Religion, Politics, Culture

Commonweal

MARCH 2021

'It Cannot Continue'

Joseph Sorrentino on the pandemic's economic toll in Mexico

Sarah Ruden on textual idolatry

Daniel Walden on Catholicism & gender

Santiago Ramos on Bolivia after Evo

Mollie Wilson O'Reilly on women in liturgy

$6.95 US/$7.50 CAN
COMMONWEAL.MAGAZINE.ORG

THE HANK CENTER PRESENTS

CONVERSATIONS ON THE CATHOLIC IMAGINATION: WAR, PEACE, AND THE CATHOLIC IMAGINATION

FEATURING PHIL KLAY AND PHILIP METRES IN CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL P. MURPHY

Join the discussion on how violence, warfare, and oppression are mediated through an imagination that knows the profound failure of such human endeavors.

MARCH 11, 2021 • 4 -5:15 PM CDT • ZOOM FORUM

Phil Klay is the author of the novel *Missionaries* and the short story collection *Redeployment*, which received the National Book Award for Fiction in 2014. His nonfiction work was awarded the George W. Hunt, S.J. Prize for Journalism, Arts and Letters in 2018. He teaches writing at Fairfield University.

Philip Metres has written numerous books, including *Shrapnel Maps, Sand Opera,* and *The Sound of Listening*. Awarded fellowships from the Guggenheim and Lannan Foundations, and three Arab American Book Awards, he is professor of English and director of the Peace, Justice, and Human Rights program at John Carroll University.

Right: Bookcover art provided by Philp Metres' *Shrapnel Maps*.

THE 2021 SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN LECTURE: DR. JENNIFER FREY

Jennifer Frey, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Carolina, offers this year's Newman Lecture, which invites scholars to recount their own discovery of the Catholic intellectual tradition in light of their ongoing research and thought. Dr. Frey's talk is titled "From the Rust Belt to Rome: The Conversion of a Working-Class Atheist." All are welcome!

MARCH 25, 2021 • 4 -5:15 PM CDT • ZOOM FORUM

THESE EVENTS ARE FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.
REGISTRATION REQUIRED.
VISIT LUC.EDU/CCIH.

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

The Joan & Bill Hank Center FOR THE CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE

Religion, Politics, Culture

Commonweal

MARCH 2021 • VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 3

Commonweal
FOUNDED IN 1924

Commonweal [ISSN 0010-3330], a review of religion, politics, and culture, is published monthly, except for a single July-August issue, by the Commonweal Foundation, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 405, New York, NY 10115. Telephone: (212) 662-4200. Email: editors@commonwealmagazine.org. POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Commonweal*, P.O. Box 348, Congers, NY 10920-0348.

LETTERS

Individual vs. Social Sin

VACCINES & ABORTION

In a statement released by the USCCB affirming the moral permissibility of getting the COVID-19 vaccine, the bishops remark, "we should be on guard so that the new COVID-19 vaccines do not desensitize us or weaken our determination to oppose the evil of abortion itself and the subsequent use of fetal cells in research." David Cloutier ("A Dangerous Confusion," February) suggests that the concern the bishops have with desensitization to abortion is a valid one, and I agree with him that it is important to recognize how vaccines derived from a cell line that began with cells from an aborted fetus "bear the stain of individual and social sin."

But I do not think that complaints about the tendency for some Catholics (including the USCCB) to focus on the issue of abortion at the expense of other moral concerns necessarily indicates a desensitization toward abortion; rather, these complaints are attempting to point out a preoccupation with abortion among some American Catholics who see any sign that abortion isn't a first priority as an indication that it is being overlooked entirely.

Massimo Faggioli ("Lots of Politics, Little Legitimacy," *Commonweal* website) points out the difference in tone between the USCCB statement on Biden's presidency—which expressed alarm over Biden's policies that support and may expand abortion access—and its 2016 statement congratulating Trump. Faggioli concludes that "the January 20 statement from the conference was one more indication that a number of U.S. bishops are indifferent to what happened in this country under Trump, and saw no reason not to support him a second time." Without suggesting that desensitization to abortion is nonexistent (I agree with Cloutier that in some circles, this is an issue), I believe that the desensitization of many bishops toward Trump and his policies deserves our concern—and the bishops' concern—as well.

The USCCB should do more to recognize the stain of individual and social sin that Trump leaves in his wake. Its statement on the COVID-19 vaccines offers no guidance on how vaccinations should be distributed with an accounting for the pandemic's particular toll on Black and Hispanic communities and the poor, and its statement congratulating President Biden makes little mention of the many serious problems with which he will contend: the threat posed by violent white-supremacist groups, racial bias in policing, the ongoing pandemic, and climate change. As Cloutier concludes, "our most important duty is to act consistently to fight injustice here and now, wherever we find it." I hope that the bishops can recognize and speak out as forcefully against these legacies of evil as they do against abortion.

Emma McDonald
Boston, Mass.

Public Writing /Private Perceptions

The Vexed Issues Surrounding Flannery O'Connor and Race

WEDNESDAYS
12:30–1 P.M.

Moderated Conversations with

Hilton Als
MARCH 10

Alice McDermott
MARCH 24

Brad Gooch
APRIL 7

Register for Free Zoom Webinar
& Submit Your Questions by Visiting
LOYOLA.EDU/FLANNERY

William H. Shannon Chair in Catholic Studies
2020-2021 Lecture Series

NEIGHBOR WITH NEIGHBOR: A CALL TO SOLIDARITY

David Karp

Becoming a Restorative Campus: How Restorative Justice Can Build Community and Address Harm

March 11, 2021 • 7 p.m.
Zoom lecture: go.naz.edu/karp

Julie Hanlon Rubio

Searching for Common Ground: Community & Belonging in a Polarized World

April 15, 2021 • 7 p.m.
Zoom lecture: go.naz.edu/rubio

All lectures are free and open to the public.

With gratitude to **Emily Reimer-Barry** and **Teresa Delgado** for their participation during the fall of 2020.

NAZARETH COLLEGE
4245 East Avenue • Rochester, NY 14618 • www.naz.edu

APPLICATION DEADLINE
APRIL 26, 2021

John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue

Russell Berrie Fellowship in Interreligious Studies

One-year academic Fellowship program in Interreligious Studies at The Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Italy

Learn more: iie.eu/berrie

Russell Berrie Foundation

iie The Power of International Education

Angelicum

Commonweal
FOUNDED IN 1924

PUBLISHER
Thomas Baker

BUSINESS MANAGER
James Hannan

VICE PRESIDENT OF ADVANCEMENT
Adrianna Melnyk

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
Milton Javier Bravo

MISSION & PARTNERSHIPS DIRECTOR
Claudia Avila Cosnahan

MARKETING MANAGER
Gabriella Wilke

ADVERTISING
Regan Pickett
commonwealads@gmail.com
(703) 346-8297

SUBSCRIPTIONS
commonwealmagazine.org/subscribe
(845) 267-3068

Commonweal articles are available at many libraries and research facilities via ProQuest and OpinionArchives. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional offices. Single Copy, U.S., $6.95; Canada, $7.95. Yearly print subscriptions, U.S., $65; Canada, $70; other parts of the world, $75. Special two-year rate: U.S., $108, Canada, $118, other parts of the world, $128. Add $45 for airmail.

LETTERS

WHICH PARISHIONERS?

Nicholas Cafardi makes "a modest proposal" for change in the bishop selection process ("An Ambrose of Our Own," January). The subsidiarity he suggests may be well intentioned, but his broad-brush statement that "the people know who the good priests are" and so we should "let the people tell the nuncio who these priests are" is ill-advised. Who are these people? Does he assume all parishioners put principles ahead of personalities, or that all are sensitive to the pastoral needs of the community and choose to set aside personal agendas? I am reminded of a recent merger of parishes where I witnessed the vitriol that a truly good priest—a man who in Cafardi's words is "a pastor and close to the people"—endured in the process, and so I have no need to imagine the chaos that would ensue at the "after Mass" town-hall meetings he proposes. Egads! But Cafardi does make this point: consulting the priests within the diocese and making an effort to select the new bishop from among them is reasonable and manifests the subsidiarity he desires.

James K. Hanna
McMurray, Pa.

SOUR GRAPES

In all that I have read about our former nuncio's attacks on Pope Francis ("The One Missing Fact," January), I have seen nothing about what seems to me the most obvious reason. Francis passed Viganò over for cardinal, and he has been nothing but sour grapes ever since Francis's first consistory.

Ron Naumann
Jamesville, N.Y.

ESTO PERPETUA

I was delighted to read not one but two discussions of the Latin language in January's issue: Charles McNamara's "Cicero Will Outlive Your Tweets" and Cathleen Kaveny's "Thinking Latinly." Both Kaveny's tribute to "celebrated Latinist" Reginald Foster and McNamara's review of Nicola Gardini's book *Long Live Latin* challenge the characterization of Latin as a "dead language."

I had a magnificent Latin teacher whose reach, like that of Latin study itself, went beyond parsing Seneca into most other precincts of my life as a writer, so I savored Kaveny's portrait of Foster, who swapped out "dead language" for "ancient language" and dubbed homework *ludus domesticus* ("home play"). Both of these discussions noted the merits of rescuing Latin from the stodgy.

McNamara points to Gardini's argument that because of their excellence, ancient texts have endured and promise to continue to endure in ways contemporary linguistic constructions (like tweets) can't and won't. Gardini's book, McNamara writes, "bounces from Catullus backwards." Catullus is where I started forty years ago, when Elementary Latin infused my undergrad poet's head with shooting stars. That little bird (to which McNamara alludes)—that *passer, deliciae meae puellae*—doesn't *have* to die.

Michele Somerville
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Commonweal welcomes letters to the editor. Letters can respond to both print and online articles, and should include your name, city, and state. Please send your submissions to letters@commonwealmagazine.org.

Correction:
Due to an editing error, David Cloutier's article in the February issue ("A Dangerous Confusion") was missing a proper citation to an article by M. Cathleen Kaveny: "Appropriation of Evil: Cooperation's Mirror Image," Theological Studies, Vol. 61, No. 2 (2000). We regret the omission.

Shameful

The Senate's acquittal of Donald Trump for inciting the January 6 insurrection did not come as a surprise, but that doesn't make it any less disturbing. Forty-three Republican senators stood with the former president, a shameful display that should puncture any delusions that the party would become more moderate after Trump left office. It confirmed, instead, the GOP's ongoing radicalization. While Republicans already had only a tenuous commitment to democratic government—in recent years they've ramped up assaults on voting rights and grown ever more reliant on a strategy of minority rule—their support for conspiracy theories about election fraud was unprecedented. When they refused to hold Trump accountable for whipping up a violent mob to "stop the steal," it was merely the latest indication of how far they would go to maintain their grip on power.

This does not mean it was a mistake for Democrats to pursue Trump's impeachment. For days after the assault on the Capitol, there was no public briefing about what happened from government officials, and journalists were left to figure out what they could from witness statements, social-media posts, and information that trickled out from law enforcement. House impeachment managers provided by far the most complete account we have of the riots—a precise timeline of events that irrefutably connected Trump's words and deeds to the actions of the mob, especially his speech outside the White House immediately preceding the insurrection and his tweets as it occurred. The video presented by Rep. Jamie Raskin, which spliced together damning footage of Trump with clips—some previously unseen—of what happened inside the Capitol, offered frightening proof of just how serious the president's supporters were about using deadly violence to meet his demands. That alone was a genuine service to the country.

After the trial concluded, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell admitted, "There is no question that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of that day." It was a very strange thing to say after voting for acquittal. McConnell justified his vote by appealing to a narrow definition of incitement and a belief that impeachment should be used only to remove someone from office, but his comments are best understood as proof that nothing could have changed his mind—let alone the minds of his colleagues. No brilliant, unpursued strategy existed that would have magically persuaded Republicans to abandon Trump. As Raskin later said, "There's no reasoning with people who basically are acting like members of a religious cult."

Raskin was right, but the GOP's fanaticism shouldn't obscure the fact that Democrats still do not seem to grasp the urgency of this political moment. Take the fiasco over calling witnesses during the Senate trial. On the night before it was set to conclude, Republican congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler released a statement about the details of a phone conversation between House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Trump while rioters ransacked the Capitol. McCarthy divulged to her that he had asked Trump to call off the mob—only for Trump to say that he couldn't because they were left-wing activists. When McCarthy protested, Trump replied, "Well, Kevin, I guess these people are more upset about the election than you are." Herrera Beutler's revelations brought new enthusiasm for deposing witnesses, with her first on the list. As reported by *Politico*, Democrats debated the possibility late into the night. The next morning, the Senate voted to allow witnesses. Trump's lawyers responded by threatening to drag the proceedings on for weeks or months, and confusion reigned. Ultimately, no witnesses testified—and not just because a number of Democrats were hesitant to extend the trial. House managers never had a real plan for such a possibility, it turns out—a stunning misstep—and they eventually settled for a compromise: Herrera Beutler's statement would be read into the record. The trial concluded later that day.

The wisdom of that compromise can be debated. Though it's unlikely Trump administration officials actually would have testified in a timely manner, and though there was little chance new evidence would have swayed any Republicans, we might have learned more about what happened on January 6. Not calling witnesses came with a cost. But the best argument against doing so was that Democrats needed to get on with the people's business. Millions of Americans desperately await pandemic relief; cabinet appointments remain unconfirmed. Incredibly, that's not what happened after the trial ended. Rather than immediately taking up vital legislation, the Senate went into recess for a week. "The jury is ready to vote," Democrat Chris Coons reportedly said during negotiations over calling witnesses. "People want to get home for Valentine's Day."

It's possible that Trump could still face justice. The NAACP has filed a lawsuit on behalf of Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, claiming that Trump's role in the insurrection violated the Ku Klux Klan Act, an 1871 statute that, according to the *New York Times*, "includes protections against violent conspiracies that interfered with Congress's constitutional duties." And prosecutors in Fulton County, Georgia, have begun a criminal investigation into a phone call Trump had with Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, during which he pleaded with Raffensperger to "find" the votes he needed to win. Whatever the outcome of these efforts, Democrats need to deliver on the promises they campaigned on, and soon. There can be no doubt that Republicans, for their part, will say anything, do anything, and tolerate anything to regain power. ✪ *February 18, 2021*

Hope for Yemen

The civil war in Yemen is currently the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe. A hundred thousand Yemenis have died, more than 8 million are displaced, and 80 percent of the population is on the brink of starvation. What began as an internal conflict in 2014 morphed into a complicated proxy war between the internationally recognized government in southern Yemen, backed by Saudi Arabia, and the Iranian-supported Houthi rebels in the north. The United States got involved when the Obama administration began providing military support to the pro-government coalition and sold weapons to Saudi Arabia, an arrangement that continued under former president Donald Trump. The United States provides two-thirds of the aircraft the Saudis use in Yemen. Equipped with American arms and aided by American advisers, the Saudis have waged a sustained and often indiscriminate bombardment of the Houthis. They have targeted schools, hospitals, factories, and weddings.

In early February, President Joe Biden signaled a new direction when he announced that the United States will end "offensive operations" in Yemen, freeze "relevant" arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and name a special envoy to Yemen to pursue a diplomatic solution. The United States will also lift the terrorist designation from the Houthis to allow more humanitarian aid to reach northern Yemen. This is a marked departure from Donald Trump who, overriding a congressional vote to end U.S. involvement in the war, increased military and intelligence support for Saudia Arabia. In the last twenty-four hours of his presidency, Trump completed another deal to send arms not only to the Saudis but also to the United Arab Emirates, which also belongs to the pro-government coalition. As a *Commonweal* editorial ("A Shameful Alliance," November 9, 2018) argued, Trump's unwavering and mainly mercenary loyalty to the Saudis led him to overlook their human-rights abuses. Most notably, he covered up for the crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, who likely orchestrated the brutal murder of *Washington Post* journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 because of Khashoggi's criticism of the regime, including its war in Yemen. ("I saved [bin Salman's] ass," Trump told journalist Bob Woodward in an interview. "I was able to get Congress to leave him alone.")

The change in American posture and policy is long overdue, and welcome. Yet it's still unclear just what it will amount to. For one thing, though the administration has promised to end "offensive operations," the United States will continue to give Saudi Arabia defensive support. From the outset, Saudi Arabia has claimed that all its interventions in Yemen are defensive in nature; indeed, this was the grounds on which the Obama administration became involved in the first place. Also unclear is what qualifies as "relevant" arms sales. The vagueness of these terms suggests the administration is leaving itself room to maintain U.S. involvement in the war, perhaps in more or less the same manner as its predecessors.

That would be a mistake. Ending the catastrophe in Yemen means ending all military cooperation with the Saudis in Yemen and cutting off arms sales to the pro-government coalition. Now that the Houthis' terrorist designation has been revoked, the United States can and should support humanitarian-relief efforts—not only in the desperately impoverished north, but throughout the country. Biden must also commit to negotiating a ceasefire and, through the new envoy, work to broker a peace deal between the Yemeni government and the Houthis. The suffering in Yemen has gone on for far too long. That the United States has helped cause so much of it should be a source of lasting shame. The Biden administration has the opportunity, and the obligation, to correct course.

—Regina Munch

Rallying Around Navalny

When the political activist Alexei Navalny returned to Russia in January after five months in Germany, where he had been recovering from a gruesome nerve-agent attack likely perpetrated by the Kremlin, he was promptly arrested for violating parole and sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison. Suddenly, Vladimir Putin seems more concerned about the threat of a free, popular opponent than the bad optics of imprisoning one on obviously flimsy grounds.

Navalny's arrest was met with protests by tens of thousands of Russians across the country's eleven time zones. Thousands of protestors have been brutally beaten and detained by heavily armed police. Navalny's team, seeking to avoid these ongoing clashes, moved their protests to social media on February 14. This was a natural choice for Navalny, a favorite among younger Russians. The forty-four-year-old rose to prominence through his YouTube channel and blog, taking advantage of Russia's free internet to post videos like his recent exposé about a $1.34 billion mansion allegedly built for Putin using fraudulently obtained funds. That video quickly garnered more than 100 million views, and was referenced in signs and chants by protesters.

Though he brushes off Navalny in public statements, Putin is clearly worried that Navalny has become a rallying point for Russians dissatisfied with the president and his party. Reluctant to make Navalny a martyr, Putin had previously permitted him to avoid extended stays in prison, despite repeated arrests. Navalny's current sentence relates to a money-laundering accusation from 2014. The European Court of Human Rights deemed the charge "arbitrary and manifestly unreasonable," but that has not stopped Putin

from using it as a pretext to bar Navalny from running for office.

The recent protests have attracted support from Russians across the political spectrum, including many who find Navalny's personal history of nationalist and xenophobic statements off-putting, but nevertheless believe he is a catalyst for change. This coincides with waning support for United Russia, the country's ruling political party, which has seen a sharp drop in its approval rating in recent years. In 2018, the party passed legislation to raise the retirement age, which was deeply unpopular with its most loyal constituency—people over the age of fifty-five. Meanwhile, stagnant wages and increasing poverty, partly due to the pandemic, have also lead to greater discontent. Navalny's team has tried to capitalize on this, launching a "Smart Vote" app and website in 2018 that recommends the most popular non–United Russia candidates in every region and municipality, whether they are from the Communist Party or the far-right Liberal Democratic Party of Russia.

In the months between now and September's legislative elections, Navalny and his allies face several challenges. It's difficult to sustain long-term enthusiasm for protests, especially during a pandemic, and many Russians now feel that voting is futile: Putin is well known for stuffing ballot boxes. Despite President Joe Biden's promise to be tougher on Putin than his predecessor, calls by the United States and other Western nations for Navalny's immediate release have been ignored.

But Navalny and his team remain undeterred, viewing the assassination attempt and prison sentence as signs that Putin and his cronies are getting nervous. But silencing one man won't stem a massive tide of protest. As Navalny reminded the Kremlin in the fiery speech he gave at his sentencing: "You can't lock up millions and hundreds of thousands of people.... You can't lock up the whole country."

—Isabella Simon

Getting Back to School

What's at stake in the fight over reopening schools? That such a question, phrased in such a way, needs to be asked at all is indicative of how poorly we've tended to public education since the beginning of the pandemic one year ago. Millions of students across the country have lost some amount of in-person learning. Millions still haven't returned to the physical classroom at all, getting by—if that can be said—via remote schooling, which everyone agrees is no substitute for the real thing. Not only does learning suffer; children's emotional health also deteriorates the longer they're away from teachers and peers. Students of color and those who live in poverty fare worse than other students. Children who rely on schools for food and, in some cases, as havens from abusive environments, face still greater precarity. The socioeconomic consequences of a lost year (or more) of schooling are frightening to contemplate and could linger for generations.

What people disagree on is how to get back to something close to normal, soon, while minimizing the chances of anyone getting sick and dying from COVID-19 as a result. Frustrated parents and critics of organized labor are angry at teachers' unions for seeking guarantees on safety before in-class learning resumes. Teachers criticize government officials for delays in vaccinations and for demanding they return to work in poorly ventilated buildings. Big-city systems with poorer students and aging infrastructure are unfairly compared with private and religious schools. Republicans in Washington, suddenly interested in the well-being of the nation's schoolchildren, criticize the Biden administration for moving too slowly. White parents are far more likely to support the immediate resumption of in-person instruction, while the majority of Black and Latino parents, aware that COVID-19 has been especially dangerous to people of color, want remote-only learning to continue.

At least there's revived commitment at the federal level to communicate about the pandemic in a coordinated and fact-based manner. New guidelines issued in February by the Centers for Disease Control for ensuring safe reopening of schools are clearer and more focused than those issued under the previous administration. Yet while the codification of steps for controlling virus transmission—mask-wearing, social-distancing, handwashing, and regular cleaning of facilities—is welcome, many school systems lack the physical and financial resources to implement them. Another recommendation, "contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the health department," is sensible, but, without guidance on how to achieve it, not very helpful. The Biden administration, admitting to the scope of the challenge it set for itself by promising to open all schools full-time within a hundred days, has since advanced the far more modest goal of getting schools to offer in-person learning at least one day per week.

Data increasingly shows that schools are relatively safe, especially elementary schools, because young children are less prone to spreading infection. Rhode Island managed to restart in-person learning, and even New York City has fared well enough since reopening elementary schools last fall that it was set to reopen middle schools in late February. With vaccinations underway, there's a clear path forward in addressing the immediate crisis. But other challenges await. If the pandemic has proved that public education is a vital public good, it has also shed more light on the disparities in how that good is distributed. And it has emboldened those opposed to the very idea of public education, who've seized on the prolonged closures to sound new calls for vouchers, privately managed charters, and for-profit schools. Public schools will reopen, but the right of all American children to a free, high-quality education is yet to be secured.

—Dominic Preziosi

MATT MAZEWSKI

Ending the Sabotage

How Democrats can restore federal labor law

"Scabby the Rat" in New York City

ROBERT CICCHETTI/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Now that Democrats have a bare majority in the U.S. Senate, thanks to the Georgia runoff elections in January, President Biden's choices for executive-branch positions, judgeships, and other jobs throughout the federal bureaucracy should, in theory, face few obstacles to Senate confirmation. Given the nonexistent margin for error, this will require the cooperation of every single Democratic senator—never something I would recommend betting on. But Biden is certainly in a stronger position than it seemed he would be in the immediate aftermath of his party's lackluster down-ballot performance last November.

Some of his cabinet picks have already been confirmed in lopsided bipartisan votes, but the Democratic majority is likely to matter most when it comes time for more controversial nominations, potentially including at least one to the Supreme Court. One vitally important but relatively lesser-known agency where Biden is sure to encounter fierce resistance from Republicans, regardless of whom he selects to lead it, is the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which administers federal labor law. Nevertheless, he and Senate Democrats should act, as soon as legally possible, to appoint and confirm new members who will get to work undoing the Trump board's anti-labor reign of terror.

Established in 1935 by the New Deal–era law known as the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), the NLRB functions as a kind of quasi-judicial body that interprets and applies the NLRA, and adjudicates disputes between unions and employers. Its rulings in these cases carry precedential weight, so their consequences can be long-lasting. By tradition, the five-member Board has no more than three members from the president's party, and currently has a 3-1 Republican majority with one vacant seat.

Encouragingly, Biden has already made two important decisions, naming Democrat Lauren McFerran as the chairwoman of the board and taking the extraordinary step of firing Peter Robb, the NLRB's Trump-appointed general counsel, after Robb refused Biden's request to resign voluntarily. Some observers worry that this action could embolden future Republican presidents to immediately terminate a general counsel chosen by a Democratic predecessor, but Biden did the right thing. Robb was using his position to sabotage the agency from within. He pursued a controversial reorganization plan that sought to centralize power under himself and cut staff at the NLRB's regional offices. He was forced to backtrack from some elements of the plan after facing backlash, but, as the *Nation* reported last fall, the NLRB workforce has shrunk by about 20 percent over the past three years, and those who remain say they have been asked to work faster with fewer resources.

One of the primary responsibilities of the general counsel is to serve as a prosecutor of cases before the board having to do with allegations of unfair labor practices. Their office receives and reviews complaints from both unions and employers, then decides which ones to pursue. This discretion entails a great degree of power, a power that Robb used to aggressively move against unions. In one case, he tried to have "Scabby the Rat"—a large inflatable rat often brought in by unions during labor disputes to protest an employer's use of nonunion replacements, or "scabs"—declared a form of unlawful "coercion."

Biden was legally free to fire Robb, but board members cannot be terminated so easily: the NLRA provides that they can be removed only for malfeasance while in office—a demanding legal standard. The president could fill the one vacant seat right away, but he will not be able to alter the balance of power on the board for another five months or so, since none of the Republican members' terms will expire until August.

Even if Democrats were unable to reclaim a majority on the board, simply letting the Trump appointees' terms expire would be a positive development. The Supreme Court has ruled that a board with fewer than three members lacks a quorum to act, so at the very least the wrecking ball would be stilled. And the damage done to federal labor law over the past few years by Trump's three appointees—attorneys William Emanuel, Marvin Kaplan, and John Ring—has been extensive.

The NLRB makes policy in two different ways: first, by handing down decisions in cases involving union-representation petitions or charges of unfair labor practice; second—and much less commonly—by issuing regulations through a formal notice-and-comment rulemaking process. In its case law decisions, the Trump-era NLRB has made it easier for employers to misclassify workers as independent contractors with no right to unionize, and to retaliate against those who organize or discuss union business using company email. It has also dramatically shrunk the set of employees at religious institutions who are covered by federal labor law, ruling in last year's *Bethany College* decision that even secular faculty at religious schools have no right to unionize (a decision that seems to have been welcomed by administrators at some Catholic universities, despite the Church's teaching on the dignity of labor and the right to form unions).

Rulemaking, to which the NLRB has historically resorted only very infrequently, has also been used by the Trump board to aggressively further its anti-worker objectives: rulemaking has been employed more times since 2017 than in the previous thirty years. Among the rules finalized is one that would make it harder for fast-food chains and other corporations that use a franchise model to be deemed "joint employers," who are required to bargain with their franchisees' workers. One of the new proposed rules would restrict unions' access to workers' contact information; another would take away the right of student workers to unionize, undermining the efforts of unions like my own, the Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC-UAW Local 2110), to collectively bargain with universities on behalf of their research and teaching assistants and to reverse the trend toward the increasing precarity of academic labor.

The damage done over the past few years by Trump's three appointees to the National Labor Relations Board has been extensive.

Fortunately, Biden now has the power not only to let the Trump appointees' terms lapse, but to replace them with pro-worker members who will uphold the actual legal mandate of the board—which is to encourage collective bargaining—and get to work reversing the anti-labor actions of the current majority. And the prospects for new members to actually win confirmation now seem fairly bright: even the ever-fickle Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia voted for Obama's nominees to the NLRB, and against Trump's.

Yet leaving so much of federal labor law in the hands of an agency whose ideological makeup is in constant flux means that Biden's board may find its achievements to be just as short-lived as those of Trump's board, or Obama's. In the long run, what is needed is a wholesale updating of the NLRA to codify many of the protections for workers that are now at risk every time a Republican president is elected, and to move away from a system of labor relations based on negotiations between unions and individual employers toward one in which collective bargaining takes place at the level of entire industries or sectors. But that would require the Senate's new Democratic majority to eliminate, or at least dramatically curtail, the filibuster. And for now at least, there seems little chance of that.

RAND RICHARDS COOPER

The Mourning After

Trump's style will have lasting effects.

He is finally gone. The Fool departs, the Reign of Error closes. The feeling in our household, as in millions of others, is one of relief. Big, big relief, HUUUUUGE relief, as the man himself might say. On January 20, I kept imagining I could hear a collective sigh of 200 million people—a veritable roar of relief, echoing from coast to coast.

The day had stray notes of absurdity mixed in. Like Trump exiting, in the ceremony of adulation he had choreographed for himself, to the raucous strains of "Y.M.C.A." *("Young man, there's no need to feel down / I said, young man, pick yourself off the ground")*. Or his valedictory message to cheering supporters: "Have a good life." Have a good life? Normally that would seem a truculent and sarcastic thing to say. And maybe it was—Trump's contempt for everyone, even for his supporters, leaking through holes torn in the man by his own ever-thrusting self-pity.

The wear and tear on our country, meanwhile, has been almost beyond measure. It's not easy to know what the worst of it has been. But I'd begin with the way in which our civic discourse has been degraded. We humans have a fantastic capacity for adjusting ourselves to circumstances. The upside of this ability is endurance: our ability to survive, no matter what. We have seen this on display, spectacularly, during the year of this pandemic. The downside is what you might call accustomization. We get used to things; the expression "the new normal" suggests how readily this happens.

What Trump demanded we get used to was a level of insult, bullying, nastiness, crassness, insinuation, duplicity, and brazen selfishness that truly boggles the mind. There was—of course—no secret about any of this; the one thing Trump was honest about was how awful he was going to be. This was a man who mocked people with disabilities to their faces; who urged police to go hard on those they arrest; who egged crowds on with chants of "lock her up!"; who boasted of sexual assault; who turned debates into pure travesty, bragging about his penis size. And all of this was fully evident *before* we elected him. The four years of his presidency, as far as I can see, did nothing—not one thing—to balance the ledger on the side of decency, kindness, forgiveness, diplomacy, or joy.

