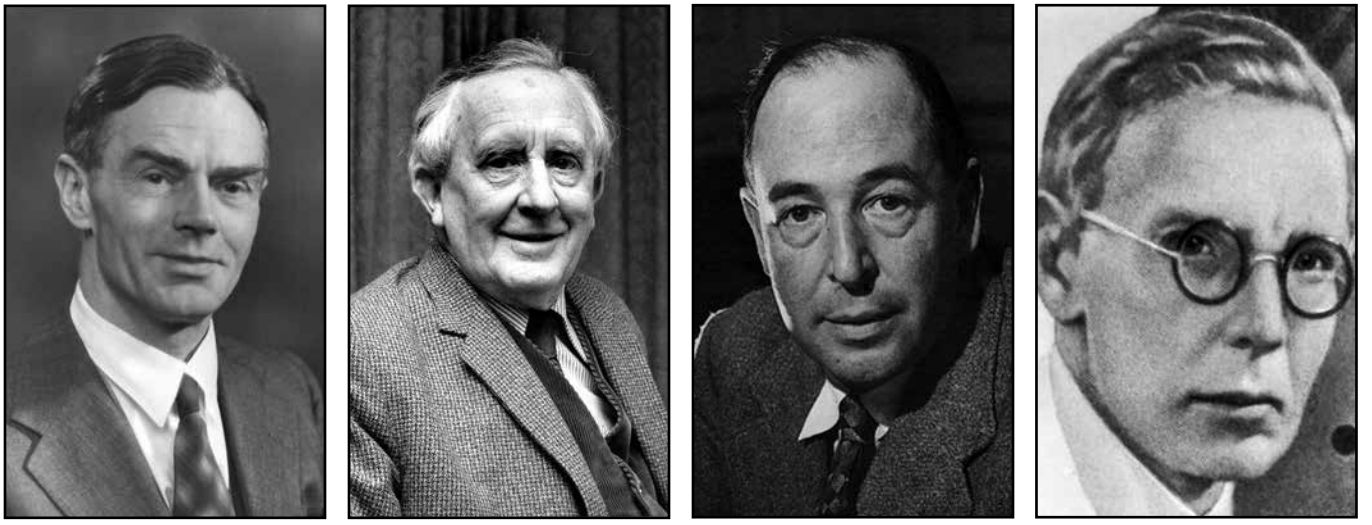
"A feeling for literature which united, in an unusual way, scholarship and imagination." Thus David Cecil described an Oxford literary club that midwifed books that have become classics of fantasy literature, apologetics, and poetry. C. S. Lewis, the engine behind the group known as the Inklings, described it more earthily: "We smoked, talked, argued, and drank together." This they did, despite professional setbacks, personal disputes, and a world war, for almost three decades—until the death of Lewis. There was nothing fashionable or avant-garde about the Inklings: they were a small group of white men who got together to talk about religion, literature, and philology while smoking and eating unhealthy pub food. Yet Tolkien remains the most important writer in Britain according to polls, Lewis continues to command attention, and their influence remains across a range of genres and scholarship. In *The Fellowship*, Philip and Carol Zaleski try to discern both why the Inklings lasted and why they still capture our imagination.

Meeting on Tuesday mornings at Lewis's rooms in Oxford's Magdalen College and Thursday nights at the Eagle and Child pub (the famous "Bird and Baby" in Inkling parlance), the group was dedicated to reading and critiquing one another's work. From these meetings came the work that made them famous: *The Lord of the Rings, Out of the Silent Planet*, fiction by Charles Williams, and work by the fourth figure profiled here, the lawyer and philosopher Owen Barfield, who has been called the "first and last Inkling." Other figures fill out the portrait, such as Lewis's brother Warnie, Dom Bede Griffiths, David Cecil, and Henry "Hugo" Dyson. The details of the meetings are not known, but the Zaleskis dig deep into archives, letters, and other sources to provide in-depth biographies, summaries of popular and critical reception, and insight into the group's creative process. We get to know Tolkien, a fecund source of languages and mythic tales who tended to mumble at the group's meetings. The Lewis presented here is jovial and in command, ready with a sharp barb or remembered quote form his copious store of British literature. There is constant talk among the Inklings about work in progress, work contemplated, or work abandoned.

As with any good myth, there is an origin story—or rather, there are two. One was a literary club established by an Oxford undergraduate, Edward Lean, in 1932–33; he called it the Inklings. Lewis and Tolkien became members, continuing an acquaintance that had begun in 1926, when Lewis met the "smooth, pale fluent little chap" at a tea. The two formed a strong bond over beef, beer, English literature and, at least initially, a common interest in their Christian faith. The second origin story involves the long walks that Lewis took along with Barfield and Cecil Harwood in the 1920s, which combined enjoyment of the countryside with rigorous evening philosophical discussions.