"The new normal," then, is a scary phrase to apply to what happened these past four years. In this sense, the hope for Biden is a hope for the old normal, some old normal, almost any old normal. That could be his nickname: Old Normal. And that would be a good thing. We need to get back.

But how? To my mind, one of the most discouraging features of Trump's presidency is one of the most abstract: the epistemological hall of mirrors he led us into; the destruction of the very idea of factuality, objectivity, provability, and truth. Trump did not create the epistemological hall of mirrors; it's been in the works for some time. During the Bush administration, Karl Rove infamously derided a journalist for being part of what Rove called "the reality-based community." What he meant was that the journalist was clinging to an obsolete idea—namely, that some things are demonstrably true and others demonstrably false, and further that this distinction is and should be the basis of our political understandings, conversations, and ultimately our agreements. Well, Rove said, you can forget about that! Here were his contemptuous words to the journalist: "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out."

I find it fascinating to think that this idea—namely, that the truth claims people make are not valid on their own, but rather exist only as assertions of power—is traceable to postmodern theory, and that a Donald Trump is essentially a fulfillment of Foucault, via the likes of such cynical operatives as Karl Rove. Whatever the intellectual pedigree of this worldview, its effect on our political life and discourse has been calamitous. Even as my household exhales in relief, other millions of American households fester in anger and even despair, believing that their hero has been cheated out of office. It is, in my view, a provably false belief. But…so what? *They* believe it, and their refusal to accept any other version of reality is fortified by an extensive network of (dis)information sources. And so tens of millions of Americans are going to continue to believe that this election was fraudulent. They will remain an indigestible particle in the political metabolism of the nation.

Back in October 2016, weeks before an election I predicted Hillary Clinton would win with a comfortable margin, I wrote an essay for *Commonweal* titled "American *Dolchstoss*," in which I attempted to assess the threat posed by the Trump style of politics. I was wrong about the election, but unfortunately right about the threat. I noted that with its rampant conspiracy-theorizing, its casual trafficking in calumnies and canards, and its stubborn refusal to accept facts, Trump's movement was dragging politics into a warped-mirror funhouse. It really is amazing, looking back, to see how clear and consistent all of this was, right from the start. Campaigning in Pennsylvania that October, Trump predicted to roaring crowds that he

Donald and Melania Trump depart Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, January 20, 2021, ahead of President Joe Biden's inauguration.

CNS PHOTO/CARLOS BARRIA, REUTERS

was going to win big. "The *only* way we don't win this state is if there's cheating going on!" he proclaimed.

From the start, Trump's *Weltanschauung*—his appeal and his brand—was darkly and frankly conspiratorial. His campaign was openly based on it. President Obama was a foreign-born Muslim out to sacrifice the United States to a global socialist government. Climate change was a hoax perpetrated by traitors pursuing our country's demise. The Clintons had Vince Foster murdered. And on and on. He spared no one, mowing down his GOP competitors with such slashing falsehoods as the slanderous innuendo that Ted Cruz's father was a confederate of Lee Harvey Oswald. From the get-go, he groomed his followers to attribute any electoral loss to the machinations of a sinister elite. Confronted with an unending flood of revelations concerning his boorishness with women, Trump dismissed it as a "global conspiracy." "The whole thing is one big fix," he said. "It's one big ugly lie."

What's scary, four years later, is the possibility that no political medicine can eliminate such paranoia. Trump's style was the MRSA of political discourse, and while he may be gone, it remains in our system, a highly resistant superbug that will persist on talk radio and in the conversations of millions of Americans who will continue to claim, and probably to believe, that the election of Biden was fraudulent. And that—of course—is the true big ugly lie. It is our American version of the *Dolchstoss*, the lie that helped spur German extremism in the 1920s and '30s. The *Dolchstoss* view (literally, "dagger thrust," a cowardly stab in the back) held that Germany's defeat in World War I had come about not via reverses on the battlefield, but by the machinations of a cabal of corrupt and traitorous politicians who sold the nation out by signing the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. This rumor of conspiracy and betrayal proved to be an ineradicable canard, and was instrumental in Hitler's ascent. Four years ago, I worried that the election of 2016 would become the *Dolchstoss* of the American Right. Well, I missed by four years. It was the election of 2020. The poison won't be easy to purge. It will remain as fuel for the next Trumpian figure who comes along.

And who will that be? Sometimes, during the lowest points of Trump's tenure, I would console myself with the rueful thought that however awful he was, his effectiveness as a would-be strongman was limited by his lack of focus, his vanity, his constant need for adulation, and his ignorance. Things could be much worse, I told myself. But that's not really a consoling thought. Because the Trump phenomenon isn't finally about Trump himself, but about us; it is about the underlying realities that made Trump possible. Imagine a different candidate, one with the same demagogic and xenophobic appeal, but lacking Trump's looniness and fecklessness. Imagine a Trump who could not only stoke deep American resentment but who could also, for instance, make a coherent and compelling speech about foreign policy, and who could follow up

his inflammatory rhetoric with a cogent five-point plan. Imagine an American version of a Euro nationalist like Viktor Orbán or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Or Vladimir Putin himself. A real strongman, in other words, not a clownish wannabe. In an America beset with racial grievances, ill-articulated class frictions, immigration anxieties, and the prospect of global terror, it is scary to imagine what a charismatic, shrewd, *and* truly talented right-wing politician might be able to do.

Part of my relief on inauguration day was gratitude that Trump had decided not to attend—that he would not be there to besmirch it with his surly, grimacing petulance. But again, I was wrong. We needed him there. His mere presence would have helped neutralize the poison, by bestowing an imprimatur of de facto acceptance of the election. Withholding that acceptance was the one tool left in his toolkit. He used it.

In his inaugural address, Joe Biden offered an admirable call for unity and an admission of how elusive unity is right now. I wonder if he understands just *how* elusive. How do we deal with this calamitous point we have been brought to, where no one trusts anyone else's sources of information; where convenient fictions and blunt slanders are marketed for ready use by all; where the very idea of objective factuality has been attacked by the cynical and spurned by the credulous? After the assault on the Capitol, Mitt Romney made an impassioned and angry plea, pushing back against what he called Trump's "dangerous gambit" in perpetuating the claim that the election was stolen. What is the best way to deal with voters who are upset? Romney asked. "By telling them the truth!"

When Mitt Romney is impassioned and angry, you know you have arrived at a point of duress and need. And we have. This vandal president is gone. But the assault on truth has been grievous. It won't be easy to recover.

RAND RICHARDS COOPER *is a contributing editor to* Commonweal.

MOLLIE WILSON O'REILLY

Women's Work

The pope makes it harder to keep women out of liturgy.

It must be difficult for a mainstream journalist covering the Vatican beat on days like January 11, when Pope Francis's *motu proprio*, *Spiritus Domini*, was announced. How to convey the significance of a tweak to canon law that clarifies women's eligibility to be lectors and acolytes at Mass? Aren't they...already doing those things?

Pity the reporter who must quickly explain the existence of "stable ministries" in the Church, and the now-obscure practice of formally instituting lay men into those roles. Even the most committed American Catholics were perplexed when the news broke, because, as Anthony Ruff, OSB, wrote at the *Pray Tell* blog, "Up until now, females couldn't be *installed* in these ministries, but they could *do* these ministries anyway." It's no wonder so many outlets framed the news in terms of what *hadn't* happened: "Pope says women can read at Mass, but still can't be priests" ran a typical headline.

"The Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women," Pope John Paul II declared in 1994 in an attempt to shut down that debate. Francis quoted that pronouncement in a letter accompanying *Spiritus Domini*, but he also wrote that he hoped

CNS PHOTO/GREGORY A. SHEMITZ

Altar servers at St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre, New York, January 1, 2021

the change he was making to canon law would help men preparing for ordination "better understand they are participants in a ministry shared with other baptized men and women." Francis's modification to one canon—changing "lay men" to "lay persons"—eliminates a long-standing excuse for discrimination against women, although you won't find him or any other Vatican official putting it in those terms.

Speaking as a non-man, I confess to difficulty in keeping track of when the word "men" is supposed to include me (as in the English translation of the Nicene Creed, "for us men and for our salvation") and when it is *not* meant to include me (as in the original language of Canon 230, at least according to those who prefer their liturgical ministers to be male). The truth is, even when the Church's own teaching clearly declares that it *does* have the authority to acknowledge, empower, or elevate women, those charged with applying that teaching have always maintained the prerogative of keeping women out. The post–Vatican II teaching that laypeople had a significant role in ministry was undercut by accommodations for bishops who felt women should be subject to special restrictions. In this light, the significance of Pope Francis's action is less that it expands what women are permitted to do, and more that it limits men's ability to hinder them.

Establishing and protecting men's authority and privileges has been the Vatican's consistent framework for defining women's roles in liturgy going at least as far back as *Liturgicae instaurationes*, the document the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDW) issued in 1970 to govern post-conciliar reforms. In setting the terms of what should be allowed, the CDW wrote, "the first appeal must be made to the authority of the individual bishops." Bishops, for their part, were encouraged to "use all the options the new rites provide" to determine what did and did not promote "unity" and serve the spiritual needs of their flocks.

One option that was emphatically not provided was permission for women or girls to serve Mass: "In conformity with norms traditional in the church, women (single, married, religious), whether in churches, homes, convents, schools, or institutions for women, are barred from serving the priest at the altar." On the subject of women reading, the CDW was cautious: "The conferences of bishops are to give specific directions on the place best suited for women to read the word of God in the liturgical assembly." Why would women, but not lay men, need a special place from which to read Scripture? The simple answer is sexism—or, as they say in Rome, "norms traditional in the church." The ambo where Scripture is proclaimed is traditionally located in the sanctuary, and the sanctuary is traditionally a male-only space. If you can imagine thinking it would be better to keep the Scriptures outside the sanctuary than to let women in, congratulations, you are thinking like Rome circa 1970.

Happily, the ladies-only lectern seems not to have caught on in U.S. parishes, but it would take a while longer for the idea of altar girls to flip from "barred" to "well, if you must." In 1980, the CDW issued another document, *Inaestimabile donum*, which said: "There are, of course, various roles that women can perform in the liturgical assembly: these include reading the Word of God and proclaiming the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful. Women are not, however, permitted to act as altar servers." A revision of canon law completed in 1983 held, in the same provision recently modified by Pope Francis, that "lay men" could be admitted to the stable ministries of lector and acolyte, and that "lay persons" could fulfill other liturgical functions. Many interpreted that to mean female altar servers were at last permitted, but not until 1994 did the CDW confirm that that interpretation was correct, and the letter announcing that verdict took pains to clarify that "the permission given in this regard by some bishops can in no way be considered as binding on other bishops." Canon law might allow women and girls to serve, but nobody could force any bishop to like it. A letter published by the CDW in 2001 spelled out its further findings: "The diocesan bishop…has the authority to permit service at the altar by women within the bounds of the territory entrusted to his care," but "such an authorization may not in any way exclude men or, in particular, boys from service at the altar nor require that priest of the diocese would make use of female altar servers." Not only is it up to individual bishops to determine whether "women serving at the altar would truly be of pastoral advantage in the local pastoral situation," it is also the prerogative of every priest to disregard his bishop's decision if it happens to be in favor of women serving (but not if it isn't).

"It is perhaps helpful to recall," that letter goes on, "that the non-ordained faithful do not have a right to service at the altar." Still, when boys and men are presumed to have access to this ministry even when women do not, it does seem fair to ask whether lay women have a right to consider themselves on equal footing with lay men.

In this light, Pope Francis's change to canon law really matters. With this revision, there is at last no asterisk to limit the validity of women's baptism or the extent of women's share in the "baptismal priesthood." The text of *Spiritus Domini* describes ministries like lector and acolyte as being "entrusted… to individual members of the faithful, by virtue of a particular form of exercise of the baptismal priesthood," before explaining that language referring to "lay men" has been changed to "lay persons" in order to clarify that all of the baptized faithful are eligible. Ministries that canon law declares open to the non-ordained by virtue of baptism are definitively *not* limited on account of sex. In an accompanying letter to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Francis explains that the change allows for "a clearer manifestation of the common baptismal dignity of the members of the people of God."

According to norms traditional in the Church—that is, so long as women hold no positions of genuine authority—it will always be up to men to decide what they are willing to let women do.

There is, however, a catch. As the change applies only to the stable ministries of lector and acolyte—which, again, have not been much in use in the past fifty years, aside from serving as formal markers in the preparation of men for ordination—it could be argued that it has no effect on the current, widespread practice of lay participation in liturgical ministry or the rules that apply to it. Canon law now says, "Lay persons who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte." It remains to be seen whether American dioceses will revive those liturgical rites. At present, the U.S. bishops' criteria require a candidate to be at least twenty-one years old. A bishop could decide to take the job away from children in favor of a newly established corps of adult lay acolytes—except that the CDW has twice declared that "it will always be very appropriate to follow the noble tradition of having boys serve at the altar." Bishops could pursue reforms that would allow children to be installed in the "stable ministry" of acolytes. A simpler course would be to continue the custom of allowing children to fulfill the role of altar server with no formal installation. In that case, the provisions that allow bishops and priests to exclude girls would still, arguably, apply.

"The effectiveness of liturgy…[lies] solely in entering more deeply into the word of God and the mystery being celebrated," the CDW declared in 1970. "It is the presence of these two that authenticates the Church's rites, not what some priest decides, indulging his own preferences." And yet, ever since, the extent to which women and girls are permitted to participate in lay ministries at Mass has been left to "what some priest decides, indulging his own preferences." The Vatican keeps telling bishops that they *can* allow women to serve. It stops short, even now, of telling them they *should*. You won't find an apology accompanying this reform. There is no hint of regret in the pope's letter that the "baptismal dignity" of women was ever obscured, no suggestion that the exclusion of women was an injustice. No call to repentance; no apology to the women whose faithful service justifies this change; just an acknowledgment that "doctrinal development" now makes it possible to recognize women as people.

According to norms traditional in the Church—that is, so long as women hold no positions of genuine authority—it will always be up to men to decide what they are willing to let women do. Francis's desire to encourage lay participation in the work of the Church is laudable, and his hope that ordained men will see themselves as partners in priesthood with laypeople is refreshing. But if Francis is less anxious than his predecessors about the idea of women being called to ministry, his *motu proprio* is still an expression of the authority men retain for themselves. The pope's modification of canon law has resolved an awkward tension by clarifying that lay ministries are open to lay people, period. It removes a major excuse that men have used to keep women at a distance from the altar of the Lord. But it doesn't require them to give us anything we don't already have. Changing canon law in this way doesn't force ordained men to get used to working with women. At best, it nudges them toward recognizing that they should want to.

MOLLIE WILSON O'REILLY *is editor-at-large and columnist at* Commonweal.

Guadalupe José Medina Tima

JOSEPH SORRENTINO

Scraping By

Letter from Cholula, Mexico

Guadalupe José Medina Tima starts work around 10:30 in the morning, when he arrives with his shoeshine box at a park in Cholula, a small city in the Mexican state of Puebla. On the box is painted the name "Andy," for his daughter Andrea. Until recently, Medina Tima also worked as a waiter on the weekends, but he lost that job last year when the restaurant closed because of the pandemic. Shining shoes is now his only source of income. "When I worked as a waiter, I earned about 500 pesos ($25) a day" at the restaurant, he said. A shoeshine costs 25 pesos ($1.25), and Medina Tima told me he used to earn about 500 pesos a day shining shoes before the pandemic arrived. "Now I earn maybe 300 ($15)," he continued. "There are no tourists, so there is no money. It is very difficult." He'd like to earn 500 pesos a day to support his wife and two young children, but he "can manage" with 300. "But I cannot buy anything extra."

The Mexican government's response to the pandemic has been inconsistent and sometimes dangerously negligent. When COVID-19 first took hold last March, Mexico's president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (referred to by everyone in Mexico as "AMLO"), denied the importance of mask-wearing, encouraged people to continue hugging, and insisted that the two amulets he carries with him everywhere would keep him from getting sick. (He tested positive for the virus on January 24.) AMLO is not unique in this regard. Luís Miguel Barbosa, the governor of Puebla, said that poor people were immune to the virus. While no one can be sure what effect such statements had on the public's response to the pandemic, Mexico has the third-highest death toll from COVID-19, surpassing India in January.

The Mexican government has used a "stoplight" system to indicate risk levels, ranging from green (low risk, normal activities, all businesses open) to red (maximum risk, nonessential businesses closed, the rest operating at 20 percent capacity). In early February, thirteen of Mexico's thirty-two states were at red, two were at yellow, and the rest were at orange—the second highest level. On December 29, authorities in Puebla ordered all nonessential businesses to close and allowed only take-out at restaurants because of "the exponential growth of infections and people hospitalized" in the state. The closure was initially slated to continue for two weeks, but was later extended

to a month. To date, there's been no financial aid to the affected businesses or their employees, most of whom barely eke out a living.

Cholula is a lovely city—its Aztec pyramid, Tlachihualtépetl, is the largest by volume in the world—and its streets are lined with stores, restaurants, and stalls offering traditional food and handmade clothing and objects. These small businesses all depend on tourists to survive. At the beginning of the pandemic, tourism slowly dropped off; now it has all but disappeared. There are no more than a handful of tourists on the streets of Cholula.

A restaurant named La Lunita occupies a corner across from the pyramid. "On weekends, we would have one hundred fifty to two hundred people," said Antonio Porras Cuevas, the owner and great-grandson of the restaurant's founder. "Now, none. Maybe ten, fifteen who buy food to take out. Our income is down 90 percent." Before the pandemic, the restaurant had fourteen employees. Today it has only four. "Maybe the others work in construction," he said, "but the reality is that there is nothing right now."

Porras Cuevas paid his employees 1,400 pesos ($70) a week before the pandemic, but since their hours have been cut, they're earning just half that. Juan Carlos Gutierrez Grande, one of the waiters still working at the restaurant, says that "now, there is not so much from tips. It is primarily from salary." He lives with his parents and three siblings. "We pool our money. That is how we survive. With everyone working, we can survive."

Jade Azul, a custom-made jewelry shop, is one of dozens of stores along Avenida Morelos that cater to tourists. "Before the pandemic, I would have eight or nine customers a day," said Martha Cabrera, the store's owner. "During the pandemic, maybe four." Her store, like most along the avenue, was deemed nonessential and closed on December 29. "I survive with Facebook," she said. "I have a sign on the door with my phone number, regular clients order by telephone and they either pick up the order or I take it to their home. I'm earning much less than half; probably 60 or 70 percent less." She told me that if the lockdown continues, she'll have to pay her bills with her meager savings, but "I will not be able to survive for more than three months." She's concerned not only for herself. "These stores are primarily for foreigners, tourists, very few Cholulans. Without

Antonio Porras Cuevas

JOSEPH SORRENTINO

tourists, Cholula will not survive. It cannot continue without foreigners who have more money."

Up the block from Cabrera's store is Jacinta Casa de Diseño, an artists' cooperative run by Claudia Susana González Leal. The store's handmade clothes, shoes, and books are supplied by seven families. "The store is their primary source of income," González Leal tells me. Its earnings had been down 50 percent because of the pandemic; now, with the closures, they're down 100 percent. "Nobody has money now. They're all small-crafts people and no one has a website; they don't know how to build one." But the artists themselves aren't the only ones directly affected by the disappearance of tourists. There are also the people the artists employ. González Leal held up a sneaker embroidered by an artisan in Tlaxcala, a nearby state. "She employed five people, now it is only her and she is struggling to survive," she said. On one wall of Jacinta Casa de Diseño were shelves filled with handmade books. The man who makes these, she said, "had three people working and had to let them all go."

It's the same story at stores and restaurants across Cholula—incomes are down, employees are being laid off, and people are beginning to run out of savings. For those lucky enough to still have jobs, reduced hours and fewer customers mean they have to economize. Churrería Las Duyas is a casual restaurant famous for its churros—sticks of fried dough dusted with sugar—and sandwiches. It's one of several restaurants that line a wide walkway in central Cholula. Before the pandemic the whole walkway was filled with tables and customers; now it's empty. Las Duyas usually served three hundred people a day, but that number dropped by about half during the pandemic and since the mandatory closures took effect, maybe fifty show up for take out. "I normally had twenty to twenty-five employees a shift, two shifts a day," said owner Victor Alfonso Aguilar Galeana. "Now, five or six during the day, six or eight at night. Everyone comes in for two, three shifts a week." José de Jesus Hernández Bonilla, a manager at Las Duyas, worked fifty-six hours a week before the pandemic arrived, and earned 1,600 pesos ($80). Now he works four days a week, eight hours a day, and makes only half the money he made before. His wife works at a small taco stand and her income has also declined. "I would look for other work," he tells me, "but there is no other work."

The government has provided loans to small-business owners, but AMLO has been reluctant to do much more than that. There have been no relief checks for unemployed workers, no extension or enhancement of benefits for those who have been impoverished by the pandemic. A growing movement called #Abriro-Morir—"Open or Die"—is urging the government to allow stores to open at least partially. "The government needs to let us work," said Porras Cuevas emphatically. "If there is no work, people will do what they must in order to survive. They will rob, assault, so they can eat." All the business owners I interviewed reported that there has indeed been an increase in crime. Aguilar Galeana said there had been more robberies and assaults, "more stealing of auto parts." Several business owners also mentioned "*extorción.*" "We get two calls a week," Porras Cuevas told me. "They say, 'We are a cartel. We want money.'" So far, nothing has happened. "It is probably a local group. If it were a cartel, they would act. There were threats before, but not so continuous. Maybe one every three months." When Porras Cuevas receives such calls, he hangs up on the caller, informs the police, and lets nearby store owners know. He worries about what could happen. "We are afraid," he told me.

All the store and restaurant owners with whom I spoke say they believe their businesses could reopen safely as long as the proper precautions were in place. "Let us open at 40 percent capacity," said Hernández Bonilla. "They can come, we can control. We can use hand gel, check temperatures." What store and restaurant owners can't understand is why they've been forced to close down when other things remain open. "Buses, vans, the markets all have normal capacity," González Leal pointed out. And those places are all still crowded. "It is a great contradiction."

"I am not afraid of the virus," he said. "We will either die from the pandemic or we will die from hunger."

Cholula's municipal government is now considering letting businesses open during the week on the condition that they limit the number of customers, provide disinfectant hand gel, and require masks. They would have to remain closed on the weekends. Restaurants would still be limited to take-out. Whether or not the restrictions are loosened, tourists are likely to stay away until the pandemic is under control.

Medina Tima walks through the park on a Saturday afternoon, carrying his shoeshine box. The park should be jammed with people on a lovely weekend afternoon but it's almost empty. He walks slowly, stopping to ask every person he sees if he or she would like a shoeshine. While I was with him, everyone politely turned him down. "Sometimes if a person does not want a shoeshine, they will give me 10 or 15 pesos," he said. He'll circle the park until 9:00 or 10:00 at night—eleven or twelve hours total—hoping to earn the 300 pesos he needs to support his family. He confesses it's difficult to keep going but, he said, "I think of my family, my daughter, and with this, I can continue."

Although most people in the park, and in Cholula, were wearing masks, Medina Tima himself sometimes does not. He is fatalistic about it. "I am not afraid of the virus," he said. "For sure, we will all die. We will either die from the pandemic or we will die from hunger."

JOSEPH SORRENTINO *is a freelance writer and photographer. He currently lives in Chipilo, Puebla, Mexico.*

BERNARD G. PRUSAK

The Paradoxes of Deterrence

How the debate about nuclear weapons has evolved

An MX Peacekeeper intercontinental nuclear ballistic missile at Vandenberg Air Force base, August 23, 1983

US AIR FORCE PHOTO/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

A little more than halfway through their 1983 pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*, the U.S. bishops acknowledge voices calling on them "to raise a prophetic challenge to the community of faith—a challenge which goes beyond nuclear deterrence." Those prophetic voices rejected the position, embraced at that time by most U.S. bishops and Pope John Paul II, that nuclear deterrence was an acceptable "interim ethic" so long as the ultimate goal was disarmament. One of these voices, Thomas Merton, claimed that "there is simply no 'good end' that renders risk [of nuclear war] permissible," and questioned whether rationalizations for "wielding the threat of nuclear destruction" do not constitute cooperation in evil.

In recent years, leading voices in the Roman Catholic Church, not least Pope Francis himself, have begun to sound more like Merton than like the majority of the U.S. bishops in the 1980s. Prophetic indictment not only of the use but also of the very possession of nuclear weapons is no longer limited to the likes of Merton, the Berrigan brothers, and activist groups like Plowshares. Thus, in a 2017 address, Pope Francis commended the "prophetic voice" of the *hibakusha*, the survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and condemned the "very possession" of nuclear weapons. In his visit to Hiroshima in late November 2019, Francis extemporaneously reiterated that condemnation. Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego has claimed that the possession of nuclear weapons "is now condemned, regardless of the intention." And the Jesuit just-war theorist and former *America* editor Drew Christiansen has argued in *La Civiltà Cattolica* that "we should cease to imagine nuclear weapons as tools for us to manage, but rather as a curse we must banish"—language that *The Challenge of Peace* reserved for the arms race, not nuclear weapons themselves.

Pope Francis's November 2019 visit to Japan, which included stops in both Nagasaki and Hiroshima, brought attention to the Vatican's renewed diplomacy on nuclear weapons. But one could argue that more attention now needs to be given to the question of *how* people who fervently wish for a world without nuclear weapons should go about working for it. As the moral theologian and *Commonweal* contributor Cathleen Kaveny explains in her book *Prophecy without Contempt: Religious Discourse in the Public Square*, prophets demand unambiguous compliance with unconditional moral

imperatives. By contrast, what she calls deliberators allow that moral rules need to take into account complex circumstances, human weakness, ignorance, and sin. (See also her *Commonweal* column, "Bridge Burners," December 2019.)

In her book, Kaveny gives three examples of pressing moral issues that, in her judgment, are *not* ripe for the rhetoric of prophetic indictment: animal rights, gun control, and climate change. Her reasons for this judgment differ for each of the issues, but a key question is whether would-be prophets can draw on at least some of the fundamental commitments of our present political community, or whether they draw only on the commitments of a utopian community they imagine and hope for. Would-be prophets who cannot draw on commonly recognized moral commitments are not likely to get a hearing. Instead, they're likely to alienate people and thereby set back their cause.

How do things stand, then, with the pressing moral issue of nuclear weapons in the twenty-first century? Is it ripe for prophetic indictment, or does that rhetorical style risk backfiring?

The would-be prophet can surely draw on widely shared moral commitments to denounce any use of nuclear weapons that directly targets civilian populations, as well as any use that "unintentionally" but foreseeably kills and maims massive numbers of civilians. The would-be prophet can also draw on common moral commitments in denouncing any system, strategy, or policy that would either increase the likelihood of nuclear warfare among the current nuclear powers, or stimulate nuclear proliferation, thereby imperiling peace in unstable regions like northeast Asia and making it more likely that terrorist organizations would acquire a nuclear device. In this regard, the signs of the times have been ominous over the past few years. If, as Pope John Paul II claimed, the "condemnation of evils and injustices…is an aspect of the Church's prophetic role," prophets have a lot of material to work with—from North Korea's expansion of its ballistic-missiles program, to Russia's violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (I.N.F.) Treaty, to the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran and abrogation of the I.N.F. Treaty in response to Russia's violations. The recent agreement between the Biden administration and Vladimir Putin's Russia to extend the New START Agreement, which limits the countries' nuclear arsenals, is a rare piece of good news.

The would-be prophet appears to be on shakier ground in denouncing nuclear deterrence as such. In *The Challenge of Peace*, the U.S. bishops had asked, "May a nation threaten what it may never do?" The argument that the answer to this question must always be "no" typically turns on the claim that it's morally impermissible to do evil that good may come of it. According to this argument, it is evil for a nation to intend the massacre of civilians either for its own preservation or in retaliation. Yet that has been U.S. policy since the Cold War. It's not only Catholic ethicists who find this policy evil. In his 2017 book, *The Doomsday Machine*, Daniel Ellsberg, of Pentagon Papers fame, laments that "what is missing…in the typical discussion and analysis of historical or current nuclear policies is the recognition that what is being discussed is dizzyingly insane and immoral." An anti-consequentialist thinker like Elizabeth Anscombe (profiled by John Schwenkler in the May 2019 edition of *Commonweal*) might take the argument a step further: because the use of nuclear weapons would be evil, and because there's no point in stockpiling weapons that a nation must never use, nations with nuclear weapons should simply get rid of them, without calculating the possible consequences.

There are several objections to this line of argument. First, one might reasonably doubt whether it is really appropriate to describe the choice to use nuclear deterrence so as to avoid being annihilated or subjugated by a foreign power as a choice to do evil that good may come of it. One might argue that it should instead be described as a choice between two evils—which is how the French bishops, for example, saw it in their 1993 document *Gagner la paix*. In this analysis, nuclear *deterrence* might be defensible as *less evil* than annihilation or subjugation. That brings us to a second objection: Is it really as bad to threaten the use of nuclear weapons—while hoping it won't be necessary—as it is to actually use them? Surely not. In that case, why would a lesser evil (nuclear deterrence) not be permitted if it has the consequence of preventing a greater evil (annihilation or subjugation)? Finally, if we are considering how to counter a threat of aggression, the first question to ask is not what we would be permitted to do *after* the act of aggression we hope to prevent, but what we are permitted to do in the course of trying to prevent it.

The point of articulating these objections is not to defend current U.S. policy, or that of any of the current nuclear powers. Ellsberg is right: "What is being discussed is dizzyingly insane and immoral." And Anscombe is right, I believe, to reject consequentialism as a moral theory. Instead, the point is to indicate that the morality of nuclear deterrence is deeply contested. Deep-rooted commitments can be invoked to defend it, such as the conviction that it is a fundamental duty of political leaders to protect citizens from harm. The upshot is that nuclear deterrence as such does not appear ripe for prophetic indictment.

If that is correct, then deliberative discussion about how to reduce the present dangers of nuclear catastrophe is the order of the day. Ellsberg may present a helpful model here to Catholic leaders. His rhetoric against the "modernization" of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is prophetic, but he also allows the legitimacy of maintaining, for now, a minimal nuclear deterrent. His example demonstrates that even prophets should not restrict themselves to prophetic denunciation. Just saying "no" will not do; they must also engage in the debate about what can be done now, starting from where we are.

Is it really as bad to threaten the use of nuclear weapons—while hoping it won't be necessary—as it is to actually use them?

It's worth noting that deterrence is hardly a stable equilibrium, especially in our multipolar world where the actions of third parties—say, North Korea or China, or an American president on mind-altering steroids—can introduce new, destabilizing calculations. Nearly fifty years ago, the moral theologian Paul Ramsey presented a thought experiment involving the feud between the Hatfields and the McCoys. In the heat of the moment, when the eldest Hatfield has his gun trained on the youngest McCoy, and the eldest McCoy has his gun trained on the youngest Hatfield, the focus is on the vulnerable children. After a while, however, attention is likely to turn to the weapons themselves, on the grounds that protecting the weapons *is* protecting the children. Yet, if one side, say the McCoys, protects its weapons so well that the weapons become indestructible, then that side endangers its children anew, because the equilibrium the McCoys had with the Hatfields is now destabilized: the Hatfields' weapons are vulnerable in a way that the McCoys' no longer are, which gives the Hatfields a reason to use their weapons before they can be destroyed. Thus, technological breakthroughs improving the speed of delivery systems and the destructive power of the weapons also threaten to destabilize the "ceasefire" between the families. In the end, what had appeared to be a stable, if mad, plan of peace is exposed as a high-risk game of chicken. For all that, until the families can reach a peace based on trust and mutual disarmament, deterrence is their only choice. Whether the policy of deterrence makes trust harder to establish is a good question, but it's not one that can be answered in the abstract, without attention to how diplomacy actually works.

Once again, the point of articulating objections to prophetic discourse about nuclear deterrence is not to defend current U.S. policy, or the policies of any other nuclear power. Instead, such objections should be understood as an invitation to reflect on the rhetorical style most likely to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament. Jesus instructed his disciples, whom he sent out like sheep among wolves, to be both wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16). If sheep can also be serpents and doves, perhaps the Church's leaders can find a way to combine the courage of the prophet with the prudence and humility of the deliberator. Nothing less is likely to succeed in moving us a step closer to multilateral nuclear disarmament.

BERNARD G. PRUSAK, *a regular contributor to* Commonweal, *is professor of philosophy and director of the McGowan Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. He is the author of* Catholic Moral Philosophy in Practice and Theory: An Introduction *(Paulist Press, 2016).*

Two Poems by Danielle Chapman

LEAVING BOSTON

Burgundy geometries of waiting chairs recede
and magazines flap open behind us

as we smack through overpasses
like waves of a whopping headache
and rowers in late sun
dip trim oars into the Charles in unison.

Ibrutinib. Ibrutinib.

There is a discipline, a sport to hope:
to pray for prayers that break the surface whether

you're better or (*please Jesus never*)
worse.

ALL DAY WE DROVE

All day we drove, eleven hours, to the crux
where my childhood, and yours, and theirs crossed—
a Sleep Inn bedded between horse farms
in the blue hills of Lexington.

In the car park, snails, zebra-striped and pearled,
scooched tiny glam ottomans across a gulch
that skidded to a creek it seemed we'd visited,
before.

Each stretched its foot (also its neck) into flesh horns
that hauled it forward, through acres of thicket
in whose dense secrecy
more snails whorled dun to emerald.

Not antennae, but tentacles, the girls told me—
eyes straining, on mucousy stilts,
as far from their shells as they could reach.
What do we have to teach them, love? They see.

DANIELLE CHAPMAN *is a poet and essayist. Her collection of poems,* Delinquent Palaces, *was published by Northwestern University Press in 2015. Her poems have appeared in the* Atlantic *and the* New Yorker, *and her essays can be found in the* Oxford American *and* Poetry. *She teaches literature and creative writing at Yale.*

Gender, Sex, and Other Nonsense

Daniel Walden

We have no better place to begin than the stories people tell about themselves.

It is not unfair to say that Catholic conversation about sex and gender has a problem. More accurately, it has a pair of problems: one concerns our ability to speak credibly to the non-Catholic public; the other concerns our ability to speak productively to one another. The first problem is, I am sorry to say, largely our own doing. The Church has the canonical structures to bring women into the uppermost ranks of leadership without any alteration to our understanding of sacramental theology, but has not used them. Gay men remain officially barred from seminaries by force of a document whose reasoning cannot withstand thirty seconds' thought. Catholic public intellectuals and bishops routinely talk about "gender ideology," a term with no clear referent, in statements and interviews. In short, we are not credible both because our institutions are hypocritical and because we routinely spout nonsense in public—nonsense that, unfortunately, also structures our internal conversations, leading to the second part of the problem. But questions of sex and gender continue to have serious consequences for both our fellow Christians and our fellow citizens, and therefore we have a duty to think and talk about them in a serious and rigorous way. Most worthwhile discussions are difficult to some degree; that is no reason for us to shirk the effort of thinking through such an important, if complicated, subject with some degree of clarity.

Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1504

FLETCHER FUND, 1919/COURTESY OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

The first step toward having more fruitful conversations about sex and gender is understanding what it is that we are talking about. We deploy terms like "sex" and "gender" in theological conversations as if their definitions were self-evident, even though they remain fiercely disputed outside of theology among people who have dedicated their lives to thinking seriously about their meanings. But if theology is "the discipline whereby we stop talking nonsense about God," as Herbert McCabe once put it, then it seems to me that we should also stop talking nonsense about those created in God's image. By examining what we mean when we talk about "sex" or "gender," we equip ourselves to strip away various falsehoods and idols, and we prepare to encounter sex and gender as deep mysteries, which we live out every day but cannot fully understand.

Sex and gender are unique to created things, and specifically to living things. God is sexed only in the sense that the Son was born into the world as a male human being, but there is nothing in either Scripture or tradition that makes the maleness of Christ necessary. Indeed, the Savior's birth seems to upend our entire understanding of sex, for Christ was a male child whose maleness and male body were formed not from the genetic material of another man, as all other male children have been, but only from that of a woman through the work of God. Indeed, great theologians of the Church like Origen and Gregory of Nyssa have relegated the bodily sex of humanity to creation after the Fall, rendering it a kind of ontological detritus, an inconvenient footnote to our humanity. I am not sure I would go that far, but such arguments remind us that this part of how we categorize our-

selves does not seem to reflect, even by analogy, any known attribute of the God in whose image we are made.

In seeking to understand the terms "sex" and "gender," then, we need to start elsewhere: at the beginning, by which I mean their first application to us shortly after we're born. A person delivering a newborn child will inspect the child for certain signs, principally the shape of the child's genital organs, and on the basis of those signs will assign and record a sex for the child. That becomes, for most of us, a matter of public record—a male or female birth is recorded and registered with the appropriate authorities. It is first and foremost a medical term, and most of its uses in our early lives are related to this: it serves as a shorthand for a certain amount of medical standardization, the outliers from which will merit closer attention from a physician. This continues to be the primary function of sex throughout one's life.

Note that absent from this discussion so far has been any talk about which clothes a child wears and which sorts of playmates a child will be expected to seek out. This is because most people rely on a parent or guardian to give a true account of their child, and they expect the child's dress and habits to confirm this account. As Judith Butler describes it, the child's gender, in practical terms, is treated as "a kind of doing, an incessant activity," and so becomes part of an identity, part of what Herbert McCabe calls a person's life story. Growing up is precisely the process of taking over the telling of this story for ourselves, of asserting our right to decide what we mean by what we do and say. One of the most important parts of our life story is our place in the social categories that structure human social and erotic life. Not only is our social life structured and regulated to varying degrees by whether we are perceived as men or as women (and then as the *right* sort of men or women), but also by whether we are erotically attracted to men or women or to many sorts of people or to none. The social approval or opprobrium that this may entail has a dramatic effect on how we experience and portray ourselves as men, as women, or as people for whom those two words are inadequate. This diverse set of relationships, experiences, and acts of positioning is what we subsume under the seemingly simple term "gender."

The responsibility that children assume for telling their own stories includes making corrections to the account our parents gave: I am not this sort of person, we say, but another sort. Many a parent has thrown around a baseball with their child only to have the child say one day that they'd rather be inside playing the piano or reading, and nearly every parent will one day face, with the utmost dread, a teenager's desire to choose their own clothes. A child's struggle to take on and grow into the responsibility for telling the story of who they are can be a source of tremendous conflict between parents and children, and one of the most frequent sources of conflict is a child's growing knowledge and assertion of their own erotic life. When we revise the story that our parents have been telling about, for example, who we will grow up to love, we revise something tied up intimately with our personhood. It is only human beings who write biographies and only human beings who conceive of our lives as having a narrative.

This narrative aspect of our humanity, while often a source of conflict, is also one of the ways in which we participate most directly in the action of God. God's revelation to us in Scripture is a narrative act, and its primary purpose is God's own self-disclosure. This is "revelation" in its most fundamental sense: God telling us about God. But God always exceeds the limits of our language and our thought, and so we must learn about God through what God says about *us*. Since God is not history's subject but its author, narrative revelation tells us about God through human events, imbuing the stories of the people of Israel and the Apostles with special importance as disclosures of God's work in the world, culminating in the archetype of all revelation, God in Christ. We modern Christians receive this revelation secondhand, as it were, in Scripture, while the firsthand, personal revelation of the Incarnation experienced by the early disciples, what McCabe calls "the intensity of his bodily presence," comes to us in the Eucharist.

We human beings, however, live within history and know ourselves through our telling of it: when we narrate our lives, we can speak directly and cogently about ourselves. But we do something more than that, for in disclosing ourselves we also disclose the work of God. Bearers that we are of the divine image, in these acts of narration we teach other people how to gloss that image, how to read and understand the icon that stands before them. To tell other people what our lives mean is to draw them deeper into ourselves, and to listen to what someone tells us their life means is to be drawn deeper into the mystery of both their humanity and humanity's maker. To impose upon another the meaning of their life is, by contrast, a kind of pretense at divinity. It is to tell another person something that only God can tell them, to claim the ultimate interpretive authority over experiences that do not belong to us. In a final sense, it is to

do violence to someone else's humanity and to the very purpose of language, for we have language precisely in order to invite others into our own interiority, to tell them our story.

It is curious, then, that when it comes to something as complicated as gender, we are apt to deny people the authority to interpret and narrate their experiences, especially the authority to make a correction to the story that has been told on their behalf. In doing so, we also deny them the opportunity to give us the tools to see what God has wrought in them. Just as God's revelation to us is what grounds our reason and enables the act of making sense, so, on a much smaller scale, must our making sense of another person be grounded in their self-disclosure to us. If I encounter a man and become red-faced and inarticulate, it might be because I find him beautiful and charming, or it might be because I know that I seriously offended him in the past and am embarrassed to see him again. There is no list of correspondences that will instantly decode the meaning of these signs for someone who sees me: their meaning will be found, instead, in my life story, in the sum of everything I say and have said about myself in speech, sign, and action.

So it is with the clothes that we wear, the manners of speech we choose, the company we keep: all can express the set of relationships and desires that we call "gender," but we can only make sense of them through the life story of a person—the full picture of a person's being who and what they are. A woman's decision to wear work jeans expresses her way of being a woman; a man's decision to wear long hair expresses his way of being a man. This critical fact has, I think, been neglected by a Catholic theological discourse that treats safe and sterile conversations about medical sex as critical, while sorely neglecting the more difficult topics that carry real moral and ethical weight—namely, the communicative acts by which someone attempts to narrate such an important part of their life story, and how we Christians are to receive that story.

I do not posit here a duty to receive the life stories that people tell us, including about their gender, without any critical engagement. But the reflexive denial with which transgender people's stories are met is only "critical engagement" with an intellectual culture that routinely mistakes contrarian punditry for discussion, paid advertisements for book reviews, and publicity-seeking pronouncements for moral theology. Authentic engagement—the sort of radical encounter with other persons that Pope Francis regularly lays out as an obligation for all baptized Christians—demands that we suspend such instincts for immediate reaction. To be properly critical, we must first understand what we criticize. We must understand what a person is saying: what their terms are, how they map onto experience, and how the arrangement of those terms draws sense and meaning out of the sequential events of experience. Such understanding comes not from a momentary reaction to a single statement, but from sustained engagement with a person's full understanding of their own life.

The truth of biography is not like the truth of a newspaper report; if it were, there would be no point in writing biography. To write biography, to tell a life story, is not only to tell what happened but to bring the reader or listener further into the depths of the subject's experience than mere factual narration will allow. Plutarch, at the dawn of biography, is fully aware of this when he says that he must be allowed "to attend to the signs of the soul" in his subjects rather than only the "great deeds and contests" that his era regarded as definitive of a person's character. He knew that the truth of a life emerges only through our immersion in it, that it becomes apparent only through the mature understanding of a person on their own terms. This reflects the way we come to grasp the truth about God, whose work in our lives is hidden from us until and unless we enter more deeply into the Christian life of love. It is this love that must be our entry point into the life story of another. Only in and through love can we begin to understand what a person is telling us.

And what a person tells us when they take over and correct the story of their gender is terribly important. When a person identifies as transgender, they are saying that the relationships our society has allowed them to form are not adequate, that there must be more authentically human ways for them to live. They are saying that the language used about them up to this point, the personal language that in English is highly gendered and is even more so in many other languages, has felt like a lie, one that can no longer be borne because of how much of their life it distorts or obscures. They feel that there must be other, truer ways of speaking about their life. They may even be saying that they feel a severe kind of wrongness about their body and how it has developed, that their brain is not interacting properly with the rest of their body such that their mind and spirit are afflicted, a condition now called "gender dysphoria." There is nothing in the teaching of the Church that binds us to disbelieve these things when we are told them, and indeed much that urges us to take them seriously. In making such

Catholic theological discourse treats safe and sterile conversations about medical sex as critical, while sorely neglecting the more difficult topics that carry real moral and ethical weight.

That someone's attempt to live gender truthfully might baffle our understanding says far more about the smallness of our understanding than it does about the other person.

a revision to their life story, a person is trying to be their self more fully, to come into a mature sense of who they are that makes sense of their life as it has unfolded so far. It is, as McCabe might put it, a revolution of the self, a breakthrough that does not make sense in our old ways of thinking, but after which our old ways of thinking make a new kind of sense. In this way it is much like falling in love: we do not fall in love in discrete and deliberate steps. Instead, we come to realize that we simply *are* in love, and this realization rewrites the story of our past and draws anew the horizons of our future. Such a revolution affects everyone who knows such a person, and it invites us, too, to make a new kind of sense of their life and the way we fit into it. If we take seriously Christ's pronouncement that we, his disciples, will know the truth and the truth will make us free, then we owe it to other people to receive their attempts to tell the truth about themselves and to try to see the truth in what they say, even and perhaps especially when our customary ways of speaking and thinking do not easily accommodate it.

To the objection, popular in more conservative circles, that transgender people's understanding of their own gender is defective, one can only say yes, of course it is, in the same way that yours and mine are defective, though most trans people have spent a good deal more time thinking through the subject than the rest of us have. Our ideas of gender are formed in a fallen world, in societies created by fallen human beings that have taught us the importance of fighting wars and having babies, but have frequently neglected to teach the still greater importance of being courageous and raising children. In fact, given the poles of male violence and female abnegation that structure our culture's understanding of gender, we should be surprised, not that some people consider the assumptions, expectations, and strictures they impose to be an unbearable lie, but that most people ever bear them at all. Though our understanding of gender may be in some way founded in truth, I don't think we are capable of saying what that truth is. Scripture tells us that "male and female He created them," but unfallen persons differ a great deal from fallen ones, and whatever is meant by "male and female" in Eden, we cannot today say how unfallen humanity expressed gender. Hans Urs von Balthasar observes that "we cannot know the form of a paradisal human society" or even "a primal relationship between the sexes, since the first children were born outside of Paradise," and John Cavadini says that we cannot speak about unfallen sex for much the same reason: our will is fallen and our thoughts are sinful, and the ways in which unfallen humanity lived are not available to us except in the examples of the Savior and His Mother, whose lives Scripture covers only briefly. Transgender people often see this gap in our knowledge better than cisgender people do. What the life stories of trans people show us is that we do not yet understand Scripture, that "male and female He created them" is not a template but a mystery, one deep enough that we cannot yet fully map its contours but must approach it with hearts humbled by love.

Above all, this humility means being conscious of our own sin. The way we live gender *is* objectively wicked: marriage and religious life are both schools for exposing this and teaching us to live better. That someone's attempt to live it truthfully might baffle our understanding says far more about the smallness of our understanding than it does about the other person, just as the need to change our language about a person says only that our language has always been inadequate. None of this is new to a Christian tradition in which God forever escapes our speech and yet expresses His work in the lives of everyone we meet. Nor does it entail that people cannot give a mistaken account of themselves; indeed, it presumes that all our accounts of self are in some way mistaken, and that our mistakes may only become visible in light of others who live in God's truth differently than we do. Even so, we have no other place to begin than the stories people tell about themselves: to impose a foreign life story onto an icon of God is to read another person through the eyes of our sin and the lies that sin has taught us. It is to sin—and we have so sinned—against them and against the God who made them, when what we really owe them is a new beginning. We cannot take back the wounds that we inflicted when we demanded false stories in lieu of true ones; only Christ can make all things new. But in our own small way, we may admit our mistakes and start to listen, knowing our ignorance and not being ashamed of it. McCabe observes that "To give love is to give the precious gift of nothing, space. To give love is to let be.... Creation is simply and solely letting things be, and our love is a faint image of that." When we take the time to let a person be who they are and tell the story of their being, we are also participating, however faintly, in the act of creation, and in doing so we become more fully the human beings we were created to be. When we have learned to do this, we may start to talk real sense.

DANIEL WALDEN *is a writer and classicist. He spends his time thinking about Homeric philology, Catholic socialism, musical theater, and the Michigan Wolverines.*

TORTOISE

Michael Cadnum

The only wild creature that ever
visited was the tortoise,
a living helmet that would be
crossing the heat-reflecting gravel again
suddenly after years of being gone,
a face that flinched in and then way in only
to slouch out again with its
china-crack mouth, and an eye
surrounded with oak-bark,
a pupil dark and without spark,
on a neck sheathed with ancient rubber.

And legs that swam, lurching strokes
stubbornly midair, tensile enough to lift
his entire chassis off the sidewalk
and lever his shadow ahead,
and strong enough to painfully claw
if we held him too close, on his way,
in the living room, on his
way turned any direction—

pointed at an offering of torn
lettuce, into that leaf, deeply even

angrily into the scattered green gift
set into the middle of the street,
a game we never
played for long because
the bronze puzzle-pieces
of his armor and his nothing-to-do-
with-us determination were already
done with our lives and he was
across the manhole cover, up the curb,
across the sun made of stone.

MICHAEL CADNUM *has published nearly forty books, including the National Book Award–finalist novel* The Book of the Lion. *His most recent book of poetry,* Kingdom, *includes many poems that first appeared in* Commonweal. *He is working on a new book of poems,* The Promised Rain. *He lives in Albany, California.*

When Texts Become Idols

Sarah Ruden

What happens when the Bible becomes something more than revelation, and the Constitution something more than a tool?

The Founding Fathers' group portraits, most of them commemorating great moments in the early life of the nation, blazon the American "civic religion." The solemn stares, the excellent posture, the iconic stillness of the bodies in the deliberative shrine project the ultimate anti-drama—a place where, like heaven in the Talking Heads song, nothing ever happens. But, of course, there's no heaven on earth. Historians stress the artists' retrospective abstraction: in reality, so-and-so was not even there, while these two other men loathed each other and were seething after a painful compromise, not posing in peaceful unity. And to judge from some of the actual decisions of the era, and from some of their consequences—most glaringly, the Civil War—Greek tragedy would have been a more appropriate inspiration for the paintings than that neoclassical cliché, the sublime calm of Greek and Roman statuary.

This tension between the idealized image and the ugliness of history has been on my mind during this scarifying winter, and I wonder whether the two cannot work on each other, to evil ends. I am a translator and literary scholar, so I turn toward texts to find my bearings. Texts are one of the many kinds of objects that political conflict can elevate into a realm where they do not belong and where they serve to sanctify hatred and greed. Scrutiny of such a process goes against my grain; cheerleading *for* the power of texts has been my business for forty years. But, alas, it's time. Even Americans who didn't contribute directly to this mess should be asking how their national culture did. And in the realm of texts, the evidence is not reassuring.

In one video clip, an insurrectionist is moving toward the Capitol, a reporter following along and asking him why he's doing this. The Constitution, he answers. The reporter persists: Has this man *read* the Constitution? The rioter is momentarily stumped. He's read…parts of it, he says. The reporter presses, saying that he himself has read the whole thing and that it's a short document, but his interlocutor has lost patience with the exchange. To him, there's no point in *discussing* this document—in pouring measured layers of words onto the original words—because to him it's not really a document, much less a foundation of law and governance. It's a sump for his lower urges, but a sump now lifted into quasi-divine status and leaking poisonous fluids from the skies. Some legal scholars like to talk about the "living Constitution," emphasizing its adaptive development over the centuries. To the alt-right, it lives in order to give them power and pleasure; hence their lack of interest in what it actually is, and their fixation on what it can do for them. In other words, it is an idol.

It would be a mistake, however, and a route toward smug divisiveness, not to see this attitude in very long perspective, and not to acknowledge how much all of us participate in it—especially those of us who cherish the written word. It is understandable how we fell into this trap. Since its invention, writing has seemed magical, and, in the public sphere, a sort of savior. Once trade became documentary, long-term transactions became far more reliable; they didn't depend on self-interested memory and which party was able and willing to beat the tar out of the other to get the result he wanted. The truth was on a tablet stored and guarded in a temple—the clay tablets of Mesopotamia are associated with the beginning of writing. Once laws became documented, ordinary citizens did not have to accept the elite's on-the-spot, verbal reports

Trump supporters during the riot at the U.S. Capitol, January 6

SOPA IMAGES LIMITED/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

about sanctioned rights and duties; a summary of these might even be inscribed permanently on government edifices. The Twelve Tables in ancient Rome were one instance: "If someone is summoned to court," they begin, "he must go." If he cannot walk, he is entitled to a cart but not cushions. The written word lasted, guiding and vindicating you when nothing else could.

"Sacred literature" is something of a misnomer when applied to the ancient world; all writing had a certain aura of prestige and wonder. This aura was immeasurably heightened in the Jewish scriptures, the earliest Bible, which didn't just regulate a polity; it practically created one out of the ashes of the Babylonian conquest near the start of the sixth century B.C. The Bible became the difference between memory and oblivion, meaning and meaninglessness, existence and annihilation amid the routine conflagrations and genocides-by-enslavement in a strategic corridor of the ancient Near East. The Christian Bible retains this status of being not just there at the creation of something momentous, but active in that creation as a primal and immortal embodiment of God's will. The first chapter of John's Gospel even asserts that the "Word" (*logos*, originally meaning a financial account, suggests a verifiable record) existed before the universe did.

The Reformation intensified this awe, and channeled it in a super-concentrated form into the American political experiment. It was not just that early Protestants meant what they said by *sola scriptura* ("by scripture alone": the transcendent Bible was to be the sole authority for faith and practice, thus purifying Christianity from veneration of objects and obedience to mere human decrees); the Bible's text and the physical Bible quickly became substitute objects of veneration, drawing to themselves some of the same superstitious feeling that reform was supposed to do away with. The iconoclastic stripping and destruction of church art, which in the Netherlands began with a long series of riots, were justified by the first of the Ten Commandments ("Thou shalt have no other gods before me") and similar Bible verses. But the innumerable textual acts motivating and celebrating these episodes—sermons and lessons and recitations and even children's chants and games—showed that the Bible itself could easily be fetishized and turned into a flag of power. A late offshoot of this tendency was Justice Roy Moore's two-and-a-half-ton piece of granite with the Ten Commandments carved on it, which he commissioned and sneaked into a rotunda of an Alabama courtroom at night. After higher courts forced its removal, he had it hauled around the country in a special truck so that like-minded Americans could venerate it.

I have met with a similar idolatry of the Bible in modern-day South Africa. In fact, the South African example derives from the same era in which the Puritan settlement of North America began, and from roughly the same strain of Calvinism that the Puritans professed. Both the Dutch Boers ("Farmers") and the Puritans migrated to seek a homeland for a stricter and more independent religion than their native countries would allow, and both took with them their precious vernacular Bibles to uphold devotions and identity in their homes. British soldiers often took these Bibles as souvenirs during the Boer War of 1899–1902. After a long hiatus in the Quaker project of restoring the looted books to their original families in South Africa, I was tasked with finding the rightful heirs of one Bible that remained unclaimed in a South African library. (I failed.)

From photos of this Bible and others, I could tell what had tempted the tommies. These weren't so much books as treasure chests: large, bound in thick leather, sometimes fitted with sturdy straps, studs, or ornate metal clasps or protectors of the

edges or corners. Hundreds of years of family records were enshrined in the front, making the volumes talismans of continuity. Again, these objects were about far more than the text as such; the priority given to the bindings speaks of security in a hostile world. (Southern Africa turned out to be much more hostile than the Netherlands, because the Boers invaded the former and pushed out or enslaved the indigenous people, who nevertheless continued to outnumber them.) It's conceivable that in less punctilious households a Bible was seldom opened. It was there to show that, like its owners, it could survive.

The American experience suggests that the veneration of the Bible as a mere object is relatively harmless. In the natural course of things, an object lets people down, reveals what it really is, and loses the ascription of magic powers, even if it keeps a role in ritual. In the movie *Groundhog Day*, one stage of Phil Connors's growth is signaled by his broadcast commentary on the big event: "This is pitiful. A thousand people freezing their butts off waiting to worship a rat." The statement remains true at bottom—the rite of groundhog prognostication is superstitious—but this doesn't matter. Phil later joins in the joyous community festivities, notwithstanding the absurd event that occasions them. In a similar vein, I don't care, and I don't have to care, what the "pagan" objects around Christmas celebrations used to stand for: those meanings have fallen away, and the objects that remain standing can stand for something else.

But a text is a more slippery thing. Lacking a fixed material form—it can even squeeze between languages—it is monstrously adaptable. It can move around anywhere, and gather auxiliaries like an evil spirit. I'm reminded of the expelled demon in Matthew 12:43–45, who searches in vain for a new home and returns to the old one to find that the mind and body are more congenial now that they have recovered from him, and suitable for seven other worse demons besides. A text can be like that demon, humanity like that mind and body. Subject to interpretation as a condition of functioning at all, a text lends itself to what Luke 1:51 calls "the imagination of their hearts." In Greek and Latin, it's a tricky phrase, but the context is helpful: this is about those on high whom God righteously brings down. The words describing their condition imply that their power distorts reality, so that they believe and cherish their own lies, and cannot be shaken by any rival power less than God's because God is the undefeatable champion of truth. Declaring the authority of an important text to be absolute and, at the same time, declaring one interpretation of it to be absolutely privileged looks like a symptom of this disease.

Biblical idolatry has manifested itself painfully through millennia of struggles for freedom of conscience and participatory governance, but it's really only the United States that is still suffering from it—and, ironically, suffering the more that science, rationalism, and materialism prevail in general. American treatments of the Bible form a complex history, but certain strains have lately reached a crescendo of shrillness. Donald Trump has nonviolent protestors cleared from a street by force so that he can cross it and hold up a Bible in front of a church, signaling that whatever is in this holy book supports his interpretation (no matter how skewed and narrow) of civil unrest and his methods (no matter how brutal and impolitic) of dealing with it. The Bible, as a mere rallying cry, figures alongside the Constitution in the outpourings of white power, Christian nationalist, QAnon, and militia organizations.

I think there has been a sort of cultural and intellectual arms race. The burgeoning prestige and power of science, technology, the globalized economy, and highly meritocratic professional institutions would mow down anything on the other side—the side that considers itself the defender of everything human, traditional, and authentic—but the most fanatical conviction. The more absurd the beliefs on that side are, the more empowering they are. Repeating what is plainly not so becomes a trial by fire to select and strengthen the most loyal and determined minds. And the most richly exploitable symbols for this test of fortitude are the texts that most Americans already have a long habit of revering, the Constitution and the Bible.

This story has old roots indeed. Consider one particularly telling example of its earliest manifestations. As described in Joseph Ellis's Pulitzer Prize–winning *Founding Brothers*, in February 1790, Quakers brought anti-slavery petitions to the U.S. Congress. Politicians from the South responded, first, that the pacifist Quakers had no right to speak to such an important issue in a body politic for which they hadn't sacrificed blood and property, and, second, that the Constitution and the Bible both guaranteed the right to slaveholding.

In the case of the Constitution, this was obviously wrong: the document only forbade any restriction on the international slave trade until 1808 (when it was banned), and left open the possibility of banning slavery altogether. The now-notorious three-fifths compromise dealt only with the counting of the enslaved in the census, and many considered the clause, like slavery itself, to be merely provisional. Certainly nothing in the text justified demanding that the galleries of the Capitol now be cleared of all spectators and journalists during the debate, or threatening a civil war, or foretelling doom for any judge in Georgia who considered the rights of slaveholders an open question. But then as now, political fury overcame all sense of reality, and a document that had been carefully designed to balance conflicting interests served as an exhortation to extremism. This mood—it does not deserve the word "argument"—about white supremacy and the Constitution would go on and on, clear through Reconstruction and Jim Crow, until today.

And again and again, the Bible would be invoked as a parallel authority, reinforcing the Constitution, though on a basis not much more solid. The Bible does matter-of-factly depict slavery and other bound servitude as normative, but the historical context is a world in which no one could conceive how society could be arranged otherwise. Yet at the same time the Bible contains much reassurance that there is no such limit to God's mind: "redemption" is literally "buying out" from slavery or captivity, and the Bible's God tends to

do this with sublime love and patience, and finally does it at an unimaginable personal cost.

Most troubling to me as a Quaker pacifist is the idolatrous *do ut des* ("I give that so that you give," the transactional relationship set up with a supernatural being) of violence. Jesus makes the all-nourishing blood sacrifice himself and of himself. There is nothing to negotiate. The pagan idol haggles with his human partner from hour to hour and is regularly hungry; there is no license he won't grant in return for a brief bellyful. This ethic can easily verge into rampages when the sacrifices and the rewards are of the same bloody kind. For example, in the Middle Ages: I go crusading, endure innumerable hardships, bleed, lose my comrades, and in return I get to slaughter Muslims and take what is theirs.