It is easy to think of the group as a model of intellectual fellowship and mutual support, but over the course of their long career together the Inklings had a number of disputes and arguments. In particular, Tolkien, as a Catholic, took a critical view of his friend's "mere Christian" apologetics. Lewis, for his part, harbored a residual Protestant distaste for Rome. Dyson, whose career was overshadowed by Tolkien and Lewis, seemed after some years to favor conflict and rivalry over fellowship.

Williams does not appear until about two hundred pages in, and dies about a hundred pages before the book ends,



The Inklings (from left): Owen Barfield, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams

but in some ways he is the magnetic and mysterious core of the story. Although previously acquainted with the Inklings, Williams began to attend their meetings regularly only after his offices at the Oxford University Press, where he worked his entire career, were relocated to Oxford proper at the outset of the war. His arrival changed the group's dynamic. Lewis thought highly of him, and praised his work at almost every chance. Tolkien saw him as a rival for Lewis's attention, and Williams's lectures at Oxford drew some of Tolkien's audience away. But most of Williams's books were, and remain, neglected, ever on the brink of rediscovery, though a new biography might finally introduce him to a wider audience.

In a way, Williams's obscurity makes sense: his occult interests (membership, for example, in the esoteric Fellowship of the Rosy Cross) and idiosyncratic religious doctrines did not travel well outside of the England of his time, and much of his Arthurian poetry sounds odd to contemporary ears. Williams was perhaps one of those whose qualities are easiest to appreciate in person—a man whose agile and restless mind mesmerized students and companions with its play of words and ideas. The Zaleskis rightly focus on his strangeness. Williams really did, for a while at least, believe in magical and occult practices, and he seems to have had odd and sadomasochistic (but also seemingly chaste) relationships with some of his more ardent female admirers. Certainly Tolkien did not fully take to him, even though some of the details of Williams's stranger practices were unknown to him or the other Inklings. Still, the Zaleskis give Williams his due; his "doctrine of co-inherence," and the informal community he established to live it, is strongly related to his interpretation of Christian doctrine. And they note that Lewis thought highly of Williams's unusual fiction, a series of supernatural (or better, transcendental) novels, some of which might make very interesting movies.

Barfield was another important member of the group, but one whose orbit was eccentric. He spent much of his life as a solicitor in London, which he generally regretted since it took so much time away from what he considered his more important literary and philosophical labors. Although among the earliest members of the Inklings, his devotion to Anthroposophy, a school now as exotic as Williams's occultism, kept him at a distance from the increasingly orthodox Christianity of Lewis and Tolkien—so much so that Barfield would not discuss his theological ideas at meetings. He suffered a series of disappointments, both personal and literary, and he seemed for a time the least distinguished of the Inklings. But that is not the whole story; in the 1960s and '70s, as the other Inklings passed away—Lewis died in 1963, Tolkien and Dyson in 1975—Barfield kept going, an inspiration to those who have not spent their

lives in intellectual pursuits but still wish they could. He arrived for the first time in the United States, less than a year after Lewis's death, for a stint of lectures at Drew University.

In his book *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis had famously described Barfield as the Second Friend, the one with whom "you go at it, hammer and tongs, far into the night, night after night…. Out of this perpetual dogfight a community of mind and a deep affection emerge." American audiences in part wanted to see who had drawn such respect from the master, and Barfield was more than willing to oblige. He lectured and wrote about his early friendship with Lewis, and their philosophical disputes (which they called, semi-seriously, "the Great War"), as well as his own work. His lectures were well attended and he entered into a remarkably vital and creative phase of his life. He wrote a well-received book on Coleridge, and two other books, *Poetic Diction* and *Studies in Words*, have attained cult classic status. He never became a household name like Lewis and Tolkien, but in his areas of interest he is now considered as accomplished as any other member of the group.

The Inklings lasted for as long as they did, the Zaleskis believe, because they were serious about their work and the critiques of their fellows, and they were serious about a certain kind of (male) friendship. They shared convictions about the power of story, including that True Story of creation and redemption they believed was reflected, obscurely, in literary creation. But what about their lasting influence? The enduring popularity of Lewis and Tolkien, in particular, has inspired critics (like the feminist Germaine Greer) to discount them as mere tellers of just-so stories. But Tolkien's philological scholarship is still important. Barfield continues to inspire more than just Christians (or Anthroposophists). And Lewis's apologetical work and literary scholarship is widely read and respected, even if most people know him for his Narnia stories.