Bizarrely, the physical symbol of the Crusades was the cross. The idol, again, is divorced from the commonsense meaning of the object and made to mean whatever is convenient, sometimes the opposite of the original meaning. In the case of the cross, the instrument on which an innocent man was tortured to death by a cynical occupying power to avert a riot by perennially oppressed people cannot logically sanctify military aggression. Likewise, mouthing the word "Constitution" can't logically justify shattering the rule of fundamental law—quite the contrary. But the godlike dimension of the symbol, along with the symbol's preferred residence in the expansive ego, invites such heinous reversals of meaning.

It seems ordinary because we are so close to it, but a similar reversal of meaning animates the mainstream American imagination, and explains the participation in the insurrection of veterans and even current members of the military and police: we bought the favor of the Constitution with our costly service, they assert, and now we cash in. Back outside the Capitol, recounting his valiant deeds, a rioter shows off a document stolen from Nancy Pelosi's office. It has his blood on it, he brags. We have seen this before. A hunk of stone or metal becomes a living bull, and at the same time the bull becomes a god and a carnivore; an important document, inherently the means to help inform, organize, benefit, and protect human beings, becomes the means to empty their minds, and to strew chaos, crime, and destruction.

Many Quakers would say that there is no contradiction between the preciousness of the Bible or the Constitution and their limitations. Like the rest of the Creation, they need our respect, love, and selfless care. (Do I ever know, as a Bible translator, about the need for care.) Precisely because they are *not* God, *they* need *us* to make sure they remain what they were meant to be.

This is not to claim that Quakers enjoy any immunity from idolatry. We are living proof that it can afflict anyone and fix on anything, and can come back and bite people who believe they've successfully banished it. Quakers are careful in their treatment of the Bible, but we have idolized our very care in that treatment; we have idolized procedural rules invented to promote peace and equality; we have idolized silence. We idolized past achievements in humanitarian reform when we introduced solitary confinement to the penal system: How could this innovation be harmful, when it was ours? We have, in wealthy households' self-satisfied gesture at material simplicity, confected an idol in the form of the elaborately stitched but pure white quilt, scores of hours' worth of work that from a few yards away can't be distinguished from a polyester mattress cover from Bed Bath & Beyond.

A text is a more slippery thing than a physical book. Lacking a fixed material form—it can even squeeze between languages—it is monstrously adaptable.

The example I would choose of the fight against idolatry in public life is not from my own sect. It is a fourth- and fifth-century bishop, Augustine of Hippo, whose own mother had given drink offerings at the shrines of martyrs before the Church cracked down on her. The rite, reflecting the pagan Roman *parentalia*, or holiday for ancestor worship, was only one of many idolatries available to Augustine in his youth: all the old pagan rites, the blood-sacrifice of the gladiatorial games, the humiliating ceremonies of the Manichaean heresy, the Roman elite's veneration of public careers, their cults of parenthood, the clan, and the household, their parades of luxuries and other rare possessions (including beautiful slaves) during the ritual of the dinner party. Augustine longed for much that others treated as holy. How did he get, and stay, beyond servitude to this longing?

The only answer I can venture is that he really believed in God, a God with the power that must belong to a divinity if there is only one in the universe. In competition with God, nothing, not even God's own book, could attract his devotion. Like other Church Fathers, he did make sweeping statements about the Bible's perfection and authority, and developed gorgeous allegorical readings of Scripture, but he did not make it an idol. As a talented student and then a leading rhetorician, he was tempted to idolize literature, but after his conversion, he treated as tools everything he knew about words and everything he could do with them, and worked his speaking and writing into many forms of service to his adopted communities. This suggests an example that anyone of any faith or of none can follow: to act as if language belongs to the world of mere things, to treat it like a gift but not a god.

SARAH RUDEN *is a Quaker writer and a translator of ancient literature. Her latest book is a new translation of the Gospels, published this month by Modern Library.*

A supporter of former Bolivian President Evo Morales shouts at a protest in La Paz, November 14, 2019.

CNS PHOTO/HENRY ROMERO, REUTERS

After Evo

Santiago Ramos

Can a new president in Bolivia keep his party's old promises?

After a tumultuous year in Bolivia, the socialists are back in power. "We have recovered democracy and…hope," announced the Bolivian president-elect Luis Arce as he claimed victory in last October's presidential election. The turnout was high, and various international watchdog groups declared the election fair. Arce, the presidential candidate for the Movement for Socialism party (MAS), defeated his closest rival, Carlos Mesa, decisively—55 to 29 percent. It was a peaceful end to Bolivia's slow slide toward the abyss. In the months leading up to the election, the country had come close to dictatorship and civil war.

A new Bolivian president *should* have been elected a year earlier. But the results of the October 2019 election were annulled after observers from the Organization of American States (OAS), seconded by the European Union, claimed to have found significant irregularities in the vote tallies. On election night, vote counting was suddenly suspended for twenty-four hours, after which the lead of the incumbent candidate, the socialist Evo Morales, increased from 7 percent to 10 percent—the exact margin required to avoid a runoff. At first, Morales, who had been president of Bolivia since 2006, contested the findings of the OAS and the EU. A popular and outspoken indigenous leader, he had been favored to win a fourth term, but the allegations of electoral fraud sparked mass protests against his government.

By November 10, 2019, following weeks of protests and bloody clashes, and under pressure from the military, Morales resigned along with his vice president, Álvaro García Linera. Morales fled to Mexico. After more resignations, the rules of succession delivered the presidency to Jeanine Áñez, a senator from the right-wing Democrat Social Movement, which had obtained only 4 percent of the vote in the election. Áñez's official title was "interim president"; her term was to last only until new elections scheduled for May 2020. During that time, Morales's party retained its two-thirds majority over both houses of parliament.

Áñez often behaved more like a despot than a caretaker president. When she assumed power on November 13, she did so in dramatic fashion, holding a Bible above her head as she entered the presidential palace. In the eyes of Áñez and many in the right-wing opposition, Morales's party is associated with an allegedly non-biblical form of indigenous Catholicism and the purported godlessness of First World leftists. Days before Áñez took office, police officers had engaged in a bizarre ceremony where the *whipala*—a flag representing various indigenous peoples, and since 2009 the alternate flag of Bolivia—was stolen from the presidential palace and trampled on. A video showing a policeman cutting the embroidered image of the *whipala* from his uniform went viral. Knowing that this vandalism had been perpetrated by some of his followers, the right-wing politician Luis Fernando Camacho urged them to "respect those who feel represented by this flag." But the damage had been done, and protestors in La Paz warned of a coming civil war.

Áñez's offenses went beyond the symbolic. Days after she assumed the presidency, the military opened fire against demonstrators, killing eight people in Sacaba and nine in Senkata. In the wake of these massacres, Áñez tried to grant security forces blanket immunity—a measure overturned after international outcry. Later, she postponed the May elections, citing the pandemic. But this rationale became less convincing when she tried to postpone the elections a second time.

Finally, however, the elections were held on schedule in October—though only after MAS staged mass protests. These included seventy highway blockades, which were denounced by some as immoral because they blocked crucial medical supply lines during a pandemic. MAS said the blockades were the only way for them to assert themselves against a burgeoning tyranny. For most of Morales's supporters, the events of November 2019 amounted to a coup d'état led by Morales's enemies and supported by a corrupt OAS.

The right-wing opposition associates Morales's party with an allegedly non-biblical form of indigenous Catholicism and the purported godlessness of First World leftists.

"I love Bernie Sanders. I am of the Left. But Sanders was wrong," Fernanda Wanderley, director of the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies of the Catholic University in La Paz, told me. Wanderley was referring to Sanders's November 2019 statement in support of Morales, which employed the charged word "coup" to describe his fall from power. This statement led some journalists to accuse Sanders (unfairly) of defending a "dictator." In the United States, the dominant media narrative cast Morales as a left-wing populist who accomplished many good things but also threatened democratic norms and therefore deserved to be forced out of office. But a vocal minority, Sanders among them, held that Morales had been the victim of another U.S.-backed coup in Latin America.

In a coup, a minority power seizes control of the government, overturns the constitutional order, and suspends democracy. Whether one believes that what happened in Bolivia counts as a coup hinges on how much one trusts the OAS observers who declared the 2019 election fraudulent. Hours before stepping down, Morales tried to negotiate with the OAS, offering to redo the elections. Later, two MIT-based researchers would publish a widely publicized analysis critical of the OAS's fraud allegations. (Last June, the OAS published a rebuttal.)

The OAS aims to be for the Western hemisphere something like what the United Nations is for the whole world, but left-wing parties have long considered it a tool of U.S. imperialism. They are especially suspicious of the current OAS president, Luis Almagro. Yet the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, an autonomous organization within the OAS, did officially condemn the Áñez government's

response to the protests in Sacaba and Senkata as "massacres." And when Almagro visited Bolivia in May 2019, he said he was not opposed to Morales's running for a fourth term.

What Morales's supporters call a "coup" Wanderley describes as a popular revolt against a once-democratic government that was turning into a tyranny. "I do not use the word 'coup.' What I see is that Bolivia has a long history of mobilizations and a great tradition of street politics. And so, mobilizations in the streets are not exceptional events. On the contrary, they are part of the Bolivian political tradition.... I was not surprised to see mobilizations [against Morales] in 2019. The event that is most similar to the events of 2019 is what happened in 2003." During the 2003 "Gas War," security forces eventually stood down before organized protests against the privatization of natural-gas reserves. (Morales himself was a leader in these protests.) This led to the resignation of President Gonzalo "Goni" Sánchez de Lozada and, after six more months of marches and roadblocks, of his successor, Carlos Mesa—the same Mesa who just lost to Arce in October.

Wanderley points out that a large swath of Bolivian society protested the alleged electoral fraud, not only the right-wing, Camacho-led groups from the region of Santa Cruz. Strikes took place in major cities across the nation, large enough that Morales threatened to cut those cities off from supply lines. Perhaps the final blow fell when the Central Obrera Boliviana, the largest federation of workers' unions in Bolivia and a key Morales ally, joined the protests and demanded Morales's resignation. Many of the protesters likely came from the section of the middle class that had become disenchanted with Morales in the past few years. This was partly because of his redistributive economic policies and sometimes divisive rhetoric, but it was also partly because of his attempt to get rid of presidential term limits.

Morales's decision to run again in 2019 was a controversial one. It was prohibited by the new 2009 constitution that was one of his government's most important achievements. Morales lost a 2016 national referendum that would have amended the constitutional term limit, but a court ruling eventually allowed him to run, effectively nullifying the referendum. Many in Bolivia did not accept this ruling. Most Latin American countries have imposed strict term limits as a safeguard against a return to the dictatorships of yesteryear. When Latin American elected heads of state try to remove these limits—what political scientists call *continuismo*—citizens fear the slow erosion of democratic norms, followed by the sudden installation of a dictatorship. For many Bolivians, Morales's decision to run for a fourth term was a sign that their country's democracy was in peril.

With the election of Arce, who was Morales's finance minister, the constitutional order has either been reestablished or preserved, depending on one's point of view. "Normally, a coup d'etat is when a democratic constitutional process is interrupted. I wouldn't call it a coup d'etat," said Gabriel Baracatt, president of an NGO that works on environmental issues and trains citizens in democratic participation. Gabriel spoke to me via Zoom during a bumpy ride in his jeep. He was on his way to visit a project site outside Santa Cruz. "How can you call what happened a coup d'etat when Evo's own party endorsed the extension of his constitutional mandate and designated the electoral judges?... [T]he institutional mechanisms collapsed after the failed reelection, which led people to lose trust and to mobilize. People mention the military intervention...but what they don't mention is that it was the social base that asked the president to step aside."

Jeanine Áñez, center, after becoming interim president, November 12, 2019

Still, it was only after the military got involved that Morales decided to resign, and that fact alone seems to indicate that this was indeed a coup. Most of the coups catalogued in Edward N. Luttwak's *Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook*, an influential academic work on the subject, involve the police or armed forces (though Luttwak himself, who lives in Bolivia, has expressed skepticism about using the word "coup" in this case.) Writing for *Jacobin*, the New York University historian Greg Grandin argues that "pretty much anytime the military intervenes to change regimes, it is a coup."

"Un conjunto de luces y sombras" is how Baracatt describes Morales's fourteen years in power—a collection of lights and shadows. "Without a doubt, we can say that much progress was made in social mobility, inclusion—today, Bolivia is a country with new elites," Baracatt says. These elites come from the indigenous and mestizo populations that were once excluded from leading roles in society. The rise of an Aymara to the highest office in the land was a boost for the social integration of indigenous peoples in Bolivia. Maria Luisa Urrelo, executive secretary of the Red de Solidaridad y Apostolado Indígena (Indigenous Solidarity and Apostolate Network), told me that "discrimination against the *señoras de pollera* [women in traditional indigenous dress] and against people from the countryside" was a much more serious problem before Morales became president. "The insults used to be loud and open. This was noticeably reduced."

MEAGAN HANCOCK/XINHUA/ALAMY LIVE NEWS

Former Bolivian President Evo Morales, right, greets supporters in Chimore, November 11, 2020, after his return to the country.

CNS PHOTO/JESLEI MARCELINO, REUTERS

This change was partly the result of government programs that were designed specifically to help citizens from indigenous communities. The *bono Juancito Pinto* (named after a legendary child soldier in Bolivia's war against Chile) provided cash payments to families to keep their kids in school. The *bono Juana Azurduy* (named after a guerrilla leader) was designed to reduce infant mortality and maternal deaths. Those programs for the young were complemented by the *Renta Dignidad*, a minimum pension for Bolivians older than sixty-five. The poverty rate fell by around 20 percent during those years. There was also notable progress in literacy and access to water. Urrelo mentions another new institution that is emblematic of the Morales era: the Plurinational Games, which allowed Bolivian youth from around the country to gather for athletic and academic competitions. "It was something that didn't exist before.... [The games] allowed a group of young people to be seen, to grow, and demonstrate their potential."

This movement toward greater integration, though briefly overshadowed by the events of last year, will have a lasting historical legacy. Herbert Klein, a leading historian of Latin America, argues that the rise of the new elite during Morales's tenure was the fulfillment of a transformation that began with the 1952 revolution, after which land was partitioned and redistributed among indigenous people throughout most of Bolivia. I spoke with a development project manager who works with indigenous communities on problems having to do with climate change, water access, and other environmental issues. (He asked that his name not be used.) While recognizing the "complexity" of Morales's time in power, he told me that "Evo did a lot for this country. Bolivia did not have a historical outcome like Peru, which had sixty-nine thousand killed by the Shining Path.... How do you explain this? Because Bolivia has also had political conflict and trauma, but has always found a way to strike a deal. We are a country that comes right up to the abyss, but we make a deal and immediately go forward toward the next abyss."

The 2009 constitution recognizes thirty-seven indigenous tongues, along with Spanish, as the official languages of Bolivia.

Morales's legacy was cemented fairly early in his presidency, with the ratification of the 2009 constitution, which redefines the Bolivian state as a union of nationalities, and invokes the principle of "interculturality" as a touchstone for unity. It guarantees communal land rights to indigenous communities, and speaks respectfully of traditional indigenous cosmology, medicine, symbols, dress, and rituals. It also recognizes thirty-seven indigenous tongues, along with Spanish, as the official languages of Bolivia.

But Morales's presidency also had its share of what Baracatt calls "shadows." His critics claim that a dangerous cult of personality had developed around him, and that he started taking advantage of this by the end of his tenure to gain yet more power for himself. His early personal history is certainly impressive. Born to the Aymara people of the Andes, Morales grew up poor in a small village of the mountainous Oruro department in western Bolivia. He paid for his own studies by working as a bricklayer, a trumpet player, and a baker. He rose through the political ranks as an activist. His talents as a leader were clear early on. But the same fiery anti-colonial rhetoric and flamboyant gestures of defiance that inspired his followers alarmed members of Bolivia's political establishment—and not only because they regarded him as a threat to their own power. They also worried that, once in power, Morales would take aim at civil liberties. As president, he lamented that Bolivia enjoys an "exaggerated freedom of expression," and he leveraged state control over media licensing to manage public perception of his government. On a personal level, he might have an even darker side: last August, the Ministry of Justice charged Morales with "rape and human trafficking," and launched an investigation whose results are pending. But his biggest *political* failures may have had to do with natural resources, the environment, and indigenous autonomy.

Under Morales, Bolivia nationalized much of the oil and gas industry, which until then had been largely under

the control of foreign companies. In addition to the money brought in directly by the state-owned oil and gas firm, a new tax regime allowed Bolivia to collect more than 50 percent of the profits from oil and gas sales. These revenues funded many of Morales's ambitious social programs, and were propped up by a commodities boom that lasted from 2000 to 2014. During those years Bolivia's government set aside money it would need when the boom inevitably ended (unlike Venezuela, whose improvident government faced a grave economic crisis as soon as oil prices began to fall). But critics say that Morales relied throughout his presidency on an unsustainable "extractivist" economic model—one that depends heavily on non-renewable natural resources.

In general, Morales's plans for economic development appeared to disregard ecological concerns. In 2011 protests broke out against his project to build a highway through the Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS), a nature preserve containing four different ecosystems, and home to more than twelve thousand people from three indigenous communities. Indigenous activists organized the protests, arguing that the highway would lead to deforestation, land grabs, and the deterioration of their home. More than a thousand protestors marched along Bolivia's highways toward the capital, La Paz. Security forces responded with brutal crackdowns, especially in Chaparina. After denouncing the protestors as "enemies" beholden to imperialists, Morales eventually gave in to their demands—but years later he was still insisting on his highway project. When I asked an indigenous-rights activist in Chile if Morales was the type of leader he would want in his own country, he said, "No, not after TIPNIS."

Fr. Franz Bejarano, SJ, lives in a small town two hours from La Paz. The day I spoke to him via Zoom, it had been less than twenty-four hours since the government finished paving the highway that joins his town to the capital. Bejarano had spent the day driving to several nearby towns, visiting the different communities under his charge. He is Quechua, but his flock consists mostly of Aymara Catholics, who preserve ancestral customs while professing the Catholic faith. ("My deacon is also the doctor of the community," he tells me.) He wears a straw hat and a windbreaker with a Jesuit logo. At times he speaks freely, even boldly, about the political situation in Bolivia, but at other times he can be a bit coy. He supports MAS and Morales, he tells me. He says he's "agnostic" about whether there was fraud in the 2019 election, though he adds that many international interests wanted Morales out.

Bejarano's flock is also Evo Morales's base. During the crisis of October and November 2019, Bejarano held vigils every evening to help people cope with the crisis. "Why did they vote for MAS in the countryside? It was a vote driven by longing.... When no other government cared about us, Evo built schools. He built hospitals. He built soccer fields. We could notice the presence of the state in the indigenous communities like we never saw before with other governments. Why? Because they didn't come to the rural areas." Those who wept during the vigils were mourning the end of what Bejarano calls the "process" begun by Morales.

Bejarano has harsh words for Áñez and her government. "Murillo threatened us with the military," he says, referring to Áñez's minister of the interior, who was largely responsible for the crackdowns. Bejarano says that "racism has been exacerbated" in Bolivia thanks to Áñez, and he points out an irony others had also mentioned to me: for all her anti-indigenous gestures, Áñez herself has clearly recognizable indigenous features. Most Bolivians have indigenous roots, though some try to hide them.

But Fr. Bejarano also laments the shortcomings of MAS and Morales. He was a parish priest in the TIPNIS region during the highway protests, and refused to cooperate when government authorities asked him to lobby in their interest with the local indigenous population. He freely admits that he felt betrayed by Morales's government. The TIPNIS crisis may have been a turning point for MAS. Bejarano claims that a group of MAS party elite pressured Morales to reject the referendum that prevented his reelection for a fourth term (a theory shared by at least one of Morales's former cabinet ministers). Bejarano points out that the Aymara people have a tradition of rotating their leader. Morales, an Aymara himself, should have heeded that tradition. "With the referendum," Bejarano says, "the people said *no* [to another term for Morales]. But the MAS leadership became stubborn. It was the debasement of power, it was their Achilles' heel."

American political commentators often look for very specific things in Latin America. Neoliberals seek a vindication of their economic model—a McDonald's, say, with locally sourced beef—or else cautionary tales about what happens when that model is rejected. Socialists look to Latin America for examples of revolution to be emulated elsewhere—

GASTON BRITO/FOTOARENA

Bolivian President Luis Arce Catacora is carried by a crowd in La Paz, January 29, 2020.

or for evidence of CIA interference. Social conservatives who look past the dream of a wall along the southern U.S. border might hope to find in Latin America a preserve of Baroque Catholicism and traditional family values. There's some truth in all these clichés. But if they looked closer, those who search Latin America only for simple morality tales of one kind or another would find the same complexity and ambiguity they have no trouble seeing in their own country. "Please do not romanticize the situation here," Wanderley pleads.

Luis Arce and his new government now confront a stark situation. The pandemic is ravaging the country and stifling its economy. Arce's government struck a deal with Russia to import its vaccine, but is also negotiating with Western pharmaceutical companies. It has promised free distribution of the vaccine to all Bolivians. But austerity measures may soon become necessary, in the wake of drastically declining revenue. Arce promises that public investments will continue, but this will be a challenge in the midst of a recession and falling commodity prices.

Arce and Morales are very different leaders, with very different backgrounds. Some have called Bolivia's new government "a technocracy of the left." Arce is an academic economist who studied in Britain, and has taught courses at Columbia and Harvard. Less charismatic than Morales, Arce has kept a low profile. He flies on commercial airlines—not on the presidential plane that Morales purchased in 2010. The day after his election, Arce publicly distanced himself from Morales, who eventually returned to Bolivia and remains the leader of MAS, highly involved in choosing the candidates who will run in the upcoming departmental, regional, and municipal elections in March. But Morales currently has no official role in the new government. Even insiders have had difficulty figuring out the relationship between Morales and Arce. But, according to Fr. Bejarano, the indigenous MAS base feels more represented by David Choquehuanca, Arce's vice president, who was an indigenous activist like Morales.

Beyond the immediate demands of the public-health crisis and recession, there remains the long-term task of promoting economic alternatives to extractivism. One activist told me he hopes the new government will turn its attention to family agriculture and other forms of local economy. No less important, Arce's government will have to begin repairing the civic damage caused by the strife of the past year. For now, the constitutional order has been restored; Bolivia has managed, once again, to pull back from the abyss. But there will be no honeymoon for Arce, and many ways for him to fail. The citizens who first propelled Morales to power fifteen years ago are waiting anxiously to see whether the Movement for Socialism can still carry through on the rest of its bold promises—whether the Morales years were truly the beginning of a new era or only a brief interruption.

SANTIAGO RAMOS *is a freelance journalist and a philosophy professor at Rockhurst University. He was the 2020 John Garvey Writing Fellow at* Commonweal.

POETRY

LEAVING BOSTON AGAIN

Danielle Chapman

When I woke out of my reverie

(*thank you Jesus thank you Jesus thank you Jesus*
the scans weren't worse and make my life
a testimony to your righteousness)

the oaks that swerve up East Rock Park
announced their white-barked symmetries
against the winter-darkened marsh
with such insouciance

I believed not only all of this was real

but that the clouds'
lavender croissants of vole fluff

such soft smudged smut

might heal

not just us but the whole deal, this

Connecticut, by Constable

GRIFFIN OLEYNICK

Carceral Aesthetics

'Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration'

The year 2012 was a turning point for Gilberto Rivera. Born in Puerto Rico and raised in Brooklyn, the former graffiti artist had been incarcerated in the U.S. federal prison system for nearly two decades. He had been regularly subjected to "diesel therapy," in which prison authorities bus detainees to different facilities across the country to break their ability to form close relationships. Rivera had always sought to make the most of things, learning new artistic techniques from incarcerated mentors wherever he ended up: impressionism at the Lompoc federal prison in California, oil painting at Leavenworth, Kansas, and ceramics at Allenwood, Pennsylvania. But after an altercation with a guard at Fairton, New Jersey, he'd had enough. Rivera was outraged, and needed a new form capable of expressing it.

An Institutional Nightmare was the result. Resembling a rugged, otherworldly landscape viewed from above, the three-dimensional mixed-media collage is made of Rivera's torn prison uniform, a drop cloth, prison commissary reports, newspaper, acrylic paint, and floor wax. Rivera's anger seems to well up out of it: the uniform, a drab brown vortex stiffened with wax and paste, writhes around the pale yellow cloth, its cheap synthetic insulation spilling over into a frothy sea of blue and red. He could have been punished just for making it, as prison rules prohibit the appropriation and destruction of state property. Yet Rivera felt it was a chance worth taking, not only as a way of asserting his identity as an artist, but also of critiquing the system of mass incarceration in the United States, which currently ensnares more than 2.3 million people.

Rivera is just one of more than thirty-five artists featured in *Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration*, a revelatory new group show on view at MoMA PS1 in New York through April 4. The massive assemblage of drawings, paintings, prints, sculptures, video installations, collage, and photography is the result of more than a decade of research by guest curator Nicole R. Fleetwood, a professor of American studies and art history at Rutgers. She's also the author of an accompanying scholarly book, the most comprehensive survey of contemporary art made by incarcerated people to date. An unabashed prison abolitionist and advocate for incarcerated people, Fleetwood has witnessed firsthand the injustice and violence of the U.S. prison system, especially the generational trauma it inflicts on communities of color (and on members of her own family). As a result, the show is anything but a facile, feel-good celebration of art as moral redemption or imaginary transcendence. Instead, it's didactic in the best sense of the term. It teaches visitors—most of whom have never been to a jail and do not know a single incarcerated person—how to see the cruelty the prison system tries to hide, and how to think expansively about a world in which prisons no longer exist.

Marking Time begins and ends with one of the most accessible genres of prison art, portraiture. As Fleetwood reminds us, the technique has a long tradition (as well as a prestigious pedigree) in Western aesthetics. Incarcerated in his late teens, George Morton used his nine years in federal prison to study the techniques of the Old Masters, eventually earning a coveted spot at the Florence Academy of Art and winning its prize for "best portrait of the year" in 2016. *Mars*, an arresting charcoal drawing of a young Black woman rendered with photographic precision, is easily the most technically accomplished work in the show.

Morton once said that learning to draw in prison lent a "monastic quality" to his time there. That feature is equally palpable in the late San Francisco painter and activist Ronnie Goodman's 2008 *San Quentin Arts in Corrections Arts Studio.* In this carefully composed self-portrait, modeled on Antonello da Messina's *St. Jerome in His Study* (1475), Goodman shows himself in profile, quietly examining a large print, surrounded by more than a dozen of his paintings as soft light pours in from a window above. The stillness of the scene, and Goodman's subtle treatment of the handful of signs of his incarceration (a clock sits just below an observation window at the top left of the frame), casts artmaking as a peaceful respite and meaningful escape from the harsh monotony of prison life.

But it's a mistake, Fleetwood argues, to interpret art made in prison through the lens of Western aesthetics to which we've become unconsciously accustomed. We tend to think of the archetypical artist as a "free, mobile, white, Western male," a genius with ample access to materials, space, and time for artmaking. Because such conditions by definition cannot hold in prison, Fleetwood argues that we need to employ a new framework for under-

Gilberto Rivera, *An Institutional Nightmare*, 2012

COLLECTION JESSE KRIMES/COURTESY OF MOMA PS1

standing prison art—one she terms "carceral aesthetics." By widening our analysis to include information about the restrictive material, spatial, and temporal conditions under which prison art is created, we don't just gain a better, fuller understanding of particular works. We can begin to appreciate art's power to subvert, maybe even tear down, the system of mass incarceration itself.

A first step in that process is recognizing one of the most glaring ironies of the prison system: though it justifies its existence by appealing to the protection of the common good and the maintenance of social order, it operates in a way that is actively hostile to the formation of fellowship within prison walls. Across several galleries, *Marking Time* highlights the way artists have come together to resist this anti-human logic by forming artists' collectives. One of the strongest and most innovative grew out of the partnership Rivera formed at Fairton with Jared Owens and Jesse Krimes. Besides critiquing each other's work and pooling their resources to procure art supplies, they also maintained a common library of art books, complete with subscriptions to leading arts publications.

The results are astounding. Krimes, the group's leader (now the owner of a flourishing studio in Philadelphia, started after his release in 2013) had just finished a degree in art before his arrest. Works like *Purgatory* and *Apokaluptein:16389067*—a monumental, thirty-nine-panel Boschian landscape stamped onto bed sheets using newspapers, magazines, and hair gel—reveal Krimes's mastery of drawing, collage, and printmaking, as well as the poetry of Dante and the philosophy of Giorgio Agamben. Owens, interested in color theory, abstract expressionism, and the historic linkages between slavery and the prison system in the United States, channels all three in the triptych *Ellapsium: master & Helm* (2016), in which the architectural plan of Fairton is overlaid with a classic 1840s abolitionist image of a slave ship making the Middle Passage. The color scheme is significant: Owens fills most of the frames with orange (the color of prison jumpsuits), which is in turn capped by a small amount of blue (the color most associated with policing in America). The prison-ship structure, a symbolic site of death, is rendered in black, gray, and white.

Owens's imagery is not just some dark fantasy. The Vernon C. Bain Center, a hulking jail barge housing nearly a thousand inmates offshore at Hunts Point in the Bronx, floats just a few miles upriver from MoMA PS1, across from Rikers Island in New York's East River. Rikers, of course, is the city's notorious, sprawling jail complex, scheduled

Tameca Cole, *Locked in a Dark Calm*, 2016

COLLECTION ELLEN DRISCOLL/COURTESY OF MOMA PS1

View of Jared Owens *Ellapsium: master & Helm,* 2016

to close by 2026. That promise has done nothing to alleviate the plight of inmates now trapped in its overcrowded confines, brutalized by guards and fellow inmates and at a disproportionately high risk of contracting COVID-19. *Marking Time* responds with a twin-channel video installation by Ashley Hunt, *Ashes, Ashes* (2020), which meditates on Rikers's brutal past and ponders its future. Haunting images of the island's wintry shoreline are overlaid with audio from activists and former inmates, who wonder why a wealthy city like New York spends so much on policing and prisons when the money could be used for public goods like health care, education, and housing.

That's the pernicious thing about U.S. prisons: mass incarceration relies on a sleight-of-hand, because the public thinks of carceral facilities as protection against (and a remedy for) crimes committed by individuals, rather than a system that targets (and profits from) poor communities of color. Prisons create perverse geographies, corrupting everything they touch; no one who comes into contact with the system, Fleetwood argues, remains unscathed. One of the most compelling chapters in her book explains her unease with prison arts programs and the (usually white) nonprofits that run them. They're in some sense complicit, inasmuch as they rely on the prison authorities for access, protection, and space to do their work.

Photojournalists and activists aren't exempt, either, though they may well produce stirring works that draw much-needed attention to ongoing injustices. *Marking Time* displays stunning black-and-white gelatin prints of Angola State Penitentiary by Louisiana photographic team Chandra McCormick and Keith Calhoun, as well as intimate, richly colored portraits of female inmates serving life sentences by Canadian public-defender-turned-documentarian Sara Bennett. But unlike their subjects, McCormick, Calhoun, and Bennett still get to return home at the end of their sessions. Uncomfortable as it may be, Fleetwood has a point: the photos are powerful, even revelatory, but you can practically feel the lens separating the artists from the detainees.

That's not the case with one final group of images on view in *Marking Time*. Vernacular photography—posed shots taken by amateur prison photographers against painted backdrops, often during family visits, as a way of memorializing the day—are perhaps the most widespread form of prison art in the United States, with millions of them circulating each year. Fleetwood explains that most eventually wind up in private collections, usually scrapbooks and shoeboxes. She had always displayed them throughout her home (her cousin was incarcerated in Ohio) but never thought of them as art until after she began her book project.

The photos reveal a rarely seen side of prison life: inmates relaxed and smiling, hugging their loved ones and expressing themselves freely. Fleetwood suggests that such images are so popular because of their "haptic" quality. Printed on thick photo paper with short messages scribbled on the reverse, they serve incarcerated people and their relatives as tactile records of a brief moment of communion, an instant when they were able to forget about the walls designed to keep them apart. On my second visit to the show, after reading Fleetwood's book, I found myself drawn to these images more than any others. "Amateur" in the etymological sense, they offer tangible evidence of the loving relationships and hidden sacrifices that sustain those living in such grim conditions—and point to a day when all prisoners will go free.

GRIFFIN OLEYNICK *is an assistant editor at* Commonweal.

PHOTO BY KRIS GRAVES/COURTESY OF MOMA PS1

NICOLE-ANN LOBO

Eat or Get Eaten

'The White Tiger'

A dilapidated rural village, an intelligent protagonist achieving success against all odds, saccharine reflections on our common humanity: these are the increasingly recognizable ingredients of the Western genre of Indian poverty porn. Some are found in *The White Tiger*, the film adaptation of Aravind Adiga's 2008 Man Booker Prize–winning novel, directed by Ramin Bahrani and now streaming on Netflix. But instead of softly focusing on sentimentality and plucky resolve, *The White Tiger* turns a hard gaze on India's unforgiving social stratification and what it takes to break through it. Succeeding requires sacrifice of the type widely celebrated in Western capitalism's concept of entrepreneurship. And Balram Halwai, the film's slick, suede-suit-wearing protagonist, is an entrepreneur at heart.

"In the old days, when India was the richest nation on Earth, there were one thousand castes and destinies," Balram says in voice-over near the start of the film, narrating a letter he's written to China's premier at the time, Wen Jiabao. "These days, there are just two castes. Men with big bellies and men with small bellies. And there are only two destinies, eat or get eaten up." Now a resident of Bangalore, "the Silicon Valley of India," Balram also admits that the police are looking for him—but he asks not to be judged before he has shared the entirety of his "glorious tale." That tale begins in Laxmangarh, where as a young boy Balram is recognized for his English literacy and his intellect. His teacher promises to help him get a scholarship at a school far away, in the nation's capital of Delhi. But Balram's family needs money, and he is forced to drop out and work in a tea shop, fated to a life of servitude. It's the destiny of millions of Indians who, Balram says, exist in a "rooster coop": they passively watch one another get slaughtered, but they're unable or unwilling to escape.

Balram's desire to leave the coop is the film's dramatic catalyst. Learning that the visiting American son of the village landlord needs a driver, he borrows money for driving lessons and then smooth-talks his way into the position. Upon meeting Balram, the son, Ashok, makes a snap pronouncement: "You're the new India," he tells Balram, part of the nation's biggest untapped market, "waiting to surf the web, buy a cell phone, rise up to middle class." But, he adds, without adequate resources Balram is only "half-baked." Balram is offended, but he knows it's true. In India, as he admits in his missive to Jiabao, there are "hundreds of millions of men like me. Open up our brown skulls and look inside with a penlight. You'll find all these ideas, half-formed, half-correct, all buggering one another, and that is what we live and act on."

Soon Balram is driving Ashok to Delhi. There, in addition to contending with the city's general, dizzying cacophony, he becomes increasingly aware of the gap between the wealth of his masters and the extreme poverty of so many others. As Ashok casually bribes politicians with millions of rupees, Balram reflects on his own monthly salary, 3,000 rupees, or around $40. At one point, his late father speaks to him in a vision: "Mr. Ashok bribes politicians in order not to pay taxes. So who is he stealing from? The ordinary people of this country. Me. And you."

The ordinary people trying to climb the ladder face two major obstacles: caste and the intergenerational lock on wealth and status the rich possess. That status also confers a privileged cluelessness, as Ashok and his dermatologist wife, Pinky, sometimes demonstrate. The young Indian-Americans, liberal in their social values, question the relevance of Balram's lower caste, and express anger and discomfort at the abuse endemic to the Indian servant-employer relationship. Yet that empathy is really only a veneer; the couple is often complacent in the face of Balram's mistreatment, and at times they exploit the power imbalance to mete out more abuse. That's reflective of today's liberal-class politics in India: equality and mutual respect are held within sight, but just out of reach, as the resentment of the oppressed steadily mounts.

And while caste discrimination may technically be illegal in India, caste continues to dominate virtually every level of society. Balram comes from a

COURTESY OF NETFLIX

Adarsh Gourav as Balram in *The White Tiger*

family of sweet-makers, denoted by his last name, "Halwai"; in Bangalore, he has changed this marker of his low caste to "Sharma," a typical Brahminical surname. The smallest of indicators reveal his place in the social hierarchy. He cannot sit on the same couch as his masters, cannot address them by name, must show respect by touching their feet. Caste and class are distinct, if overlapping, phenomena, but insufficiently addressing the difference—which India's organized Left has historically been guilty of—has helped enable the Hindu-chauvinist government campaign to focus solely on caste representation while ignoring economic realities.

Aesthetically, the movie mostly adheres to literalism, and the cinematographic style is sometimes akin to vérité. It fits the subject matter. Balram could be any of the hundreds of millions of people left behind in India's globalized economy, which he himself admits. Adiga wrote *The White Tiger* as a cautionary tale of the effects globalization might have on India; thirteen years later, his imagined India has arrived. The combined wealth of sixty-three Indian billionaires is higher than the entire national budget, and greater access to must-have consumer goods like iPhones has conferred the illusion of material comfort among the Indian working classes. But real quality of life hasn't improved, and the gap in wealth is only growing, abetted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's neoliberal agenda of social-service privatization and disastrous demonetization policies. Alas, Ashok is right: Balram is the "new India."

The White Tiger has been compared to Bong Joon-ho's 2019 *Parasite* in its sympathetic portrayal of the psychological devastation wrought by capitalism. Like *Parasite*, the movie builds to a plot twist meant to unsettle viewers with the gory reality of class conflict. While the films are distinct in their treatment of social issues, both advance the uncomfortable truth that in desperate circumstances, morality might be a luxury available only to the wealthy. Balram says as much: "Men born in the light, like my master, have the choice to be good. Men born in the coop, like me, we don't have that choice." But by the time he finishes his tale to Wen, it's clear that Balram has shed the passivity that sustains the coop. Yellow and brown men like us will take over the world, he promises, having bought into the idea that in a ruthless, globalized economy, entrepreneurial cunning and cold-bloodedness aren't vices, but virtues.

NICOLE-ANN LOBO *writes from London. She was the 2019 John Garvey Writing Fellow at* Commonweal.

PAUL BAUMANN

'Citizen Kane' Revisited

The 'Commonweal' connection

I had read quite a bit of praise for *Mank*, the new movie about the making of *Citizen Kane*, before watching it on *Netflix*. The story is about Herman J. Mankiewicz (played by Gary Oldman), who shared the Oscar for best screenplay with Orson Welles, the star, director, and force behind *Citizen Kane* (1941). "Mank" was Mankiewicz's nickname. With its innovative cinematography, ever-shifting chronology, and playful use of newsreels, *Citizen Kane* is regarded by many as the best—or at least the most important—movie ever made in Hollywood. There had long been a dispute, now largely resolved, about whether it was Welles or Mankiewicz who deserved the bulk of the credit for it. Most scholars now agree that it was Welles who fundamentally shaped the film, although Mankiewicz's contribution was real enough.

Directed by David Fincher and written by Fincher's late father, Jack, *Mank* is shot in inky and shadowy black-and-white, which is intended, I suppose, to evoke the earlier film and the era when Welles and Mankiewicz battled over the script, but it often strained this viewer's patience and eyesight. Mankiewicz was a notorious wit, a member of the fabled Algonquin Round Table. Jack Fincher does his best to give Oldman the barbed tongue of that classic romantic Hollywood figure: a brilliant writer who has sold his talent and soul to an industry dedicated to the bottom line. But Mank's wit doesn't quite come into full view. Or as the *New Yorker*'s Anthony Lane puts it, "The lines are funny, but not *that* funny, and it's never easy to make us believe in someone of lofty comic repute." In that regard, it doesn't help that Mank is a dipsomaniac, whose verbal agility is as often derailed as fueled by booze.

Citizen Kane, of course, was a slightly veiled retelling of the life of William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper mogul. It is not a flattering portrait, and Hearst did everything in his power to block distribution of the film. He succeeded, at least at first. Mankiewicz and Hearst were well acquainted, even friends. In the film Mank thinks of himself as a conflicted tribune of the people, although he prefers the company of the wealthy and influential. He is also portrayed as being close to Marion Davies (played by Amanda Seyfried), the movie actress who was Hearst's mistress. Hearst and Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM and Mankiewicz's employer, were corporate titans determined to protect their economic interests and sabotage any progressive political movement during the Great Depression. The film proposes that Mankiewicz was embittered by their underhanded opposition to Upton Sinclair's 1934 campaign for governor of California. (As it turns out, there is no historical basis for thinking Mankiewicz supported Sinclair.) A famous muckraking journalist and author of *The Jungle* (1906), Sinclair had long been a dedicated socialist. Nevertheless, he managed to win the Democratic nomination for governor on

Gary Oldman as Herman J. Mankiewicz in *Mank*

a platform to "End Poverty in California" (EPIC), one that included raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy and establishing old-age pensions.

Sinclair had previously run unsuccessfully for governor and other offices in California as a Socialist Party candidate. Perhaps Sinclair's most famous sentence reads: "It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it." Mayer produced "newsreels" denouncing Sinclair with actors pretending to be ordinary citizens. He required employees to "donate" a day's pay to Sinclair's Republican opponent. (James Cagney refused.) Hearst's newspapers similarly distorted Sinclair's record, calling him a Communist. In short, they practiced the sort of red-baiting that Republicans have long embraced in their effort to roll back the welfare state, practices that culminated in the election of Donald Trump. (If you think that claim is exaggerated, read Jill Lepore's *New Yorker* article "The Lie Factory: How Politics Became a Business," September 17, 2012.)

Sinclair was defeated handily, and it is the conceit of *Mank* that the disgruntled screenplay writer penned *Citizen Kane* to avenge Hearst and Meyer's cynical and reactionary politics. Sinclair was a prolific author, publishing forty-seven books and winning the 1943 Pulitzer Prize for *Dragon's Teeth*, a novel about Nazi Germany. Socialism was not his only cause. Like many of his contemporaries, Sinclair was also interested in spiritualism and various health fads. He used profits from *The Jungle* to establish the communal utopian experiment Helicon Hall in Englewood, New Jersey—across the Hudson from New York City. Among the commune's residents was Michael Williams, the founding editor of *Commonweal*.

Williams, a much-published writer and former city editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*, had corresponded with Sinclair before the success of *The Jungle* and wrote to him expressing an interest in the Helicon enterprise. Sinclair invited him to see it for himself. The two became friends, and later put together a book proposal that failed to interest publishers. They subsequently spent time in Bermuda writing a book on nutrition and healthy living (Williams suffered from recurring bouts of tuberculosis). That project also failed, and Williams hints that Sinclair absconded with the advance.

Williams was never a socialist, but he was intrigued by, and sympathetic to, Sinclair's countercultural social attitudes and his denunciations of economic inequality. In *The Book of the High Romance: A Spiritual Autobiography*, published in 1918, Williams takes a droll approach to his earlier enthusiasm for Helicon Hall. He describes it as "The House of Strange Souls" and enumerates its various participants and factions as "a mixed assemblage of socialists, 'intellectual anarchists,' single taxers, vegetarians, spiritualists, mental scientists, Free Lovers, suffragists, and other varieties of Ism-its." Writers were thick on the ground, and Williams spent his brief time there toiling away on a variety of manuscripts, including a novel, for which he had high hopes.

Helicon Hall burned down in 1907 under suspicious circumstances, and the group of strange souls disbanded. Williams and his family escaped the fire, but he lost all his writings, including his novel. But he credited the intellectual tumult of "the colony" with helping to sharpen what was to become the philosophical question that would eventually compel him to return to the Catholicism he had abandoned at fourteen. "It was at Helicon Hall," he writes, "that the problem with which so much of my life has been concerned—the problem, namely, of whether we are immortal souls or merely ephemeral products of a casual chemico-mechanical process, began to press upon me with an irresistible urgency."

Pursuing an answer to that problem led Williams to organize the effort to establish a journal of opinion that would tackle the cultural and political questions of the day from a distinctively Catholic perspective. From its founding in 1924, *Commonweal* has not shied away from engaging the arguments of those who—like so many of Williams's fellow residents of Helicon Hall—think the heritage and intellectual resources of Christianity are irrelevant in a post-Darwinian and technological age. Now, nearly a hundred years after its founding, and in light of the often-unimpeded march of a utilitarian materialism into every corner of human life, *Commonweal* increasingly seems like a utopian project of its own, but happily one built on a sturdier foundation than Helicon Hall.

PAUL BAUMANN *is* Commonweal*'s senior writer.*

GISELE SCHMIDT/NETFLIX

the weal

Commonweal's reading and discussion community, **the Weal**, invites you to join us for a virtual event series on the intersection of faith, politics, and culture.

Featured guests include James Martin, SJ, Vanessa White, & Matthew Sitman.

Get connected to upcoming events and our monthly newsletter at **www.cwlmag.org/theweal**

Commonweal

Upcoming Events:

Mar 17, 6:30pm CST (7:30pm EST)

Learning to Pray with James Martin, SJ

A discussion with Fr. Jim Martin about his new book

Mar 24, 5:30pm CST (6:30pm EST)

A journey in the Black Catholic Experience with C. Vanessa White, D. Min.

A discussion with Vanessa White about the resistance and resiliency of Fr. Augustus Tolton and Sr. Thea Bowman

Apr 21, 5:30pm CST (6:30pm EST)

Resistance Art with Fr. Eddie De Leon, CMF

A discussion with Fr. Eddie De Leon about the expression of resistance in art

Apr 28, 5:30pm CST (6:30pm EST)

The 2020 Presidential Election & the First 100 Days

A panel discussion with Matthew Sitman, Miguel Díaz, Heidi Schlumpf, and John White

For questions about the Weal and registration information, please contact us at:

theweal@commonwealmagazine.org

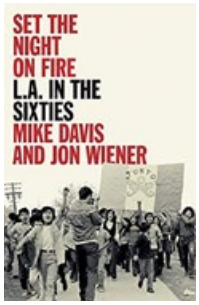
Excavating the Future

JOHN THOMASON

The worst compliment you can give Mike Davis is to call him a prophet—he takes no pleasure in being right. Davis made his name with the 1990 publication of *City of Quartz*, a series of acerbic, exhaustively researched meditations on twentieth-century Los Angeles. He countered celebrations of LA's revival—emblematized in its hosting of the 1984 Olympics—with an account of a city fractured by publicly subsidized hyper-gentrification, government disinvestment, white-homeowner revolts, and an impoverished and disenfranchised Latino and Black underclass. Most famously, perhaps, Davis declared that the city's urban design was governed by an ideology of "spatial apartheid" and cataloged "the emergent liaisons between architecture and the American police state." Even celebrated Angeleno Frank Gehry comes under fire as one of the chief architects of "Fortress L.A."

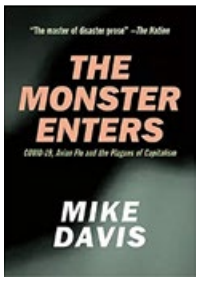
I discovered Davis in my early twenties, just after I'd moved to Los Angeles. I lived in a boxy, low-rise apartment complex just across the street from the million-dollar, faux-Mediterranean bungalows of Beverly Hills. A visible line in the middle of the street divided those tiny mansions (and the rich municipality that sponsored them) from my apartment in the actual city of LA. The Beverly Hills half of the street was paved with pristine black asphalt, while the LA half was composed of cracked gray concrete slabs. The first house on the Beverly Hills side had barred windows and a caged entryway that belied the friendliness of its impeccably manicured lawn. I never saw anyone go in or come out. It occurred to me then that the house might not actually be a dwelling, but instead a kind of border barricade. Considered alongside the lawn signs on other homes that warned trespassers of an "ARMED RESPONSE," it all amounted to an unambiguous message: stay out. As a result, I rarely went running in Beverly Hills, taking my chances on LA's considerably more uneven sidewalks instead.

Reading Davis gave me a language to articulate the purposes of the city's built geography, the ways its urban design enforced the sorting of its more and less worthy citizens. *City of Quartz* is in part a history of how such features came to be etched so firmly into a metropolis that sold itself as a land of open roads. Even the library where I could check out Davis's books (the 1984 Gehry-designed Goldwyn branch in Hollywood) was a symptom of this process. Davis argued that the privately sponsored public building—"baroquely fortified" with "bellicose barricades"—was a "beachhead" for the gentrification of Hollywood, a neighborhood populated largely by Central American refugees. It reminded me a lot of the house on the corner.



SET THE NIGHT ON FIRE
L.A. in the Sixties

MIKE DAVIS AND JON WIENER
Verso
$34.95 | 800 pp.

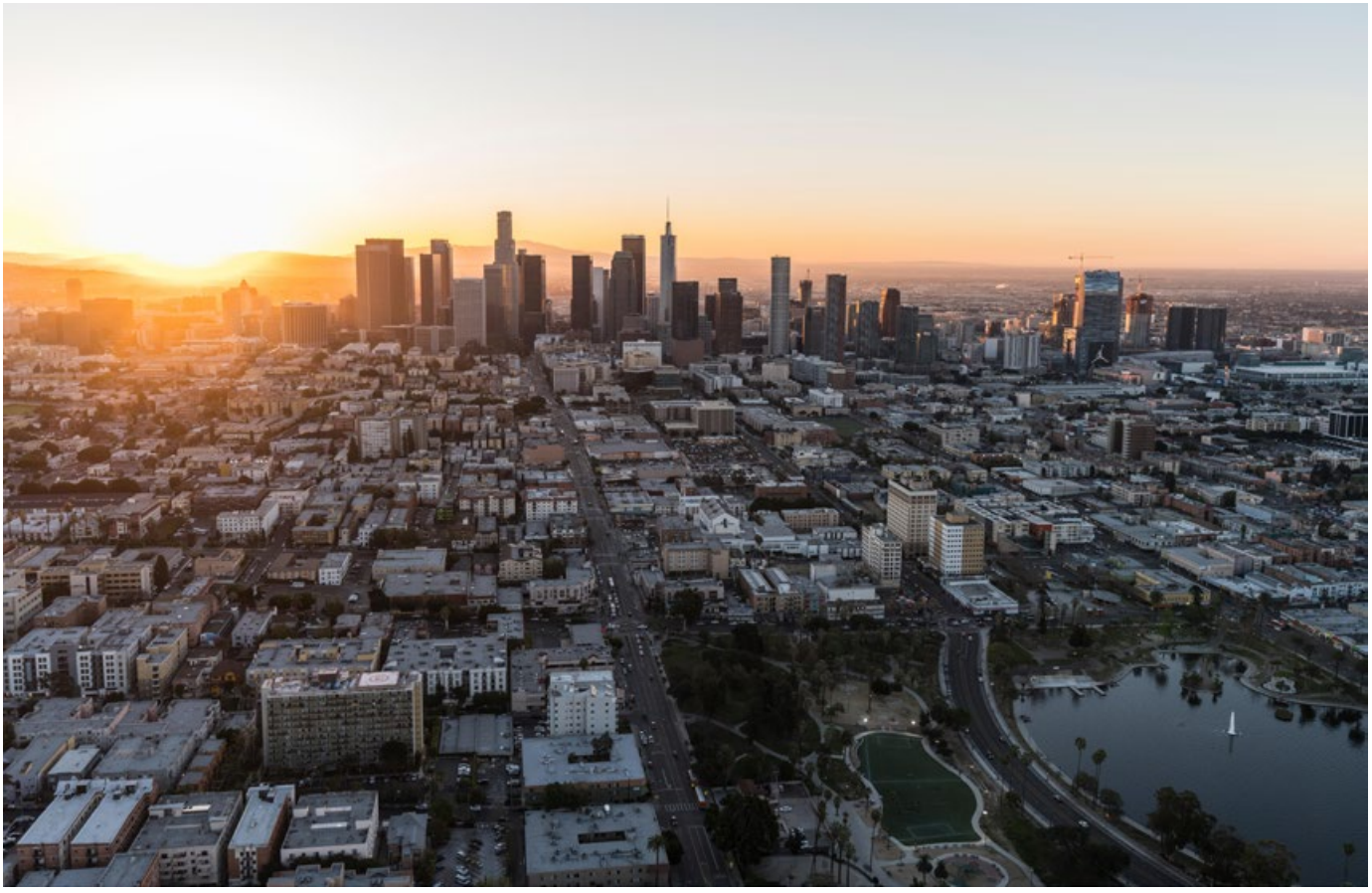


THE MONSTER ENTERS
COVID-19, Avian Flu and the Plagues of Capitalism

MIKE DAVIS
OR Books
$33.60 | 240 pp.

"As the walls have come down in Eastern Europe, they are being erected all over Los Angeles," Davis observed. The imposing exclusivity of the city's modern development was, in his view, a middle finger directed at the city's working poor, who suffered most from the cannibalization of what remained of LA's public space. (Davis pointed out that the city had fewer public restrooms than any other North American city.) They also suffered from police terrorism, which crescendoed in the indiscriminate mass arrest of fifteen hundred Black youth on a single night in 1988. "Every eleven-year-old in the city knew that an explosion of some kind was coming," Davis would later write of that period.

The explosion came. After Rodney King was dragged out of his car and viciously beaten in 1992, the city saw its largest, most militant uprising since the Watts rebellion of 1965. *City of Quartz* was credited with predicting the tumult, and Davis was offered a contract to write a follow-up book on the fallout. Ultimately, however, he turned it down. An activist as well as an author, Davis felt too close to the uprising and its participants to portray them dispassionately and faithfully. As an intellectual, he's most comfortable in the past, unearthing trends by reviewing decades' worth of daily editions of the *Los Angeles Times* on microform. As an activist who cut his own teeth in the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)



Los Angeles

TREKANDSHOOT/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the 1960s, Davis now prefers to let younger activists lead the way.

To put all this differently: prophesying an apocalypse is one thing; documenting it in real time is quite another. Davis himself underscored that when he gave *City of Quartz* the subtitle "Excavating the Future in Los Angeles," and it is the excavation of emerging futures—rather than documentation of an ephemeral present—that animates his writing, which includes innumerable essays and more than a dozen books, all written after his fortieth birthday. Now in his mid-seventies, Davis hasn't slowed down, and interest in his work is reaching another crescendo. That is partly due to the broader revival of Marxism in American intellectual culture—Davis is something of a patron saint for upstart socialist publications like *Jacobin*—but a larger part of it is Davis's uncanny sense of America's pulse. Last year he released a new book about multiracial street protests a month before George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis. A few months later, he reissued his 2005 book on pandemic response.

Davis's literary aura is that of an outsider. The crew-cut Marxist who stares out coldly from his book jackets has long been a source of fascination, often driven by a myopic focus on Davis's class background. It's almost impossible to read an article about him that does not mention that he once drove trucks for a living, or that his father was a meat cutter. Davis himself, however, has described his origins as "impossibly average." "Our family income, home mortgage, car value, hours spent watching TV, and so on were always the national median during the 1950s," he has said of his childhood in eastern San Diego County. "I've researched this." (After reading a few of his astonishingly thorough books, it's easy to believe he actually did so.)

His "burning bush moment" came at age sixteen, when a cousin invited him to a CORE protest. A college dropout, Davis spent his formative years as an SDS organizer, burning his draft card before finding his way to the Southern California branch of the Communist Party. After he was fired from his job at the Party's LA bookstore, he drove long-haul trucks for a few years. Disillusioned with the Teamsters (he claims they tried to enlist him in a hit on a strikebreaker), he went back to college, then graduate school, ultimately falling in with the British Marxists of the *New Left Review*, an affiliation he has more or less maintained ever since.

Aside from the flicker of fame that followed *City of Quartz*, Davis has managed to largely avoid the limelight for nearly four decades, despite receiving a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, a Lannan Literary Award, and many other honors along the way. For his devoted readers, part of his appeal is surely found in his writing style, which though forceful, self-assured,

and playful, is also unapologetically precise, even scientific, making full use of a century-and-a-half's worth of Marxist vocabulary. And part of it is his seemingly dour and idiosyncratic interests, which have led him to write books about the history of the car bomb, developmental patterns in contemporary slums, and the role of El Niño famines in nineteenth-century political economy.

But topics as weighty as these are only idiosyncratic as long as they have no immediately obvious bearing on the present—and 2020 appears to be the year that many of the apocalyptic futures excavated by Davis have finally come into full view. In 1998, Davis argued that megafires of increasing virulence were an inevitable feature of California's future, given its rampant, loosely regulated development boom and the counterproductive policy of total fire suppression demanded by real-estate interests. (He called that essay "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn.") Twenty-two years later, as an area larger than the state of New Jersey burned up and down the entire West Coast, Davis was called into radio shows and (virtual) lecture halls to explain the "apocalyptic trinity" responsible for such megafires: exurban development, alien plant invasion, and climate change.

And that's not the worst of it. Davis has said that he writes books about the things that scare him the most, and there was one book whose contents frightened him so much that he was unable to keep a copy in his house after publication. That was *The Monster at Our Door* (2005), a sobering account of the avian flu and SARS outbreaks at the turn of the millennium. The book warned that the same diminished public-health infrastructure, pharmaceutical greed, and ecological destruction behind their spread were making another, far deadlier zoonotic-disease pandemic a virtual certainty. When it finally came, Davis had to order a copy of his own book, which was reissued this summer as *The Monster Enters*.

Of all the books I've taken refuge in since first being subject to a stay-at-home order last March, Davis's have come the closest to offering me something like solace. I wouldn't have expected that I'd take comfort in closing my computer and its drumbeat of catastrophic headlines to pick up books with titles like *Planet of Slums* and *Late Victorian Holocausts*, but they provided what I was searching for: the clarity of a long view. The brutal disparities in the suffering wrought by COVID-19 made me hunger for histories that spoke to the ways contemporary inequalities were constructed.

Davis's writing is Marxist, but you don't have to be a Marxist to appreciate the vast majority of his work. You don't even need to have read Marx, though admittedly that will help. (In the introduction to *Old Gods, New Enigmas*, his most direct book-length engagement with explicitly Marxist material, Davis slyly riffs on the long tradition of leftists trying and failing to read the works of Marx himself.) Davis doesn't so much evangelize for Marxism as provide a lively, contemporary, and relatively accessible model of what Marxist analysis does at its best: explain the origins of social crises in explicitly material terms. Where other thinkers see history as driven by the ideas or emotions or the prejudices of individuals and groups, materialists see a shifting web of class relationships oriented principally around bread-and-butter issues. To situate people politically, Marxists look primarily at their relationship to the production, provision, and distribution of society's goods, services, and wealth. Like Davis, the best materialists never reduce all social conflict to these material relationships. But they do argue, convincingly, that these relationships are the first place we should look when seeking answers to social and historical questions.

Watching Davis so capably model this method, one stumbles upon possible answers to questions he hasn't even intentionally posed. Among those that were on my mind when I revisited his work: Why has the richest and most powerful country in the world been unable—and arguably unwilling—to marshal the resources necessary to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic within its own borders?

One of the most striking things about the popular response to the pandemic in the United States has been our inability to insulate public-health policy from the distorting filters of contemporary politics. What recourse to familiar culture-war dynamics (Republicans are for freedom, prosperity, and survival of the fittest; Democrats for science, competent management, and self-sacrifice) obscures is the way that the seeds of the present crisis were planted long ago and have been growing for decades. In Davis's first book, *Prisoners of the American Dream*, he argued that the Reagan years marked the beginning of a new economic paradigm in the United States. Government support for industrial workers—which had previously been the backbone of widespread (if uneven) social prosperity—was abandoned in favor of policies that redistributed income and wealth upward to the nation's managers, professionals, and entrepreneurs. The idea was that eliminating barriers to accumulation for this broad upper-middle class—whether through tax breaks, cheap services, or the fire sale of previously public goods—would enable them to engage in enough consumption to compensate for the stagnation of the blue-collar middle class, as well as the limited purchasing power of low-wage, precarious service workers whose exploitation made more accumulation possible for the privileged. A virtuous circle would ensue: consumption would enable accumulation, which would enable more consumption, ad infinitum.

The limits of this sort of public policy were visible in the Great Recession, but they appear even more stark now. The public-health measures necessary to control viral transmission are simply incompatible with many of the forms of mass consumption that undergird America's economic dynamism. After a half-century in which one or both major political parties prioritized greasing the wheels for this kind of consumption, is it any wonder that

mass death is a price that many are willing to pay to "reopen the economy"? And that a political party that campaigned on having an actual policy to control coronavirus just barely eked out an election victory over a party whose policy was that controlling the virus at all would be economically ruinous? Davis argued that contemporary American politics was ruled by a fidelity to this ideology of "overconsumption." In 2020, that fidelity is killing us.