The Zaleskis highlight what perhaps really discomfits some modern readers about the Inklings: they believed in redemption, in what the Zaleskis call the Happy Ending—not an ending without sorrow or wounds, but salvation all the same. They believed that Western culture had lost the image of salvation, which was expressed in story, legend, and myth (including what Lewis called the Truth Myth, Christianity). But they were not really nostalgists; their work was directed not "simply to restore the discarded image, but to refresh it and bring it to life for the present and the future." ■

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Marlene Lang

Reel 'em In

Phishing for Phools

The Economics of Manipulation and Deception

George A. Akerlof and Robert J. Shiller
Princeton University Press, $24.95, 272 pp.

When it comes to writing about economics for the layman, it turns out that even Nobel laureates can relax and have fun. Introducing themselves as "Bob and George," the renowned economists Robert J. Shiller and George A. Akerlof invite the reader to rethink market dynamics in *Phishing for Phools: The Economics of Manipulation and Deception*. In the process they shine a lighthearted light in our dark places, illuminating everyday psychological questions alongside economic theory. How exactly does manipulation of the free market affect the workings of Adam Smith's invisible hand? When does slick marketing cross an ethical boundary and become downright slimy? And why do we buy what we buy? Bob and George will explain.

While making clear from the outset their fundamental embrace of capitalism, the authors proceed to question, in the lingering shadow of the 2008 financial crisis, just how the marketplace functions, and specifically what influences beyond supply and demand are in play. They raise an essential and uncomfortable question: Why didn't economists see the crash coming? Their carefully chosen case studies suggest that the way we have looked at economics too often has neglected the human behavioral aspect. Human actions are not incidental to the marketplace, but embedded within it. The authors argue that economists ignore these behavioral influences on economic life at their peril—and ours.

For instance, consider the psychological element behind our purchases. A gym membership, a new car, a new drug: very often we buy to make ourselves feel better. Economists who discount this insight work with a big blind spot. They won't see the many foibles at work in the market, won't grasp why we spend a lot to feel like a good parent or to look younger, why we buy bad food or take foolish chances—like buying Powerball tickets or pumping money into slot machines. When the foolish chance is a subprime mortgage, and hundreds of thousands take it, behavior becomes economics.

Phishing for Phools marshals a vocabulary well suited to exploring such insights. Its examination of the recent financial crisis, for example, shows how ratings agencies eroded the integrity of the market by taking fees—payoffs, essentially—in exchange for the desired rating. This "mining of reputation" by investment banks provides a glaring example of the dangers of market manipulation, and sheds light on what the authors mean by a "phish." An equilibrium is always at work in the market, they explain, with supply either falling behind demand or catching up to it—in much the way that retail checkout lines even out and shrink as shoppers choose the shortest line or rush to an empty register when it opens. In a similar manner, a healthy economy thrives through the efforts of economic players who act productively to fill a market vacuum. But creating a vacuum with false or misleading information can distort market workings, upending optimal equilibrium to produce an "unusual profit" for the schemers that inevitably leaves buyers worse off than they would be otherwise. That deceptive and distorting action is the "phish."

The "phools," of course, are any of us who are buying. From behavioral psychology, Akerlof and Shiller borrow the insight that all too many buyers do not merely choose what is best for themselves, but follow the dictates of "monkeys on their shoulders" to pursue emotionally driven purchases not in their best interest. The authors wax vehement on the subject of how such vulnerabilities are exploited by practitioners of the phish. Economic practices that "manipulate and distort our judgment," they assert, "are analogous to biological cancers that make their home in the normal equilibrium of the human body."

To explain why markets are so easily "phishable," Bob and George apply an insight dear to marketers: it's all about the stories we tell. They then ask their fellow economists to ponder the story we tell about our economic system: that the free market, if left to itself, will bring a prosperous society. They note that a counter-narrative, once widely espoused by Americans, held that "government programs and laws...addressed real needs," and that "government, used effectively, can be genuinely beneficial." The authors call this the "Old Story," while today's "New Story" tells us that "government is the problem" with the economy. Put forward relentlessly by advocates of unhampered capitalism, this second story now dominates both economic policy and politics, as seen in the loosened regulation that enabled the Madoff scheme and in the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision, which conjoined free-market thinking to the interpretation of free speech. All in all, the environment created by this "New Story" ideology makes for easy phishing.

The "New Story" has old origins. Ever since *The Wealth of Nations*, people have been identifying the pursuit of private interests with the promotion of the common good. *Phishing for Phools* insists that a capitalist economy offers the best hope for prosperity, but also warns that a healthy market is perpetually subject to the "cancer" of manipulation. It's

important to note that in making this diagnosis, the authors are not singling out the routine hype practiced by advertisers or sales reps. They are after, so to speak, much larger phish: the misuse of rating systems, co-opting of regulations, and "story sculpting" maneuvers that they maintain have constituted economic harm on a scale unseen in prior generations. They acknowledge that many economists are likely to respond by saying, "Nothing new here!"—but they point out that when the calamity of 2008 happened, most economists were caught out in the cold.