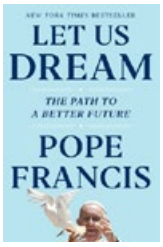
It's easy to see why Davis has been maligned as a "prophet of doom" (and occasionally embraced the label himself), but his oeuvre does contain less gloomy credits to his prescience. In many ways, in fact, his latest book is his most hopeful yet. Just two months before the United States experienced its largest-ever street protests for racial justice last summer, Davis published a monumental account of the multiracial street activism that flowered (and, admittedly, also wilted) in LA during the 1960s. *Set the Night on Fire*, co-written with the journalist and historian Jon Wiener, aims to dislodge the popular conception of sixties radicalism as the terrain of white Berkeley hippies and New Left agitators. Instead, Blacks, Latinos, high-school students, and unreconstructed communists were at the center of the city's struggles against segregation and police impunity.

One wonders why it took Davis so long to write about a history that he actually participated in. "I once promised my oldest daughter I would never talk about the fucking '60s again," he explained to *Mother Jones*. "But the problem is that so many of the struggles and the issues are exactly the same issues we're facing today."

Davis's greatest virtue as a writer may be his awareness that another, undefined future always lies just beyond the one that he has just excavated. And what that future looks like has everything to do with what the rest of us do now.

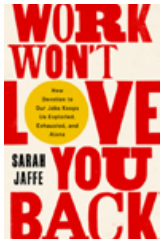
JOHN THOMASON *is a freelance writer and the articles editor at* Grist.

BOOKS IN BRIEF



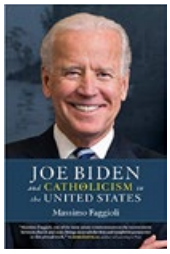
LET US DREAM
The Path to a Better Future
POPE FRANCIS AND AUSTEN IVEREIGH
Simon & Schuster
$26 | 160 pp.

***Let Us Dream* resonates with themes** familiar from Pope Francis's other work: the importance of looking to those on the margins to lead us as we pursue change; of listening with open hearts and engaging in dialogue; of caring for our collective home. Yet this contemplative volume is still deeply moving, at times even radical, explicitly advocating economic reordering to provide land, lodging, and labor for all, reminding us that every "concrete act of mercy is an act of justice." Francis urges us to meet the global crisis we face by choosing fraternity and community over individualism and profit—even when that requires us to face the suffering on the edges of our communities that we too often ignore.



WORK WON'T LOVE YOU BACK
How Devotion to Our Jobs Keeps Us Exploited, Exhausted, and Alone
SARAH JAFFE
Bold Type Books
$30 | 432 pp.

"If you do what you love," so the saying goes, "you'll never work a day in your life." Labor reporter Sarah Jaffe uses her new book, *Work Won't Love You Back*, to flip this particular canard on its head, arguing that the myth of "doing what you love" sets up an often unattainable or insupportable ideal of work: if your job is your passion, that should make up for low pay, long hours, or poor working conditions. Structured as a series of case studies, Jaffe's book examines particular jobs and industries that tend to be most afflicted by this labor of love rhetoric (nonprofits, tech workers, and internships, to name a few). By highlighting subsets of the modern workforce, Jaffe hopes to shed light on questions that affect all workers: How do we build lives that have purpose and joy outside of the workplace?



JOE BIDEN AND CATHOLICISM IN THE UNITED STATES
MASSIMO FAGGIOLI
Bayard
$22.95 | 176 pp.

Joe Biden was elected the second Catholic president of the United States at a time of profound crisis in both his country and his Church. It's not just a pandemic that he's inherited: Biden took office mere weeks after his predecessor incited a violent insurrection at the Capitol, while the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops greeted his inauguration with barely concealed hostility. In *Joe Biden and Catholicism in the United States*, Massimo Faggioli provides a superb guide to how we got here and sharp insights about the forces that will shape Biden's presidency. "Biden is the first Catholic president to publicly express a religious soul," he writes, "not a vaguely Christian, but a distinctly Catholic one, confidently but not bellicosely." What is distinctive about this distinctly Catholic president? How does he fit into the sweep of American political and religious history, including past Catholic politicians and candidates? And how might he forge a productive relationship with Pope Francis, if not the U.S. bishops? Faggioli takes up these questions and others, bringing to bear his scholarly expertise in this accessible, essential book.

A Happy Contrarian

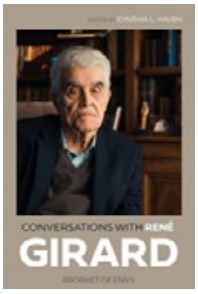
COSTICA BRADATAN

René Girard's best-known books, such as *Violence and the Sacred* and *The Scapegoat*, leave the distinct impression of an intellectual project plotted and forged in solitude. Serious strategy seems to be at work here: the books are both dense and lucid, their arguments not only tightly knit but also elegantly presented. One imagines the long hours of hard, lonely labor behind each of these titles. And yet Girard (1923–2015) was a rather social person and a compulsive conversationalist; he needed to be with others as much as he needed his solitude. Someone who knew Girard well observed that he was "doggedly dialogic"; he liked "working *with* people on things." There is in fact a whole series of books—above all, the groundbreaking *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1987)—in which he involved other scholars as interlocutors. Girard was aware that much of what he was proposing was too new and too unusual (and sometimes too idiosyncratic) to go unchallenged. Always the strategist, he often invited people to challenge his arguments before he published them. Beyond the sheer human need to be with others, Girard needed the opposition and counterarguments of his conversation partners to test his ideas and push them to their breaking point.

And not only that. Dialogue itself can be a singularly *creative* process: something new is often born in your mind in the very process of addressing the person in front of you. You didn't know that thing existed until you opened your mouth. Now that it has come out, you may be as surprised as your dialogue partner. Girard the conversationalist must have known a thing or two about this process.

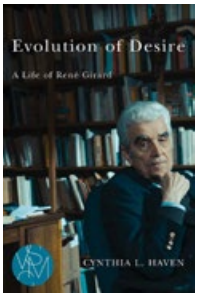
Apart from the books he collaborated on with others, Girard gave countless interviews to journals, magazines, and newspapers in the United States and elsewhere. With him, though, this wasn't about vanity; you learn precious little about Girard the person from these interviews. In *When These Things Begin: Conversations with Michel Treguer*, Girard tells Treguer, "I'm not concealing my biography, but I don't want to fall victim to the narcissism to which we're all inclined." For Girard, interviews served the same purpose as his "books of conversation": to challenge and test his ideas while discovering new things in the company of others. Cynthia L. Haven, the author of a remarkably insightful biography of Girard, *Evolution of Desire: A Life of René Girard*, has now put together a selection of these interviews. They give us a good picture not only of the complexity and multifacetedness of Girard's ideas, but also of the process through which a young professor of French literature originally operating in a rather narrow field turned into a visionary thinker of global renown, as revered as he was contested. As Haven puts it in her introduction, in "these interviews, over years and decades, Girard gradually becomes Girard, like an image slowly appearing in the developer of an old darkroom."

The core of Haven's collection deals, unavoidably, with Girard's mimetic theory; some of these interviews could serve as excellent single introductions to "the Girard system." If you don't have the time to read Girard's oeuvre, the interviews with Rebecca Adams or Robert Pogue Harrison, to give just two examples, might offer you a fairly good idea of what mimetic theory is all about. In any event, you should get enough from them to decide whether you love Girard's thinking or hate it—the two most common responses to Girardism. Very few of his readers are ambivalent about him.



CONVERSATIONS WITH RENÉ GIRARD
Prophet of Envy

RENE GIRARD
EDITED BY
CYNTHIA L. HAVEN
Bloomsbury Academic
$26.96 | 232 pp.



EVOLUTION OF DESIRE
A Life of René Girard

CYNTHIA L. HAVEN
Michigan State University Press
$29.95 | 346 pp.

The interviewers often push Girard to explain how his theory applies to real life, and he is happy to oblige. The theory's journey into the world is a great story in its own right. No sooner did his argument reach a certain "elegance" than Girard started to realize its growing applicability: "You suddenly see that there is a single explanation for a thousand different phenomena." He first formulated his theory in a book of literary history, then went on to apply it to the study of mythology and religion, then to politics and international relations, then to society and economy, fashion and eating disorders, and whatnot. Just open a newspaper and pick something, anything, at random. Even the stock market? Especially the stock market, Girard would respond. That's "the most mimetic institution" of all—indeed, a textbook illustration

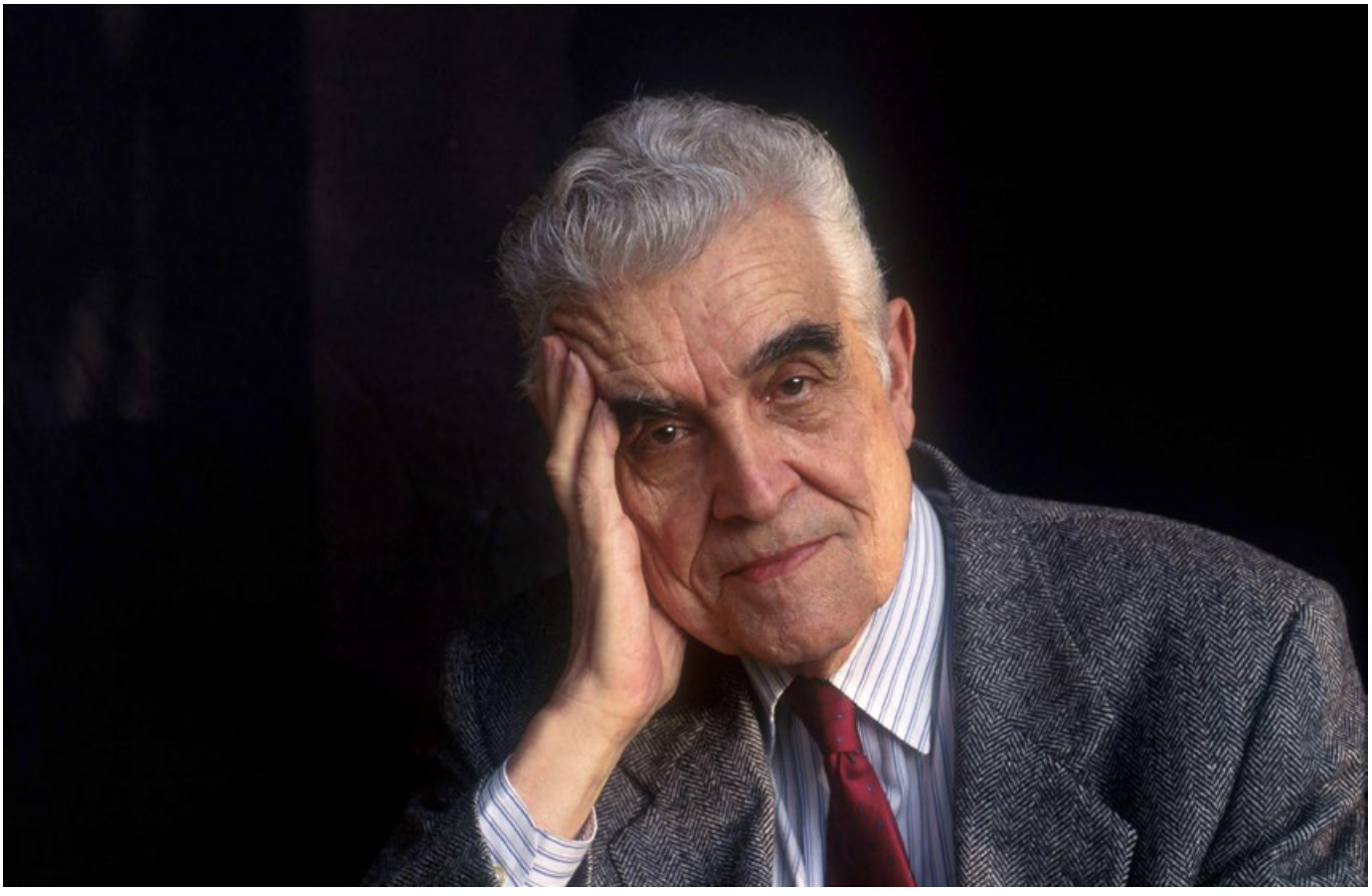
of how mimetic theory works: "You desire stock not because it is objectively desirable. You know nothing about it, but you desire stuff exclusively because other people desire it. And if other people desire it, its value goes up and up and up." There is hardly a field, sphere of life, or situation, where Girard's theory does *not* apply. He finds that fascinating. Some of his readers find it too good to be true. Others find it scandalous.

In Haven's collection, Girard's mimetic theory, with its ever-increasing range of applicability, comes forth forcefully. He had the rare gift of narrating ideas. Yet there is something else that the book reveals, which not only makes it a compelling read but deserves at least as much attention: the portrait of René Girard as a major public intellectual and one of the most seminal thinkers of our time; his uncompromising unorthodoxy and unusual position in American academia; the fascinating case of someone who, as a matter of both scholarly method and personal lifestyle, always seems to go against the flow, no matter the consequences.

Jean-Michel Oughourlian, a renowned French neuropsychiatrist and psychologist, is one of Girard's interlocutors in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*. The discovery of Girard's theory (and then the chance to work with him) was a life-changing experience for Oughourlian. One gift Oughourlian received from Girard, he recalls, was the "lightness, humor, and laughter when approaching the thorniest problems.... I have never laughed so much as during the preparation of *Things Hidden*, nor have I ever learned so much." This is precisely what Haven's collection reveals. Girard is utterly serious about his ideas, but he never seems to take himself too seriously. "My main desire was to get a car," the theorist of mimetic desire recalls about his first years in America. His recorded conversations are full of irony directed at himself, self-deprecation, even self-mockery. Such humility, coming from such a great man, is what makes reading Haven's collection a profoundly refreshing intellectual experience.

Typically, Girard hides himself behind a sober professorial mask, and that's what renders his humor so effective. "Just look at academia, that vast herd of sheep-like individualists," he exclaims in one of the interviews. Nietzsche, he observes elsewhere, "is so wrong that, in some ways, he's right." Speaking of how he came to the mimetic theory, Girard admits, tongue firmly in cheek, that "my theory took me by surprise.... I'm really just as startled by it as anyone else." Girard had the finest of manners, and that may be why his sting was so lethal: "Deep down, Sartre was very comfortably petit bourgeois, a lover of tourism, and too even-keeled to become a true genius."

There was another gift that Jean-Michel Oughourlian remembers receiving



AGENCE OPALE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

René Girard

What depressed Girard most about academia was the combination of ferocity and nihilism he observed among his colleagues: fanatics who don't believe in anything.

from Girard: "An utter irreverence with regard to canonical authors, that is to say, freedom of thought." In American academia, Girard was a strange animal. Even as he managed to get to the top of the system (he held prestigious positions at Johns Hopkins and Stanford, among other places), he never cared too much about its rules and conventions. The hierarchies and holy figures of the academic game left him unimpressed. His exact position in the system was never clear, which he must have found amusing. Many considered him a literary scholar. Yet, he says, "in an academic sense, literary criticism is no more 'my' field than anthropology, or psychology, or religious studies." He was interested and did significant work in all these fields, without having formal training in any of them. The one discipline in which he did have such training was the one in which he did the least work. "If our 'real' field is the one in which we are not self-taught," he said, "my 'real' field is history." Here he is teaching at an elite university while praising the virtues of auto-didacticism: "In everything that truly matters to me...I am self-taught."

Something that many of his academic colleagues could not forgive Girard for was his religion. While he started from a purely secular position ("I am rooted in the avant-garde and revolutionary tradition"), Girard adopted Christianity for philosophical reasons. His theory led him to think that the Passion of Christ (as recorded in the Gospels) was a turning point in history because it put an end to an uninterrupted line of violent scapegoating by exposing the scapegoat mechanism for what it was. As Haven shows in *Evolution of Desire*, Girard's was primarily an "intellectual" conversion. He needed to believe in order to make better sense of the world—as he observed, "conversion is a form of intelligence."

Yet many could not comprehend how such a brilliant and sophisticated man (and a Frenchman to boot) could go so medieval. Conversions were not exactly in intellectual fashion in American academia. When "theory," the latest French import, was Gospel truth in the humanities, Girard would never cease to poke savage fun at it. "If a Rabelais shows up at the right time," he said in 1993, "he will do hilarious things with our current scholasticism and in particular with our use of the word 'theory.'" Girard grew up and was educated in France, and could see right through the whole thing. In the United States, "theory" was a fad that would soon die out, as fads always do:

> The next generation will wonder what impulse could so move so many people that go on endlessly writing the most convoluted prose in a complete void of their own making, disconnected not only from the reality of their world but from the great literary texts, of which recent theory has been making a shamelessly parasitic use.

Prophetic though Girard was in other respects, he was dead wrong here. The next generation of literary scholars may have abandoned "theory," but only to venture into new voids.

What depressed Girard most about academia (even though it was yet another confirmation of his theory) was the combination of ferocity and nihilism he observed among his colleagues. They were the representatives of a most peculiar brand of fanaticism: fanatics who don't believe in anything. They could wage the nastiest of intellectual wars, hurt and humiliate others, even destroy careers, in the name of absolutely nothing:

> Whenever people really believe in some truth larger than the academic world, they do not dedicate themselves to the pursuit of academic success with as much ferocity as the people who believe absolutely nothing.... far from making people more relaxed and generous, the current nihilism has made academic life harsher and less compassionate than before.

This pushed Girard into an increasingly isolated position within American academia. Not that he disliked being in such a situation—if anything, he may have found it exhilarating. The more his colleagues shunned him, the more he mentioned the emperor's nakedness; the deeper their silence, the sharper his criticism. The contrarian's role seemed to suit him well. While most of his peers were advertising their disdain for religion, Girard was praising the virtues of true faith: "If we had more *genuine* religion, we would have less violence." Nothing too scandalous here, certainly. However, right after this, he adds a coda. "This is what most ordinary people still believe," he said, "and, as a rule, when the ordinary people and the intellectuals do not agree, it is safer to go with ordinary people." One can get away with saying many things in today's university, but not this. The theorist of scapegoating was courting trouble.

A comment that Haven makes in passing toward the end of her biography has been haunting me. When Girard's *Achever Clausewitz* (*Battling to the End*)—another "book of conversations," with Benoît Chantre as interlocutor—came out in France in 2007, it became an instant bestseller. It was much talked about and passionately debated; even the French president had something to say about it. Girard was a star in high demand, with journalists camping out in front of his Paris home. That was in France. "Meanwhile," Haven comments wryly, "once back in the United States that had been his home for sixty years, Girard walked the Stanford campus virtually unnoticed and unrecognized." The contrast could not be sharper—but he may have preferred it that way.

COSTICA BRADATAN *is a Professor of Humanities at Texas Tech University and an Honorary Research Professor of Philosophy at University of Queensland. He is the author, most recently, of* Dying for Ideas: The Dangerous Lives of the Philosophers *(Bloomsbury).*

Two Poems by David Lehman

PHILATELY

It happens every year: a dead man
is elected justice of the peace.
The jury is sequestered, each juror
having been asked "Are you now or
have you ever been a collector
of stamps?" because the defendant
smuggled the drug money in rare
stamps from the Caribbean island
whose aged dictator appears
on airmail issues.
When cigarettes are
banned in public, the dictator's cigarette
is air-brushed out of the picture,
which is one way to erase the past.
You can also change the name
of the country, inflate the currency,
inflame the populace, and kill
the old people who remember
the old days.
"You get all that from
a set of postage stamps?"
Yes, though
they, too, are disappearing from our lives.
As a collectible, coins have left stamps
in the dust the way Secretariat outdistanced
the field at the Belmont. Nevertheless,
when the passenger beside me asks,
"What do you do?" I like to say "I'm
a philatelist," and see what happens.

ALL SOULS

All souls: an excellent name for a November day
or a wealthy Oxford college with a sundial
created by Christopher Wren. T. E. Lawrence
got in; future PM Harold Wilson failed

the entrance exam, which consisted
of the candidate's response to a single word,
such as "censorship," "chaos," "comedy," and "culture."
One recent year the aspirants were asked whether

the "moral character of an orgy" changes
"when the participants wear Nazi uniforms."
Also, "Is there anything to be said for astrology?"
"The dice of God are always loaded" (Emerson). Discuss.

Oh, to be an Oxford don tasked with
formulating questions about relativism,
cultural imperialism, Dark Energy, Dark Matter,
Las Vegas, and the present status of concepts of "the soul"!

DAVID LEHMAN *is the editor of the* Oxford Book of American Poetry, *the general editor of the* Best American Poetry *anthology series, and the author of such recent books as* One Hundred Autobiographies: A Memoir *and* Playlist: A Poem. *He writes a monthly column on movies for the* American Scholar.

THANK YOU, COMMONWEAL ASSOCIATES

Every year at this time we thank our Commonweal Associates. Their generous support makes possible our expansion into digital media, outreach to new readers, and a growing network of local communities. Quite literally, *Commonweal* would not be here without them.

The list below reflects gifts and membership received in 2020. To join the Associates, please visit ***www.cwlmag.orgldonate***

$25,000 +

Sheila & Robert L. Berner Jr.
Daniel R. Murray
Michael Vertin

$10,000 - $24,999

Anonymous in memory of Alice Mayhew
Suzanne McSorley & Thomas Baker
The Helen V. Brach Foundation
Julia Ladner
Marcia & James T. Morley Jr.
Leslie & Dennis Purcell
Barbara & Robert Rosiello
Patricia & Paul C. Saunders
Tim Welsh

$5,000 - $9,999

Anonymous (2)
Rev. Edward Colohan
Maureen & Mark Dalton
Rosemary Deen
Frank L. Johnson
John J. Kevan
Chris Lowney
Barry McCabe
Jean McManus & John McGreevy
Brien O'Brien & Mary Hasten
Judith & Dennis O'Brien
Nancy & Robert Shannon
Mary Alice & Vincent Stanton
Margaret O'Brien Steinfels & Peter F. Steinfels
Dana & Marc vanderHeyden

$1,000 - $4,999

Anonymous (3)
Pam Gelfond & Nick Baumann
Vivian Segall & Paul Baumann
Mary F. & Keith P. Bednarowski
Marianne & John Borelli
Susan M. Carlson
Ann Caron
Rev. James A. Coriden
Louis De Strycker
Ann DeLaura
Samuel E. DeMerit
Ann Doig
M. Susan Donnelly
Clare & Paul Faherty
Msgr. Charles J. Fahey
Mary Anne Ford
Sally C. Fullman
Rev. Thomas Garthwaite
Wendy & Robert Gittings
Thomas J. Gosnell
Mary Jane & Bruce Hall
Robert L. Harlow
Mary & Thomas Heyman
Lyn & Harry Isbell
Kathleen & Patrick Jordan
Rev. Joseph A. Komonchak
Mahri Leonard-Fleckman
Kathleen E. Martin
Mary Maxwell
James H. McCarthy
Deacon Bartholomew J. Merella
Mary Mullin & Fred Lough
Samuel S. Mullin
Jane & Tony O'Connell
Karen Yost & Richard O'Connell
John R. Page
Anita M. Pampusch
Mary & Al Pierce
Fernande & Rudolph Pruden
M. Raidmets
Rev. David J. Riley
Irene & Joseph Roach
Rev. Robert J. Rokusek
The San Francisco Foundation
Dr. Valerie C. Scanlon
Marita Carew Sedlak
Julia V. Shea
Mary & Greg Stephen
Bobbie & Bruce Weber

$500 - $999

Anonymous (2)
Kathryn & Shep Abell
Peter Albert
Richard J. Barber
Marie J. Barry
Vincent J. Bartolini
Rev. John P. Beal
Mary L. & Dr. Barrett H. Bolton
Joseph Boyle
Joseph J. Boyle Jr.
June & Cyril Buersmeyer
R. Scott Burns
William Cahill
Eric F. Craven
Thomas Cummings
Susan & Thomas Druffel
Rita & Dr. Thomas Finnerty
Sharon & James Fisko
Takaoki Fusejima
Liz Larson & Grant Gallicho
Amy Rauenhorst Goldman
Nancy D. Golsan
M. P. Graham
Paula Hall
Harold T. Hartinger
Margaret M. Healy
Rev. John E. Hennessey
Thomas J. Higgins
Valerie Sayers & Christian Jara
Kris S. Jarantoski
Margaret & Paul Judge
M. Cathleen Kaveny
Susan Keane & Richard Griffin
Andrew Emmett Kelly
James R. Kelly
Dr. John S. Kelly
Colette Cook & Christopher Koller
Peter Kountz
Rev. Kenneth Lasch
Anne Laurance
John P. Lawler
Gregory Lehane
Francis R. Lewis
Betty L. Lovett
Joseph T. Lynaugh
Denis G. Mahoney
John S. Martin
Lawrence T. Martin
Mary & Thomas McCarthy
Anne & Rev. John L. McCausland
Mildred & Robert McCoy
Jane & Arthur I. McEwen
Monica & Thomas McGonigle
Kathleen & Dr. Patrick McGreevy
John R. Miles
Thomas F. Noble
Teresa & Dan Nolet
Elizabeth Oakes
Michael Peppard
Tom Quigley
Kathleen B. & Peter A. Quinn
Brian A. Ragen
Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities
Rev. Philip D. Reifenberg
Thomas Reiter
Kathleen & Timothy Reuland
Theodore R. Robb
Vincent Rougeau
Matthew S. Santirocco
Arthur B. Schute
Charles Scott
Richard Sexton
Michael Shea
Margot & Joseph Sheehan
Patricia & John F. Simonds
Karen Sue Smith
L. W. Staudenmaier
Michael Stevens
Justine & James Sugrue
Winnifred & Barry Sullivan
Charles J. Sullivan
Robert Swab
Thomas A. Swiatek
Michael J. Thompson
Catherine & Charles Voss
Ellen D. Warwick
Susanne Washburn
Msgr. Edward V. Wetterer
Mariellen Whelan
Catherine Wolff
Janine & Jay Wood
Marguerite Wordell

$250 - $499

Anonymous (15)
Lillian M. Adami
Anthony H. Ahrens
Rev. John T. Albosta
Celine M. Allen
Michele Allen
Dr. Howard J. Aylward Jr.
Joseph Barreca
Sheila & Thomas Barrett
Joseph J. Bascone
Alice & Robert Beezat
Richard Bernier
Joan Blessing
John Borst
Becky & Ed Boudway
Robert F. Brady
Arthur Brown
Jeanne Bugyis
Ester & William A. Bultas
James Bush
Charles G. Calhoun
Mark S. Callahan
Sidney Callahan
Judy & John J. Campbell
Anne & Brian Carroll
Rev. Robert F. Caul
Hans Christoffersen
Brian Cole
John F. Coleman
Thomas E. Connolly
Mary G. & Malcolm F. Crawford
John Cunningham
Frederick J. Cwiekowski, PSS
Nancy Dallavalle
Carole Desnoes
Cassie Dillon
Anthony J. DiStefano
John Docherty
Donnelly Household
Mary Ann & William L. Droel
Joseph Dubanowich
Catherine L. Dubreuil & Joseph S. Merola
Diane & Terrence Dugan
Thomas R. Dunlap
Steve Dzida
Rev. James Eblen
Rev. Msgr. William E. Elliott
Denise M. Errico & John G. Esmerado
Thomas J. Farrelly
Elizabeth & Stephen Fearon
Arthur Ferrante
Thomas Finn
Dr. Arthur Fleming
Raffaele Fodde
John Fontana
Jerome L. Fox
Bettina Francis
Christopher Free

Robert K. Freeland
John Gallagher
Frank Galvan
Rev. Richard E. Gardiner
Barbara & Albert J. Gelpi
Niles J. Gillen, O Carm
Owen Gillick
Kathleen & Charles Glatz
Maureen & Philip Gleason
Dolores Gracian
John F. Graham
Stanley Harrison
Bert E. Hartinger
Rev. Robert F. Hawkins
Rev. Robert J. Heidenreich
William Henderson
Kathleen Freeman Hennessy
Robert P. Ellis
John W. Hinkley Jr.
Constance A. Soma & Thomas F. Hinsberg
Myra J. Hoecker
Michael Hollerich
Dr. Louise Berner & Michael J. Holmberg
Richard L. Homan
Jane de Leon & Peter J. Horton
Rita L. Houlihan
Carol A. Hubert
Kenneth L. Hull
Cecil Hunt
Nadine A. & James E. Hunt
Mary & Daniel Hurley
Joseph E. Imbriaco
E. Neil Jensen
Ann F. Johnson
Milam J. Joseph
Rose Marie Joyce
Lee Buckley & Robert A. Jud
Linda & Ed Kaiel
Ruben deAnda & Dr. Mike Kaminski
Matthew R. Katrein
Barbara P. Keeley
Joan Keenan
Elizabeth Keogh
Barbara & Thomas Kiernan
Sr. Mary Kim
Vincent Kinney
Thomas J. Kramer
Simon Kress
Susan S. & Christopher Lane
Allyson & Patrick Larkin
Rev. Allan R. Laubenthal
Anna & Joseph Lauer
Rev. Edward R. Lavelle
Frederick Leising
David Lightner
Nancy Eisold Lindsay
James Lund
Thomas F. Mader
Rev. Paul Magnano
Mary & Anthony Mahowald
Sevile Mannickarottu
Teresa Marcy
Elizabeth & Jeremy Martin
Alice E. Mayhew
William McDonough
Rev. James G. McDougall
Catherine & James McFadden
Thomas J. McGovern
Carol C. & George E. McMullen
Rev. Robert Meissner
Sam R. Miglarese
Lucien M. Miller
Estelle L. & Robert J. Miller
William Mitchell
Walter Modrys, SJ
Rev. Richard J. Molter
John C. Moore
Rev. Neil J. Moore
Neal F. Moran
Marc Moreau
Rev. James H. Morse
Geraldine & Charles Mulligan
Bernard Murchland
Mary Jo & John David Murphy
Dr. Michael Murphy
John R. Neville
Jon Nilson
John A. Nolan
Kholoud & Dhafir E. Nona
Marjorie & George O'Brien
Jenny A. O'Brien
Rev. Raymond C. O'Brien
John E. O'Connell
Margaret Rafferty & Timothy G. O'Connor
Rev. Theodore Olson
Philip F. O'Mara
Rev. Donald J. Ophals
James M. O'Toole
Brian Palmer
Patrick P. Parke
Maryjane Parrine
David Parsons
Ann H. & Clyde V. Pax
Gene Elizabeth Harkless & Peter Farrell
Rev. Steven J. Peterson
Guy D. Pfeiffer
Joseph Picciano
Robert S. Pietrusiak
Elizabeth Poreba
Jeannette & James Post
James Pribyl
Anna Rahn
Rev. Boniface Ramsey
David Rauch
James S. Rausch
Raymond J. Ring Jr.
Lynn Robinson
Garrick Rollert
Margaret Mitchell & R. A. Rosengarten
Bruce Russett
Alice B. Scanlan
Stephen A. Scherr
Michael Schmied
Joe Schultz
Dr. Mary Segers
Msgr. Joseph F. Semancik
Rev. Richard J. Shannon
William G. Shlala
Jenaro D. Simpson
Norbert Sinski
Kathleen & Robert Snyder
Jeffry B. Spencer
P. Del Staigers
Charlene & G. Robert Stewart
Donald L. Stirling
Victoria L. & Timothy J. Strattner
Thomas Suddes
Clemens Suen
Daisy Swadesh
Ann Swaner
Barbara & Stephen Sweeny
Andrew Szegedy-Maszak
Elizabeth & Richard Valent
Philip R. Valera
William J. vanden Heuvel
Julio Vidaurrazaga
Kurt Vorndran
Patrick J. Waide Jr.
Daniel Walsh
Joan Walsh
Jim Wayne
Thomas C. Weston
Mary Ellen Williams
Nancy & Jim Wilson
Kenneth Woodward
James R. Worsley Jr.
Joseph Young
Frank A. Zabrosky

$125 - $249

Anonymous (28)
Robert T. Agee
Michael Alavanja
Gloria V. & George Allen
S. Robert Ambrose
Marianne Andreach
Michele Anthony
Mark Asselin
Jill & Pierre Auger
Irene Baldwin
Carolyn & Brent Banulis
Mary Ann Barletta
Madalyn Baumstark
Rev. Robert Beck
Lenore Belzer
Jane Bemko
Catherine & Dr. Richard Bendel
Mary & Paul Bendel-Simso
John J. Bernauer
Robert J. Biegen
Rose Blake
Barbara Ann Blessing
Barbara Bolton
David T. Bradley
Thomas F. Brannon
Mary K. Brantl
Rev. Don G. Brinkman
Rev. John Brophy
Maureen & Alden Brown
Theresa Krolikowski Buck
Thomas M Burger
James D. Burke
Ann Buttrick
Amity Pierce Buxton
Joseph F. Byrnes
Joanne & Robert Cabrera
Cachat Household
Anne C. & John P. Campbell
Eileen Canty
Rev. Roger J. Caplis
Mary & Daniel Capron
Carmelite Sisters
John Carville
Sheila Cavanaugh
David Cawley
John E. Chamberlain
Thomas & Nancy Chisholm
Kevin J. Christiano
Dr. Anthony Ciccariello
Patricia & Lawrence M. Clemens
John Clendenning
Eugene Clerkin
William Cloherty
Rev. Frank Coady
Frank Cody
Thomas Coffey
John Coggins
Robert J. Colacicco
Edward Cole
William A. Collier
Rev. Douglas G. Comstock
Stephanie & Eugene Conley
Noreen M. Connolly
Anne M. & Walter L. Constantine
Joan Cooney
Joseph J. Costa
Dorothy Courtis
Joseph Coyle
Rev. Donald Cozzens
Bernard Cummins
Joseph Curley
Gregory Cusack
Karen H. & Timothy J. Dacey
John Dahmus
Dr. Frank T. D'Alessandro
Margaret Dalton
Lenore d'Anjou
Mary Jane Davis
John P. Day
Robert J. Delaney
Dorothy & Walter Dempsey
Evelyn & James Dette
John E. Dolan
Ray Dombrowski
James P. Dougherty
Virginia M. & John J. Dowd
Constance Dubick
Jane H. Duffy
Col. Gerald H. Early, USA Ret.
Frank Earnest
Jane L. Engelke
Rev. John F. Fahey
Rev. Bernard C. Farley
Frank Farrell
Vincent Fausone Jr.
Diane M. Filbin
James L. Firmin
Rev. Charles Fischer
Daniel J. Flannery
Mary B. Flannery
Mary Ann Fleming
William Flounders
Msgr. James B. Flynn
Michael J. Flynn
Elizabeth J. Marrufo & Michael J. Flynn
Zsu & Richard Kadas-Foote
Joseph Frankenfield
Jill Frasier
Kathleen Frazee
Robert L. Fuller
Giuseppe Furfaro
Karen Fussy
Gilbert Gaeta-Symonds
Edward Gaffney
Joseph M. Gainza
Rev. F. Anthony Gallagher
Ann & Thomas Gannon
Rosemary & Dr. Efrain Garcia
Most Rev. James H. Garland
Regina Garvey
Claire Gaudiani
William Gianola
David Gibson
Paul Gifford
Juliana F. & Terence F. Gilheany
Garth Gillan
Valerie & Aaron W. Godfrey
Terry Golway
Hubert Gordon
Beatrice & Robert Gormley
Ruth & Jake Graves
Joseph Griffin
Maria Grimminger
Hugh Gwyn
Thomas G. Haas
Abigail & Yates Hafner
Lourdene Haley
Michael H. Halloran
Melanie Joyce Halvorson
Patricia Hampl
Rita & Jim Hannan
Janet Hannon
Kip Hargrave
Rev. Msgr. Robert M. Harris
Thomas C. Hart
Amy Hastings & Oliver Yarbrough
Sheila Hawkes
Thomas Hayes
Maryann Heimsath
Lynn & James Heitsch
Marie-Christine Hellin
William M. Henggeler
Stanley J. Herber
David Hillis
Raymond Hodges

John B. Hostage
George Howlett
Andrew Hoyal
Lucie H. & Lawrence W. Iannotti
Dr. Julian J. Irias
James McKee
Dorothy A. Jankowski
Stephanie Jones
Jane Joyce
Margaret Joynt
Ann Kabala
Peter P. Kalac
Jane G. & John T. Kearns
Rev. J. Patrick Keleher
Anne J. & Eugene J. Kelley
Mary C. & Joseph H. Kelly
Rev. Raymond Kemp
Kathleen Kennedy & Charles DiSalvo
Victoria & William Keogan
Christa & Scott Kerber
Mary Kerby
John B. Klaus
Phil Klay
Mary E. Klink
Stanley Kopacz
Richard J. Kostryka
Victor Kralisz
Jim Kuhns
Barbara Kummerer
Barry Ladendorf
Susan J. & Robert K. Landers
Raymond Latour
Rev. Edward J. Lauden
Jorge Lazareff
Susanne Lehne
Bernice B. Leracz
Susan B. Levangia
Marysue & Bob Livingston
William P. Loewe
Anne & Nicholas Lombardo
Patricia Lucey
Patricia & Donald Lund
Beatrice Mackenzie
C. Madayag
Diane & Tom Mader
Gregory Maher
John Manahan, SM
L. F. Manning
Janaan Manternach
William Marmion
George Marsh
Col. Douglas A. Marshall III
F. Martin
Joseph Masheck
Andrea Mastro
Angela M. Mathews
Rev. Richard Maynard
Donal McCarthy
Constance & Dr. Daniel J. McCarty
Mary & James McCue
David McCurdy
Myles T. McDonald
Rev. John P. McDonough
Robert M. McGarty
Patrick McGuinness
Ann & John McKay
Mary J. & Molly McLaughlin
Charles McNamara
M. Stewart Meagher
Julie Merklin
Eleanor Merrick
Leonard Milulski
John Mooney
Monica Moore
Cheryl & Steven Moore
Eugene L. Moretta
Anthony Morley
Edward N. Morris Jr.
William E. Mueller
Mary Pat Mulligan
Allison & Jo Murdach
Cornelius Murphy
James M. Murphy
Philip Murray
John Murtagh
Daniel M. Murtaugh
Thomas J. Mustillo
Chris Napolitan
Elizabeth & Stephen Nevin
Andrew S. Newman
Michael Norko
Rev. Robert J. Norris
Daniel A. Nuxoll
Andrea OBrien
Patricia A. O'Connor
Jeanne O'Dea
Peggy Oleynick
Mary L. Olson
Bernard L. O'Neill
Hugh O'Neill
James R. O'Neill
Msgr. Peter O'Reilly
William O'Shaughnessy
James V. Parker
Dr. Francis Parnell
Jane Parrine
Richard D. Parry
Mary Pat Peck
Ovidio Pennalver
Helen Penberthy
Anne Perkins
George M. Perkins
Vincent Petti
Mary & Joseph Pettit
Msgr. Michael J. Phillips
Lawrence Pirtle
Eugene Plevyak
Cecelia Price
Eleanor M. & Donald Price
William A. Prince
Margaret A. Quigley
Rev. P. Quinn
Jill Raitt
Joseph A. Reardon
Ann Redd
Rev. A. Paul Reicher
Robert Reiley
Michael T. Ridge
Joseph M. Rigolio
Michael B. Roark
Mary Ann Ronan
Joseph Ross
Stephen Rowan
John A. Rubino
Rev. David F. Ryan
Carolyn Sabatino
Gail Salvetti
Thomas J. Sas
Brian E. Scanlon
John Schoenberger
Barbara & John Schubert
Cynthia J. Schumacher
Ann Lessner Schwartz
Thomas Schweitzer
Ellen Flanagan & John W. Sedlander
Katie O'Sullivan See
Charles A. Sena
Carol A. Serafin
Georgianne Serico
Camilla C. & James L. Shumaker
Sidney Simmons
Mary Louise Sirignano
Maureen Sloan
E. J. Smith
Edmond C. Smith
Snyder Household
Patricia & Joseph Spampinato
Robert Speigel
Joanne Spellane
Betsy Spiering
Finbar Stanton
Joseph Steger
Rev. Paul W. Steller
Catherine H. Stepanek
Christina & Max Stephenson
Judy Ann & David J. Strollo
Christopher Struttmann
John Sullivan
Valerie & Robert Sutter
Ann M. Swanson
Marilyn Swatuck
Szabo Household
Judith A. Szot
Bernadette Tasher
Carol Taylor & Robert J. Barnet
Nancy Taylor
Robert J. Tennessen
Joel Thompson
Genevieve & Michael Timpane
Ronald Tobin
Kevin C. Toole
J. Tuohy
George B. Vania
Dr. Gerald A. Wagner
Mary E. Wald
Anata Walsh
John Coleman Walsh
Patrick Walsh
Margaret & Dr. Charles Wasilewski Jr.
Tom Wavro
Most Rev. Emil A. Wcela
Charles Weiser
Rev. Gerard R. Welsch
Kathleen & Thomas West
Holly A. Wiegman
Suzanne & John Wilcox
Rev. Lyle Wilgenbusch
Mark Joseph Williams
Anne & Edward N. Wilson
James Wolcott
James Wood
Rev. Robert Wozniak
Sandra Yocum

$50 - $124

Anonymous (92)
Risteard Ó Seanacháin
Rev. Andy Aaron
Fran Abbott
Peter Abdella
Michael Abele
Evelyn Adamo
John S. Adams
Adeolu Admoyo
Beth Adolph
Daniel J. Ahearn
Kathleen Albee
David Albertson
Mary M. Albright
Katie Alexander
Douglas Allaire
Marjorie Allard
Mary Ambrose
Nathaniel Costa & Aimeclaire Roche
Anthony D. Andreassi, CO
Mary & Howard Andrews
Maryann H. Antoine
Phil & Jane Argento
Mauna Arnzen
Martin J. Arsenault
Ellen Ashcroft
Albert C. Astone
Maureen Augusciak
Robert Backis
Olga Baeza
Francis Baiocchi
Raymond Baird
Douglas Balan
John Balestriere
Michelle Balog
Florence L. & Stephen P. Balog
Jayne A. Barber
Prof. Lawrence F. Barmann
Robert P. Barrett
Donald Barshis
Msgr. James O. Barta
Monika Bauer
Greg Baynie
Anita Beach
Eugenie R. Beall
Kathleen Beaufait
Adrian Beaulieu
Maureen O'Brien & Andrew Bechman
Raymond J. Behrendt
James Bell
Victoria Bell
Joan B. Bellan
Catherine M. Beltz
Helen C. Benton
Lynne Benz
Brother Robert Berger
Susan & Jim Berghoff
Gordon Bermant
Thomas Berna
Edgar D. Berners
Anthony Bertram
Antoinette Betschart
Dennis Bevan
Julia Bidell
Lawrence P. Bissen
Longinus Bitz
Carol-Ann Black
Andres Blanco
Liam Blayney
Ralph G. Bliquez
George R. Blomquist Jr.
Sally Bloun
Harry Bognich
Genevieve & Raymond Bogucki
David Bohr
Patrick J. Boland
Gordon Bollinger
Ann Bolton-Brownlee
Emily J. & Vincent S. Bonfanti
Larry J. Bongort
Molly Booth
Carol A. Boulanger
Pierre Bouvette
Martin Boylan
Mary C. Boys, SNJM
D. & G. Bracken
Rev. Daniel Brady
Jerry Brady
Robert J. Brady
Kathleen Braga
Dorothy J. Brandt
Stephanie Bravo
Patricia A. & Francis T. Brech
Patricia Breedlove
Stephen J. Breen
Bruno Breitmeyer
Gretchen Brennan
Sylvester Bretschneider
Frank Briganti
Peggy Briggs
Dr. Allen S. Brings
Jean Brinich & Martin Langlois
Nancy Bloomgarden & William Bronner
Daniel A. Brown
Frank Brown
Sue Brown
James Bruckman
Robert Bubash
Joseph A. Buckley
Kevin Buckley
Nicholas Bukowski
Ponce Bullard

Roland Bunda
Frank J. Burger
James Burke
John D. Burke
Kevin Burke
Mary Burke
William J. Burke Jr.
Barbara Burkhardt
Daniel M. Burns
Francis P. Burns
Jeffrey M. Burns
David Burr
John Burr
Nancy Burrows
Harry J. Bury
John Bushman
David S. Butler
Mary C. Butler
Raymond D. Butts
William Buzan
Rev. Dohrman W. Byers
Richard P. Byrne
Robert Byrne
John Caffrey
Anne Cagnina
Anthony Cahill
Edmund Cahill
Mary & Owen Cahill
Michael Cain
Ann & John Calcutt
Leonie Caldecott
Thomas Calder
Gloria Callaci & Lawrence Suffredin
Mary Lu Callahan
Charles F. Callanan
Louis Callegsri
Patricia Calvo
William Cameron
Lucy M. Campanella
Sandra L. Campbell
Mark Canavan
Joseph Canny
Will Capella
James Carl
Warren R. Carlin
Gregory Caron
Joe Caron
Rosalind Carr
Daniel Carroll
Thomas Randall Casey
Ellen & Stephen Casey
Virginia Cashin
Nora Cashion
E. A. Caspary
Rev. Thomas C. Caswell
Lisa Catanzaro & Dominic Preziosi
Gina Cattalini & J. Peter Nixon
Louis Celaya
John Cervini
Charles A. Cesaretti
Kristin Chambers
Brian Chanatry
Rev. Paul F. Chateau
Judith & Edward Chmielewski
Michael Chowning OFM
Dolores & Richard Christie
Charles W. Cicerale
Kenneth Cipriani
John Clark
Sarah May Clarkson
Robert V. Cleary
Mary V. Clemency
Matthew Clemons
Judith Clifford
Louise Clifford
Peter Cline
Robert Cloutier
Peter Coccia
Margaret Coffey
Kathryn A. & Ronald L. Cole
Dr. Ernest J. Collamati
Susan & William Collinge
Bob Comfort
Mary Gail Compton
Rev. Denis Condon
John Conlon
Dr. Maura Conlon-McIvor
Marie Conn
Helen R. Connell
James W. Connell
Michael Connelly
Nancy & James Connolly
Brendan Connors
Katharine & John M. Conroy
Bill Contardi
Paul Contino
Daniel Conway
Rev. Mike Cooney
Celia Cooper
Judith & Eugene Corning
Joe Corry
Evelyn & Nicholas Cort
Joe Corvino
Rev. C. Costello
M. Costello
Michael Costello
Bill Cotter
Rev. Alfred C. Cournoyer
Margaret F. & John P. Courtney
Kathy Cox
Susan & John Coyle
Doug Cramer
A. Paul Cravedi
Jay Craven
Daniel Crawford
Peter Crescimanno
Rev. George E. Crespin
Clyde R. Crews
John J. Criscione
John H. Croghan
David Cronin
Patricia A. Cross
James M. Crowe
Lorne Crozon
Anthony V. Cuccia
Anne Cummings
Ermelinda Cuono
Jack Curley
Miriam & Thomas Curnin
Jonatha Curr
Denise Curry
Frances Curry
Marion Curtis
Anthony Cuseo
Thomas D'Albro
Margaret D'Alesandro
Patrick Daly
Elizabeth M. & Robert W. Daly
William Damato
Kim Daniels
Rev. James M. Daprile
Betsy Darken
Rosemary Darmstadt
Ona Daugirdas
Charles N. Davis
Larry Davis
Mary Davis
Terry Davis
Virginia Anne Day
Fran de la Chapelle RSCJ
Louis de Strycker
Anthony Deany
Carol DeGroot
Robert DeLauro
Ralph S. Della Cava
Richard J. Dellamora
Bernard Delorey
Dennis Deslippe
Julian D'Esposito
John V. Di Bacco Jr.
Eric Diaz
Charles & Ellen Dickinson
Ann Farrell Diemer
Kathleen Digiorno
Louise Dimattio
Richard P. Dina
Kristi & Tom Dinell
John Dinges
Paul E. Dinter
Bill Dittrich
Karen Doherty
Timothy Dolan
Megan Eckerle & Anthony Domestico
Charles Domestico
Dominican Friars
James Donahue
Arthur C. Donart
Mary T. Donnelly
Charles Dorenkott
Ed Dorman
Tom Dorney
Elizabeth Dossa
Rev. Douglas Doussan
Valerie Downing
Dennis M. Doyle
Mike Doyle
Patricia & William J. Driscoll
John Dubay
Rev. John P. Duffell
Ed Duffy
Richard M. Duffy
Rev. Terrence Dumas
Arthur J. Dupont
Edward J. Dupuy
Thomas Durkin
J. R. Durnan
Carolyn Eady
Douglas Ebert
Jane & Robert Eberwein
Christopher Edelman
David Ederer
Mildred Edwards
Carol A. & David P. Efroymson
Jan Peter Eklund
Rosalie Elder
Georgia Elliott
Amy & Patrick Elliott
Mary English
Judy & Bob Ennis
Kenneth Eppes
Rev. William W. Ernst
Nick Ertz
Ricardo Esparza
Hillary Espree
Maribeth N. Eugene
Frances & Michael Evans
Mildred Evans
Ellen & Thomas Ewens
Fred & Carol Eyerman
Rev. Norman J. Faramelli
Jacki Farhood
Buck Farmer
Rev. Charles T. Farrar
Gene Harkless & Pete Farrell
Margot Fassler
Joseph A. Favazza
David Fedor
Christopher Fegan
Peg Fennig
Rev. Donald J. Fenske
Rev. Robert J. Fenzl
Blaine Ferris
Frank Ferrone
William J. Fice
Regina Fink
James Finley
Susan L. & Joseph L. Finn
Patrick J. Finnegan
Lee Fischler
Stephen Fisher
Patricia & Edmund Fitzgerald
J. Terrence Fitzgerald
Kathleen L. Fitzgerald
Margaret M. Fitzgerald
Mary & Stan Fitzgerald
Edward Fitzpatrick
Patrick F. Flaherty
Rev. William J. Flaherty
Paul Flament
Rev. Matthew J. Flatley
Michael Fleet
Kathleen Fletemeyer
Eric Flinn
Joachim K. Floess
John Flood
Richard Flynn
Patrick M. Folan
John W. Folcarelli
Jorge Martine Fonts
Cathy Ford & Everett Hoffman
Carol Fowler
Mark Francis
Bernard Freiland
Colette Stelly Friend
James P. Furey
Susan & Dick Gaffney
Bridget Gainer
Anne Murphy Gallagher
Edward J. Gallagher III
John G. Gallagher
Mary Gallagher & Brendan O'Flaherty
Maureen Gallagher
Richard A. Gallehr
Harold F. Gallivan III
Dr. John Gallus
Susan R. Gannon
Richard Garber
Sabrina Garbutt
Antonio Garcia
James Gardner
John P. Gargan
Sixto J. Garcia
James Garland
Thomas Garr
Robert Garver
Anne Marie Gavin
Elizabeth Gavula
John Geoffroy
Laura S. Gellott
Colleen Gibson
Cynthia Gibson
Rev. John J. Gildea
Michael Gill
Robert Gilliam
George B. Gilmore
Guillaume Giraud
Dr. Burtin Glennon
Rev. Mike Glockner
Patricia Goddard
Daniel Goessling
Carolyn & Dr. Rudolf Goetz
Stephen & Barbara Golder
Rev. Lorenzo Gonzales
Robert E. Goodfellow
Bob Gorman
Evelyn Gorman
Michael Gormly
Dennis Grabrian
William Grace
Ann Grady
Peter Green
William C. Green
William J. Green
Richard Grek
Joseph M. Griffin
William Griffin
Horace H. Grinnell
Timothy Grosser
Peggy Grossman
Christopher Grosso
Ann E. Grow

Katherine & Michael Gruber
Richard Gruber
Ed Grusheski
Maria Guanio
William B. Gubbins
Ronald B. Guenther
Most Rev. Thomas J. Gumbleton
Julius Gurney
Ramon Gutierrez
Marlene & Richard C. Haas
Rosanne Haggerty
Mary Rita Hagwell
Barbara Hale
C. Joseph Hamburger
Gertrude & Joseph V. Hamilton
Julia Dos Santos Hanlon
William T. Hanlon
Gretchen M. & Cletus J. Hansen
Mary & Rev. Larry Hansen
Jane Haproff
Rev. Paul Harman
Dick Harmon
Mary Harper
Patricia Harrigan
Michael Harrington
Tim Harris
Francis Hartmann
Daniel Hartnett
Barbara Havel
John Hawes
Frank Hayden
Christina Callahan Hayes
Michael Hayes
Katherine & Thomas Hayes
Colette & John Hazard
John Heard
Jerome F. Heavey
Mary & Lee Hebert
Peter Hebert
Barbara Houlihan Hecht
Anne Goodrich Heck
Joseph Heininger
Patricia Heinz
Theresa Heinz
Brian Hennigan
Mathleen Henson
Rev. Eugene Herbert
Dan Herdeman
Ann & David Hermsen
Joan & Don Hernon
Alejandro Herrera
Constance Hershey
Ellen Herzman
Arthur Hessburg
Michael Hickin
Richard Higgins
Kathleen Hill
Luke HIll
Joan Hilton
Jim Hinchen
Katherine Hirschboeck
Maria Hitchings
John M. Hofstede
Marie Hogan
Michael C. Holcomb
Winifred Holloway
Barbara Holman
Sybil Hopkins
Rev. Paul Hottinger
Mary Alice Houghton
Joseph Houska
Michael Hudock
Judith Z. Hughes
Monica Hughes
John S. Huitema
Catherine Hull
Ann D. Hungerman
Mary Hunt
Mary Hunt
William P. Hurlbut
Margaret H. Hurley
Virginia Hurst
Linda & Dr. John Huseman
Peter J. F. Hussey
Eliane & Walter Huwyler-Maier
Andy & Monika Hyatt
John Hyatt
Kimberly L. Hyatt
John Hynes
Rev. Robert Imbelli
John Infranca
Catherine Irby
Jerome H. Irsfeld
David Ivanov
Fr. Frank Ivey OFM
John J. Jachman
Fay Jackson
Adelaide Jacobson
Mary A. Jaeger
Bill Jankos
Shirley Jenks
Mary C. Jennings
Valerie Jennings
Daniel Jensen
Jesuit Community of San Francisco
E. Peter Johnsen
Douglas W. Johnson
Jim Johnson
Luke Timothy Johnson
Sandra & Robert Johnson
Bernard J. Johnston
Elizabeth G. Johnston
Geraldine Jones
Thomas Joyce
Robert & Annamarie Kachurek
Mary Beth Kamp
John Kane
Paula Kane
Kristine & Edward Kansa
Velma Kantrow
Frans Kasteel
Joanne B. & James M. Kee
John E. Keegan
Suzanne Keen
Dennis K. Keenan
Joan Keenan
Richard Keevy
Jerome Leiken
Brian Kelahan
Terry Kelleher
George Kelly
John Kelly
Mary Kelly
Alice & Terrance Kelly
Joseph Kendrick
Gail Kenna
Michael J. Kenna
William P. Kenney
Dennis Kenny
Gaye S. Kenny
John J. Kenny
Peter Kenny
Robert Kertz
Rev. Edward J. Kiernan
Eugene P. Kiernan
Helen K. & John W. Kilty
Donald King
Dennis K. Kirby
Klawitter Household
David Klemm
Kathleen Knight
Frank Knofler
Marlys & Ken Knuth
William N. Koch
Jon Koehler
Maria A. & Edward A. Kompare
Ellen Koneck
David Konschnik
JoAnn Kostelas
Pat Kosuth
Rev. Robert Kotlarz
Richard Kozak
M. Diane Krantz
Rev. Thomas Kraszewski
Mary M. Kresky
Lance Kronzer
Theodore Kruse
Tom Kubasik
Joanne M. & Thomas M. Kubiak
Kathleen S. & John F. Kutolowski
Shayne LaBudda
Rogelio Ladao
Dr. James W. LaFave
James Lafave
Veronica Laite
Luke Lamb
Margaret Langhans
Deacon John Langmead
David Lanning
Lanning Household
Thomas S. Laskey
Olga LaTessa
Mary Sweetland Laver
Robert P. Lawry
Louise & Aaron Lazare
Helene Le Bel
Germaine Leahy
Irene P. Leahy
Jerome Leary
Joseph Lechowicz
Dolores R. Leckey
Daniel J. Leer
Liz McCloskey
Ann Lemire
Thomas R. Lenert
David & Judith Lenihan
Sharon Leon
Chester Leonard
John Leonard
Amy E. Lepak
Richard Leverone
Marc E. Lewand
Therese Lewandowski
Rita & Robert Lewis
Ralph Liebelt
David Lien
Judy R. Little
John David Long
Long Household
Lester Long
Patrick Long
Joanne Love
David Lovely
John Lowrey
Guillermo Loyola
Rev. Tim Lozier
Kate Lucky
Al Luersen
Delaney Lundberg
Carol Schneller
Daniel F. Lundy
Jonathan Lunine
Mary & Francis Luongo
Jason Lupton
Joan Lynch
Paul Lynch
Michael Lyons
Kathleen Maas Weigert
Yvonne MacCormack
Elizabeth MacFarlane
Henry Maciejewski
Shirley Macklin
Michael T. MacNeil
John R. Madden
Raymond Maher
Gerald Mahon
John J. Mahoney
Mary Mahoney
Danuta Majchrowicz
Lawrence Makofske
Myrna & Michael Malec
Joanne M. & Robert A. Mallet
William Mallet
J. J. Malone
Matt Malone
Daniel J. Maloney
Maria C. & Thomas N. Maloney
Dan Mandell
Margaret & Louis Mangieri
Maryann Mangum
John J. Manning
Paul L. Marentette
Joe Marhoefer
Eileen Mariani
Tony Marinelli
Amy & Stanley Marko
Thomas W. Marren
James J. Marshall
Ronald Marstin
Richard Martin
Stephanie Martin
Paul Marx
Joseph Matt
Betty & Frank Maurovich
Charles Maynard
Cornelia A. &
Dr. Daniel S. Mazzuchi
Douglas McBride
Bob McCabe
Charles McCafferty
Kevin McCanna
Mary McCarthy
Patricia I. McCarthy
Mary & Robert McCarthy
Rev. Tom McCarthy
Colleen A. McCluskey
Rev. Brian McCormick
David McCormick
Kathleen & John McCoy
Jim McCrea
Maureen F. McDermott
Robert McDonald
Thomas McDonnell
Julia & W. Michael McDonnell
Gabrielle McDonough
Gabrielle & J. Edward McDonough
Kristin McDonough
Jerome E. McElroy
Mary Ellen McEvily
Alma McFarland
James D. McGarry
John McGlynn
Michael O'Neill McGrath, OSFS
Thomas McIntyre
Bill McKenna
Cecelia M. McLane
Kevin McLaughlin
James R. McLellan
Katherine McLoughlin
Patti McMahon
Rev. Thomas McNally CSC
Michael McNulty
Dr. Stephen J. McPhee
Dorothy, Julie & Edwin Meehan
Gail Meighan
Patricia Meldrum
Dr. Fernando A. Mele
Barbara Melton
Mary Lou Menches
Coleen Mennucci
John C. Mercier
Louis M. Mercorella
Harry J. Meyer
Patricia Meyer
Misael Enrique Meza Rueda SJ
Elizabeth E. Miller
Stephanie Miller
Steve Millies
Robert T. Milton
Robert P. Minichiello
Rev. William J. Minigan
The Ministry Institute at
Mater Dei
Ed Mirek
Maria Miro Johnson
Joseph Misner
Paul Misner
Joseph Misquez