Phishing for Phools presses these economists to question the long-held assumption that free markets are best left untended. Bob and George urge us to slap Adam Smith's invisible hand when it steals from everybody's cookie jar. They ask us to ponder those situations, economic or political, that provide particularly tempting opportunities to phish for phools—situations that they believe demand regulation, for the sake of a healthy economy and the common good. With its penetrating insights rendered in accessible prose, this book constitutes appropriate reading for students of social ethics, Catholic Social Teaching, or marketing and public relations. Or you can read it just for phun. ■

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Black Lives, White Catholics

Jon Nilson

For anyone needing a straight-on look at racism in the United States, the National Urban League's thirty-ninth *State of Black America* report, issued in March 2015, unmasks its everyday workings with some dismaying numbers. Over 25 percent of our black population lives below the poverty line, for instance, while only 11.1 percent of whites do. Black unemployment is double that of whites. In fact, in nearly every major "quality of life" category, from health care and infant mortality to education, the report tells "a tale of two nations," as the Urban League's CEO, Marc Morial, put it. Morial insists that the state of black America in 2015 can only be described with one word: "crisis."

Do black lives matter to white Americans? Martin Luther King contemplated the racists of his time and wondered, "Who is their God?" His question remains sadly relevant today. Why are so many white Catholics untroubled by the empty stomachs of black children, by the thousands of black men in prison, by the suffering of black women who die too early from undiagnosed and untreated illnesses? Why isn't racial justice one of the highest priorities of the U.S. Catholic Church? Why are white Catholics among the staunchest supporters of Donald Trump's presidential candidacy?

Ignorance about the reality of black life is rampant among whites who rarely have to confront it. Official, *de jure* segregation may be illegal in this country, but black-white economic disparities create a *de facto* segregation, with most whites living in racially homogenous, relatively prosperous neighborhoods where schools function well and safety is taken for granted. Such separateness conduces to mass ignorance about the crisis described in the Urban League study. Gallup reports that more than seven in ten whites think that blacks and whites have equal employment opportunities. Eight in ten believe that blacks and whites have equal educational and housing opportunities. No wonder most whites aren't upset about what's happening to black lives.

How can injustice be remedied when it is invisible? Educating the public is the first and essential step. White Catholics—and indeed all white people—must learn how racism, both subtle and not-so-subtle, perpetuates black suffering and death. How can the Catholic Church make a contribution to this challenging learning process? As it happens, I think we already have on hand a good model for doing so. Why not conduct the kind of public, collaborative investigation into the state of race relations today that the U.S. bishops did in writing their pastoral letters, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983) and *Economic Justice for All* (1986)?

Those documents set a tone of moral purposefulness while providing a model of how the church should bring its unique perspective into the public square on issues of national importance. The bishops intended not only to produce accurate analyses and effective strategies, but also to promote discussion and action

within the church—and, as Cardinal Joseph Bernardin noted, to "stimulate the public argument" about peace and the economy. To this end they published preliminary drafts of their letters, saying, in effect, "Whoever you are, if you can help us improve this, please do." The response was remarkable, so much so that Bernardin, who directed the peace pastoral, had to request more time for his committee to digest it all. Archbishop Rembert Weakland, who directed the economic pastoral, reported "abundant feedback" from eighty-eight dioceses, thirty-two religious orders, thirty-eight secular organizations and institutions, forty-four academics, thirty international sources, fourteen interfaith and ecumenical bodies, and over a thousand individuals.

When all was said and done—and written—the bishops had dramatically heightened public awareness and debate, both within the church and without; and as a consequence, few could doubt the church's commitment to peace and economic justice. But John Paul II and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger were not pleased with this process, and it has not been tried again. Why not revive it now, under Pope Francis, at a moment in our history when bridging the racial divide is so important and so difficult?

Imagine what might come out of reviving this fruitful process. Consulting and collaborating with historians, political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, and theologians can help reveal the scope and tenacity of racism. We could dispel the notion that racism is just a matter of individuals' attitudes and actions, or that the police killings of young black men are merely "isolated incidents." We could shelve the fantasy of achieving racial reconciliation without some form of reparations. We could develop and begin to implement effective strategies against racial bigotry at all levels of the church. And at last, at last, white America might hear the anguish of racism's victims.

James Baldwin was surely right when he wrote that only "a very rare, intrepid, and genuinely free and loving shepherd [can] challenge the habits and fears and assumptions of his flock and help them enter into the freedom that enables us to move to higher ground." We need such intrepid, free, and loving shepherds now. ■

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