Michael Missaggia
Liz Mitchell
Stanley Mizgala
Florence & Daniel Molloy
Rosemary Molloy
Beatrice Mondare
Constance & Joseph Mondel
Robert M. Mondoy
Ronald N. Montaperto
Patricia A. & John J. Montesi
Anne G. Moore
Bart Moore
Robert Moore
Thomas Moore
Alice Moormann
Manuela Romero & Alfonso Morales
John T. Moran
Anita Morgan
Sara L. Morrison
Rosemary Morse
Richard Morton
Maureen & Paul Moses
Patrick Mowery
Carolyn R. Mullally
Matthew P. Mullane
William J. Mulloy
Mary & Roger Mulvihill
Daniel C. Murphy
Dr. Dennis K. Murphy
Elizabeth Murphy
Eugenia Murphy
John J. Murphy
Michael Murphy
William Murphy
Joseph G. Murray
Gordon Myers
Rev. Kevin Nadolski OSFS
Nahser Household
Mike Nash
Patrick Nash
Virginia Navarro
Robert Nedswick
Susan Nedza
Colette & Michael Needham
Herbert J. Nelson
Wiliam Nessmith
Ralph Neuhaus
Thomas V. Nicastro
Patrick Nichelson
Matthew Savio Nicholas
Francis Nichols
Deborah Nicklas
Burke Nixon
Wayne Nohelty
A. J. Nolan
Michael Nolan
Rev. Mark L. Noonan
William Noth
Marie Nowakowski
Carl O'Byrne
Robert E. Obach
Anne E. O'Brien
Christopher O'Brien
David J. O'Brien
Elizabeth O'Brien
John O'Brien
Michael O'Connell
Br. Mark O'Connor
Arlene Odenwald
Hugh O'Donnell
Rev. William J. O'Donnell
Dierdre O'Donnell-Griswold
Jerome Oetgen
Joseph E. O'Gara
Kathleen & Edward Ogrin
Frank O'Hara
Janet O'Keefe
Sr. Mary Edith Olaguer
Bert Olechnowicz
James Olesen
Maggie Olson
Kathryn O'Malley
Jean Omeara
James E. Oravetz
James K. O'Reilly
Margaret O'Reilly-Landry
Marey O'Rourke
Sally & Michael Orr
Nancy Rae Ortiz
Dennis Ortman
James Ortmeier
Richard Osburn
Micheal O'Siadhail
Ted Ostrowski
John O'Sullivan
Mary Ott
Our Lady Queen of Peace Church
Edie Overduin
William Owens
John A. Paar
M. Padilla
Camille Page
Christine Paige
Joseph Palka
Adelaide Palmer
Rosemary Palms
John Paone
Darlyne Pape
Cathleen & Ronald J. Paprocki
William Paré
Pamela Park
Rev. Theodore Parker
Patricia Parrish
Barbara Parsons
Martha Pascual
Patricia Patterson
Margaret Patterson
William Pearson
Bette & William Pease
Mary M. & David M. Pedersen
David Penchansky
Raquel Perez
Michael Peroz
Terese Perry
Steven Pesavento
James Petrie
Charles W. Pfeiffer
William Phelps
Maryann Picard
Robert P. Piccus
Karl Pister
Francis Pizzarelli
Dr. Joseph J. Plaud
Ronald L. Plue
Matthew Pope
Judith E. Poston
Rev. Thomas Poth
Timothy P. Shriver
Margaret A. Potter
Deacon John Powers
Robert Powers
John Prados
Meldon Preusser
Mary Priniski
Margaret S. Kowalsky & Bernard G. Prusak
Rocco Pugliese
Robert Pugsley
Kirstin Valdez Quade
Rita Quigley
Carolyn Quilter
Brendan Quinn
Maggie Quinn
Thomas Quinn
William J. Quinn
Katherine Radeka
Marirose A. & John T. Radelet
Rev. Raymond M. Rafferty
Susan & Stephen Ragatz
Alexander Ramos
Barry & Donna Rankin
Martha Rapp
Jack Raslowsky
Thomas Raycroft
Sylvia T. Rdzak
Rev. Michael F. Reagan
Paul Reagan
Kathleen M. Reardon
Mary Reath
Michael Regan
Michael Reichel
Justin Reidy
Thomas Reilly
Claudia M. Reimer
Robert Reinhart
Richard Reister
Paul Rennick
Alicia Resnick
Joan Reuss
Jorge Reyes
Raymond Reyes
Barbara Reynolds
Dr. Helen K. Rhodes
Dr. William C. Rice
Ann Wall Richards
Gail M. & George P. Richardson
Joseph Richardson
Barbara Rico
Victoria Ries
Pat Riestenberg
Sheila & Philip Riley
M. M. Riordan
Richard Rismiller
Louis Robards
Ernest F. Roberts Jr.
John Roberts
Barbara Robless
Rev. Alfred Rockers
Bob Roddy
Kevin P. Roddy
Gary Rodgers
Flor Rodríguez Gomez
Rita Rodriguez
Judson Rogers
Raymond Rolwing
Robert Romano
Ann Romero
Elizabeth Ropa
Marie K. Rose
Michael Rosenfeld
Gloria Romero Roses
Michael Rowe
Robin Rowland
Charles Royer
Joseph Ruane
Fr. Charles Rubey
Ernest Rubinstein
John I. Rudolph
Rev. Edward J. Ruetz
Cheryl S. & Rimantas A. Rukstele
Fred Ruse
Aloysius Rusli
Edmond Ryan
Gail Ryan
Michael Ryan
Patricia Ryan, CSJ
Laura Rybski
Florianne Rzeszewski
Evelyn Saal
Alida Sahwell
Mary M. & Dr. John R. Salata
Chris Sales
John V. Salvati
Gerald M. Sande
Maureen Santiago
Rosemary Santoli
Jeffrey L. Sarkies
Eugene & Colleen Sathre
Joan & Ryan Sattler
Glenn Sauer
Robert W. Sauter
Melissa Sawyer
Robert E. Sawyer
John Scanlon
M. Colleen Scanlon
Irene & Michael J. Schaefer
Frances & S. Schaefer
James M. Schellman
Mary H. Scheuer
Timothy P. Schilling
Andrew Schirrmeister
Daniel L. Schlafly
Aurora Camacho de Schmidt & Arthur Schmidt
Philip Schmidt
Richard Schmidt
Ann Schneeman
Rev. Bernard Schneider
Rev. Nicholas Schneider
Mark Schoen
Charles Schramm
Catherine Schreiber
Frances Schueler
Gregory Schuler
Mary Schultz
Paul Schumacher
Margaret B. Schwob
SCJ Community
Laurel & Ralph Scorpio
James Scott
Mary E. Scott
Ellen & Edmund See
Rev. Richard E. Senghas
Rev. George A. Seuferling
Rev. John Shanahan TOR
Shanley & Associates LLC
John Jay Shannon
Joan T. Sheehy
Marilyn Sheppard
James Sherald
Kevin J. Sheridan
John F. Shine
Eileen Shirey
Joyce Nash Shivers
Monica Sidor
Meg Siewert
Mary Jane Silvia
John Simon
R. Matthew Simon
Marilyn & Carl Simone
Michael Sinclair
Mary Ellen Sinkiewicz
Frank Siroky
Sisters of Providence
Matthew Sitman
Dolores Skelly
Ellen Skerrett
John A. Slater
William H. Slavick
Michael Slusser
Dennis Smith
Dr. Donna Smith
Kevin Smith
Dr. Martin Smith
James Snyder
Kevin Somerville
Inigo Soriano
Jamie Soto
Jean Soto
Melanie Sovine
C. Spiller
Mary & John Spollen
Jackie & Tony Staley
Laurence B. Stanton
Barbara Steinbeigel
Andrew Steiner
John M. Steiner
Paul D. Steinke
Rev. Mark S. Stelzer
Rev. Daniel Stempara
Margaret Stewart
Paul Stinson
Arthur Stoeberl
Rev. John Stowe
Ivan Strenski
Mary H. Stuart

Mariann & Gregory Stupka
Edward Sullivan
Edward C. Sullivan
Tommy Sullivan
Super Household
Cynthia Suprenant
Daniel Susek
Dr. Michael Swords
Rev. Stan Szczapa
George Tabisz
Richard J. Taigue
Greg Takser
Anthony Tambasco
Natali Tarallo
Arthur R. Taylor
Fred Teichert
Carol Teodori
C. Testa
James H. Thessin
David Thompson
David D. Thompson
Jerome Tiller
Nancy Tim
William Tinney
Janmarie Toker
Deacon Bill Toller
Santiago Torres
Suellen & Eugene Tozzi
Bernard Tracey
Arthur Trezise
Mark Trifiro
Claire Trivisonno
Michael Troy
Richard Troy
Sandy & Raymond Trybus
Patrick M. Tucker
Janet & Louis Tullo
Maura G. Tyrrell
Edward T. Ulrich
Brian L. Ulrickson
Robert Unferth
Rev. Robert A. Uzzilio
Aaron Van Dyke
Rudolph Van Puymbroeck
Mary Varhue
Louis Velasquez
Marjorie T. & Paul A. Vermaelen
John Vespo
Mary Lyn & John Villaume
Kathy L. Villeneuve
Marilyn Vitale
Anne Vogel
Jeffrey von Arx
Richard Waddington
Robert J. Wagner
Revs. Deborah & Walter Wagner
Catherine Walker
Margaret Wallenberger
Holly & Joseph Walls
Kathleen Walsh
Maryann Walsh
Patrick Walsh
Georgene R. Walters
A. J. Ward
Frank Wasserman
Rev. William J. Watters, SJ
Roberta & Ernest Webby Jr.
Mary & Edmund Wehrle
John B. Wehrlen
Robert J. Weiler
Barbara Weithaus
James F. Welby
Frank M. Wessling
Rev. John E. Wessling
Cricket Weston & David Molinaro
Greg Wyandt
Joseph Whalen
Paul Wheeler
Xavier Wiechers
Frances & Alan Wiener
Mary Ellen & Charles K. Wilber
Alexander W. Wilde
Ann Wilger
Anthony M. Wilhoit
Gerald Williams
Dustin Wilson
Gene Wilson
Jean Wilson
Robert Wilson
Stephen E. Wilson
Thomas A. Wilson
Christian Wiman
Ann Wingert
Trudy & Fred Winne
Sean Winters
Robert D. Wisenbaugh, SJ
Carl Wisniewski
Judy A. Wittkop
Steve Wittman-Todd
Joanne Wohlmuth
Catherine O'Hagan Wolfe
Tom Wollenman
Richard L. Wood
Eileen M. Dooley & Denis J. Woods
Robert Worth
Wayne P. Wright
Rev. Bob Wyatt
Carol & Nick Wynn
Donatta M. Yates
Robert R. Yohannan
Cynthia Yoshitomi
Daniel L. Young
Lee Zadra
Aldona J. Zailskas
Patricia K. Zapp
Franklin Zawacki
Justin B. Zawadzki
James R. Zazzali
Jacqueline Zbaracki
James Zeller
Robert Zimmerman
Don Zirkel
Stephen Zoretic

SUSTAINING ASSOCIATES

These donors are providing *Commonweal* with regular monthly support by credit card. We are grateful for the financial stability they provide.

For more information, please visit ***www.cwlmag.orglsustaining***

Anonymous (14)
Mauna Arnzen
Robert Backis
Irene Baldwin
Marie J. Barry
Rose Blake
John Borst
Becky & Ed Boudway
William Bowling
Allanah Boyle
Mary C. Boys, SNJM
D. & G. Bracken
Gretchen Brennan
Jean Brinich & Martin Langlois
Ed & Kathy Buechel
Laura Burt-Nicholas
David Butler
Mary C. Butler
Anthony Cahill
Michael Cain
Anne & Brian Carroll
Dr. Anthony Ciccariello
William A. Collier
Helen R. Connell
Gerda & John Cunningham
Gregory Cusack
Nancy Dallavalle
Maureen & Mark Dalton
John Docherty
Joseph Dubanowich
Amy & Patrick Elliott
Nicholas Farnham
Peg Fennig
Blaine Ferris
Mary Ann Fleming
William Flounders
John W. Folcarelli
Joseph Frankenfield
Giuseppe Furfaro
Takaoki Fusejima
Joseph M. Gainza
Richard Garber
Claire Gaudiani
Laura S. Gellott
Cynthia Gibson
Garth Gillan
Owen Gillick
Terry Golway
Abigail & Yates Hafner
Rita & Jim Hannan
Mary & Rev. Larry Hansen
William M. Henggeler
Thomas J. Higgins
Raymond Hodges
Marie Hogan
Mary Hoffman Hunt
Joseph E. Imbriaco
Douglas W. Johnson
Luke Timothy Johnson
Kristine & Edward Kansa
Susan Keane & Richard Griffin
Joanne B. & James M. Kee
Rev. J. Patrick Keleher
William P. Kenney
Elizabeth Keogh
Christa & Scott Kerber
David Klemm
Mary E. Klink
Peter Kountz
Timothy Kunz
Kaulie Lewis
Rev. Tim Lozier
Patricia Lucey
Tom & Diane Mader
Donal McCarthy
Michael McCauley
Kathleen & John McCoy
Julia & W. Michael McDonnell
Martin McElroy
John McGlynn
Monica & Thomas McGonigle
Jean McManus & John McGreevy
Donald McKay
Jeni McLaughlin
Robert Meave
Adrianna Melnyk
Barbara Melton
Julie Merklin
Steve Millies
Ronald Montaperto
Robert Moore
Monica Moore
Maureen & Paul Moses
Allison & Jo Murdach
Elizabeth Murphy
Joseph G. Murray
Daniel M. Murtaugh
Thomas J. Mustillo
Gina Cattalini & J. Peter Nixon
John A. Nolan
Dolly Nunez
Judith & Dennis O'Brien
John E. O'Connell
Bert Olechnowicz
Brian Palmer
Loretta Pehanich
George M. Perkins
Michael Peroz
Robert P. Piccus
Lawrence Pirtle
Elizabeth Poreba
John Prados
Cecelia Price
Dennis H. Reeder
Robert Reiley
Barbara Rico
Irene & Joseph Roach
Michael B. Roark
Vincent Rougeau
Evelyn Saal
John V. Salvati
Gail Salvetti
Valerie Sayers & Christian Jara
Brian E. Scanlon
Timothy P. Schilling
Michael Schmied
Ann Lessner Schwartz
Katie O'Sullivan See
Marsha Smith
Tanya Solov
Melanie Sovine
P. Del Staigers
Jackie & Tony Staley
Mary H. Stuart
Clemens Suen
Andrew Szegedy-Maszak
Arthur Trezise
Dana & Marc vanderHeyden
Holly & Joseph Walls
Ms. Holly A. Wiegman
James Wood
Robert Wyatt
Franklin Zawacki
Robert Zimmerman

THE EDWARD SKILLIN SOCIETY

Members of the Skillin Society are providing for *Commonweal*'s future through bequests and other forms of planned giving.

For more information, please visit ***www.cwlmag.org/bequests***

Suzanne McSorley & Thomas Baker
Richard J. Barber
Mary Barry
Vivian Segall & Paul Baumann
Alice & Robert Beezat
George D. Cody
Mig Boyle
D. & G. Bracken
Ruth E. Brenner
Helen R. Connell
Ellen & Thomas Ewens
Gail Lambers & Peter Fagan
Daniel J. Flannery
Mary Anne Ford
Sally C. Fullman
Frank Galvan
Mary Jane & Bruce Hall
Rev. Robert L. Hazel
Thomas J. Higgins
Dorothy A. Jankowski
Christa & Scott Kerber
Donald King
Mary E. Klink
Judith & Paul Kolosso
Barbara Kummerer
Angela M. Mathews
David K. McGuire
Marcia & James T. Morley Jr.
Margaret F. Mullin
Daniel M. Murtaugh
Dr. John Neff
William P. Neis
Judith & Dennis O'Brien
Robert P. Piccus
Rev. David J. Riley
Mary H. Scheuer
Msgr. James F. Spengler
Mary Alice & Vincent Stanton
Ann T. Straulman
Charles J. Sullivan
Dana & Marc vanderHeyden
Michael Vertin
Waldemar H. Wenner
Mariellen Whelan
Eileen M. Dooley & Denis J. Woods

THE COLLEGE SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAM

This program makes free subscriptions available to promising undergraduate and graduate students at dozens of Catholic and secular campuses.

For more information, please visit ***www.cwlmag.org/college***

Anonymous (13)
Lillian M. Adami
Gloria V. & George Allen
Maryann H. Antoine
Suzanne McSorley & Thomas Baker
Florence L. & Stephen P. Balog
Robert P. Barrett
Mary & Paul Bendel-Simso
John J. Bernauer
Robert J. Biegen
Harry Bognich
Barbara Bolton
Joseph J. Boyle Jr.
Thomas F. Brannon
Mary K. Brantl
Neil & Janet Brown
Thomas Burger
James Bush
Ann Buttrick
Joseph F. Byrnes
Mark S. Callahan
Eileen Canty
Rev. Roger J. Caplis
Ellen & Stephen Casey
Hans Christoffersen
Rev. Frank Coady
Frank Cody
William A. Collier
Joan Cooney
Dorothy Courtis
Peter Crescimanno
John H. Croghan
David Cronin
Gregory Cusack
Mr. & Mrs. John Dahmus
Thomas D'Albro
Robert J. Delaney
Anthony J. DiStefano
Ann Doig
Ray Dombrowski
Ed Dorman
Mike Doyle
Patricia & William J. Driscoll
Susan & Thomas Druffel
Constance Dubick
Catherine L. Dubreuil & Joseph S. Merola
Jane H. Duffy
Diane & Terrence Dugan
Rev. Msgr. William E. Elliott
Denise M. Errico & John G. Esmerado
Susan L. & Joseph L. Finn
Thomas Finn
Kathleen L. Fitzgerald
Patrick F. Flaherty
William Flounders
Raffaele Fodde
Mary Anne Ford
Kathleen Frazee
John G. Gallagher
Ann & Thomas Gannon
Rev. Richard E. Gardiner
Elizabeth Gavula
Barbara & Albert J. Gelpi
Niles J. Gillen, O Carm
Maureen & Philip Gleason
Ruth & Jake Graves
Peter Green
Maria Grimminger
Mary Jane & Bruce Hall
Michael H. Halloran
Patricia Hampl
Janet Hannon
Robert L. Harlow
Bert E. Hartinger
Sheila Hawkes
Margaret M. Healy
Jerome F. Heavey
Rev. Robert J. Heidenreich
Maryann Heimsath
John W. Hinkley Jr.
Jane de Leon & Peter J. Horton
Carol A. Hubert
Kenneth L. Hull
Kathleen & Patrick Jordan
Peter P. Kalac
Mary Beth Kamp
Jane G. & John T. Kearns
Dr. John S. Kelly
Rev. Edward J. Kiernan
Barbara & Thomas Kiernan
Mary Kim
John B. Klaus
Pat Kosuth
Robert Kotlarz
Thomas J. Kramer
Jim Kuhns
Frederick Leising
Judy R. Little
Betty L. Lovett
Patricia Lucey
Denis G. Mahoney
Margaret & Louis Mangieri
F. Martin
Douglas McBride
James H. McCarthy
Rev. Brian McCormick
Mary & James McCue
Thomas J. McElligott
Catherine & James McFadden
Monica & Thomas McGonigle
Kathleen & Dr. Patrick McGreevy
Mary J. & Molly McLaughlin
Deacon Bartholomew J. Merella
Harry J. Meyer
Misael Meza Rueda
John R. Miles
Estelle L. & Robert J. Miller
Michael Missaggia
William Mitchell
Neal F. Moran
Eugenia Murphy
Daniel R. Murray
Daniel M. Murtaugh
Elizabeth Oakes
Philip F. O'Mara
James K. O'Reilly
Margaret Patterson
Vincent Petti
Mary & Joseph Pettit
Rev. P. Quinn
Rev. Raymond M. Rafferty
David Rauch
James S. Rausch
Sylvia T. Rdzak
Rev. A. Paul Reicher
Rev. Philip D. Reifenberg
Robert Reiley
Joseph M. Rigolio
Theodore R. Robb
Stephen Rowan
Charles Royer
John A. Rubino
Dr. Valerie C. Scanlon
Mary H. Scheuer
Cynthia J. Schumacher
Norbert Sinski
Maureen Sloan
E. J. Smith
Kathleen & Robert Snyder
Betsy Spiering
Mary Alice & Vincent Stanton
Rev. Paul W. Steller
Charles J. Sullivan
John Sullivan
Ann Swaner
Marilyn Swatuck
Arthur Trezise
Dana & Marc vanderHeyden
Susanne Washburn
Mariellen Whelan
James Wolcott
Joseph Young
Franklin Zawacki

The Antics of the Turnips

ST. RAFAEL ARNÁIZ

Born in 1911, Rafael Arnáiz was a young architecture student in Madrid when he first visited the Trappist monastery of San Isidro de Dueñas in Venta de Baños, Spain, and fell in love with the contemplative life. After entering the monastery, which he affectionately called "La Trapa," as a novice in 1934, Rafael was forced to leave formation several times for medical treatment for his diabetes. He ultimately returned to La Trapa as an oblate, unable to take vows and spending most of his time in the infirmary. An artist, mystic, and writer, Rafael kept illustrated journals detailing his spiritual life. Rafael died of diabetes in 1938 at the age of twenty-seven, and his posthumously published writings contributed to his reputation for holiness. He was canonized in 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI.

When Rafael wrote the following entry, he was twenty-five years old. He had just been found medically unfit to serve in the Spanish army, into which he had been drafted during the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War earlier that year. With the monastery empty of its other young men, and threatened by anticlerical violence, Rafael wondered how his silent suffering as a sick Trappist oblate could still serve God. In this entry, God gives him a response.

—Catherine Addington

Three in the afternoon on a rainy December day. It's time to work, but since it's Saturday and very cold, we aren't going out into the fields. We're going to work in the warehouse where we wash lentils, peel potatoes, chop collard greens, etc. We call it the "laboratory." There is a long table there, with some benches, a window, and a crucifix up above.

It's a melancholy day. The clouds are rather gloomy, and the winds somewhat strong. A few drops of water begrudgingly lap at the windowpanes. Pervading it all is a chill befitting the country and the times.

Truth be told, other than the chill—which I can feel in my frozen feet and frigid hands—you could almost say I've imagined all this, since I've hardly even looked out the window. The afternoon that faces me today is murky, and everything seems murky to me. Something is disturbing my silence, and it seems as if some little devils are determined to aggravate me with what I'd call memories.... Waiting with patience.

A knife has been placed in my hands, and a basket in front of me, full of some kind of big white carrots that turn out to be turnips. I had never seen them raw, they're so big...and so cold.... Well, nothing to be done about that! All we can do is peel them.

Time passes slowly and my knife does too, moving between their skin and flesh, leaving the turnips perfectly peeled.

The little devils continue to wage war on me. To think that I left my house to come here in this cold and peel these stupid turnips!! It is a truly ridiculous thing, this business of peeling turnips with the seriousness of a magistrate in mourning.

A tiny, shrewd devil infiltrates me and from deep within it reminds me subtly of my house, my family, and my freedom...which I left behind in order to lock myself in here with these lentils, potatoes, collard greens, and turnips.

It's a melancholy day...I'm not looking out the window, but I can guess as much. My hands are chapped red as the little devils; my feet are frozen solid.... And my soul? Lord, perhaps my soul is suffering a little. But it doesn't matter... let us take refuge in silence.

Time kept on going, along with my thoughts, the turnips, and the cold; then suddenly, quick as the wind, a powerful light pierced my soul.... A divine light, lasting but a moment.... Someone saying to me, "What are you doing?!" What do you mean, what am I doing? Good Lord!!...What a question! Peeling turnips...peeling turnips!... "But why?".... And my heart, leaping, gave a wild answer: I'm peeling turnips for love...for love of Jesus Christ.

Now, there's nothing I could say to make anyone understand this clearly, but I can say that somewhere inside, deep inside my soul, a very great peace took the place of the turmoil that had been there before. All I can say is: just thinking about the fact that in this world, we can make the smallest actions into acts of love for God...that closing or opening our eyes in His name can earn us a place in heaven...that peeling a few turnips for true love of God can give Him as much glory, and give us as many merits, as the conquest of the Indies; thinking about how only through His mercy do I have the great fortune to suffer something for His sake...it fills the soul with such joy that if I had let myself be carried away by my interior impulses at that moment, I would have started flinging turnips in the air, trying to communicate the joy of my heart to these poor root vegetables...I would have made a miraculous show of juggling the turnips with my knife and apron.

I laughed at those little red devils until I cried, and frightened by my change in attitude, they hid among the sacks of chickpeas and a basket of cabbage that was sitting there.

What do I have to complain about? Why should I be sad over what is a cause for joy alone? To what more can a soul aspire, than to suffer a bit for a crucified God?

We are nothing and we are worth nothing; one moment we'll be overwhelmed by temptation, and then the next we'll

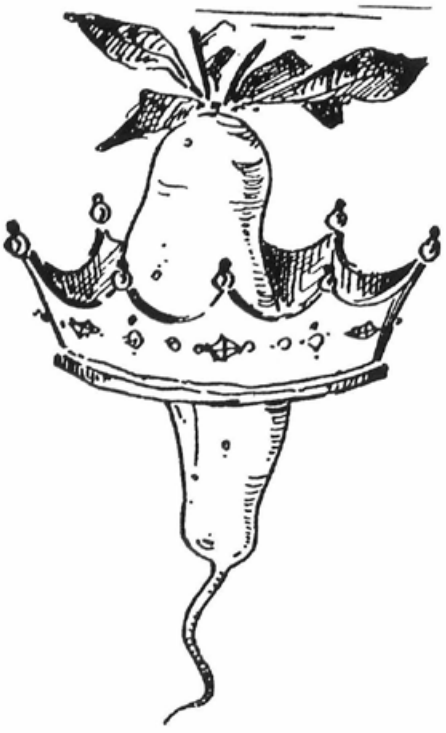


Illustration by
Saint Rafael Arnáiz Barón

be flying on the wings of consolation at the smallest touch of divine love.

When work started, clouds of sadness covered the sky. My soul was in pain at finding itself on the cross; everything weighed it down: the Rule…work…silence…the absence of the sun on such a sad, grey, cold day. The wind rattling the windowpanes, the rain, the mud…the absence of the sun. The world…so far away, so far…and all the while I was peeling turnips without thinking about God at all.

But everything passes, including temptation…. Time has passed, it is already time to rest, there is light again, and I don't care anymore if the day is cold or cloudy or windy or sunny. All I care about is peeling my turnips, peaceful, happy, and content, contemplating the Virgin, blessing God.

What does a moment's regret matter, an instant's worth of suffering? All I can say is that there is no sorrow that will not be repaid, if not in this life then in the next; and in reality, so little is asked of us in order to gain heaven. Perhaps it is easier in La Trapa than it is out in the world—but not because of this or that state of life, for in the world they have the same means of offering something to God. It's just that the world is distracting, and a great deal goes to waste.

People are the same there as they are here; our ability to suffer and to love is the same; wherever we go, we shall carry a cross.

May we be able to make the most of our time…. May we be able to love that blessed cross that the Lord places in our path, whatever it may be, no matter what.

Let us make the most of the little things in our everyday life, our ordinary life…. There is no need to do great things to become great saints. Making the little things great is enough.

In the world, people waste many opportunities, but the world is distracting…. It is worth just as much to love God by speaking as it is to love Him in Trappist silence; it is a matter of doing something for Him…keeping Him in mind…. Location, place, occupation are irrelevant.

God can make me just as holy through peeling potatoes as through governing an empire.

What a shame that the world is so distracted…because I have seen that people are not evil…and that *everyone* suffers, but they don't know how to suffer…

If they would lift their eyes a little to look beyond the frivolity, beyond that layer of false joy with which the world hides its tears, beyond their ignorance of who God is, if they were to lift their eyes up above…surely what happened to that monk with the turnips would happen to them too…. Many tears would be wiped away, many sorrows would become sweet, and many crosses would be embraced as offerings to Christ.

When work ended, I placed myself in prayer at the foot of Jesus, dead on the cross…. There, at his heels, I left a basket of clean, peeled turnips…. I had nothing else to offer him, but anything offered with one's whole heart is enough for God, be it turnips or empires.

The next time I peel root vegetables again, whatever they may be, even if they are cold and frozen, I ask that Mary not allow those little red devils to get near me and afflict me. Rather, I ask her to send me angels from heaven, so that as I peel, they might carry the work of my hands in theirs, and place red carrots at the feet of the Virgin Mary; at the feet of Jesus, white turnips, and potatoes and onions, and cabbage and lettuce.

Anyhow, if I live in La Trapa for many years, I will turn heaven into a kind of vegetable market…and when the Lord calls me and says to me, "that's enough peeling, drop the knife and apron and come enjoy the fruits of your labor"… when I see myself in heaven among God and the saints, and so many vegetables…my Lord Jesus, I cannot help but laugh. *Ave Maria.*

Excerpt from Saint Rafael Arnáiz: Collected Works, *edited by Sr. María Gonzalo, OCSO, and translated by Catherine Addington, forthcoming from Cistercian Publications, spring 2022. Reproduced with permission from Liturgical Press. The translator acknowledges Fr. Edmund Waldstein, O.Cist., for the title "The Antics of the Turnips."*

COURTESY OF THE MONASTERY OF SAN ISIDRO DE DUEÑAS

THE Commonweal PODCAST

"A paragraph is an incredibly complex thing—it fires up the neurons like nothing else in the world"

— GEORGE SAUNDERS
Ep. 51 - Story as Ceremony

Visit **commonwealmagazine.org/podcast**

Subscribe now:

Apple Podcasts **Spotify**

Rise Up and Walk:
Catholicism and Health Care across the Globe

April 16-18, 2021 • Online via Zoom

Perhaps the world's largest provider of health care, the Catholic Church continues Jesus' legacy of healing through sophisticated hospital systems and small rural clinics. But today, there is a widening gap between technologically advanced medicine and the needs of the desperately poor. This conference addresses some of the most pressing issues facing the world's Catholic health providers and gathers speakers from Uganda, India, Ecuador, South Korea, the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Kenya, and Zambia. Topics include

- Catholic health care services and strategies
- biblical and theological narratives of health and healing
- the relationship between Western and non-Western traditions of medicine
- healing trauma and invisible wounds
- Catholic partnerships between the global South and global North

Keynotes

Barbra Mann Wall, PhD, RN, FAAN

Thomas A. Saunders III Professor of Nursing, University of Virginia (Charlottesville, VA)
Author, *Into Africa: A Transnational History of Catholic Missions & Social Change*

David Cayley

Award-winning journalist & former host, CBC Radio One's "Ideas" (Toronto)
Author, *Ideas on the Nature of Science*

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

MORE INFORMATION
http://worldcathweek.depaul.edu

DePaul University

WORLD CATHOLICISM WEEK 2021 APRIL 16-18