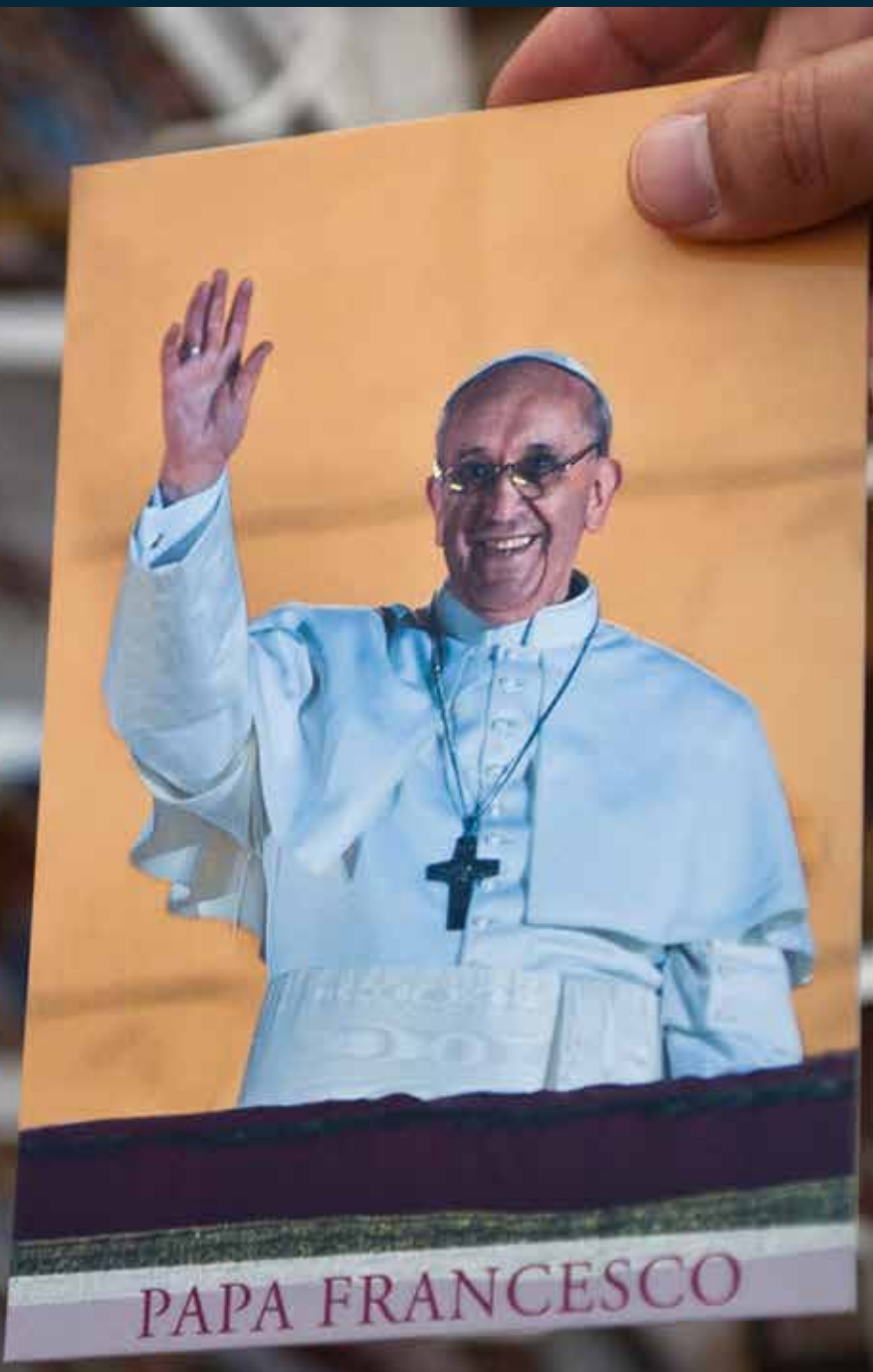
A Review of Religion, Politics & Culture

Commonweal

APRIL 12, 2013



HABEMUS PAPAM

PAUL MOSES

JULIA YOUNG

TOM QUIGLEY

THE EDITORS

THEOLOGICAL BOOKS

Leo O'Donovan on
Theology & Censorship

Michael Higgins on
G. K. Chesterton

William Portier on
George Weigel

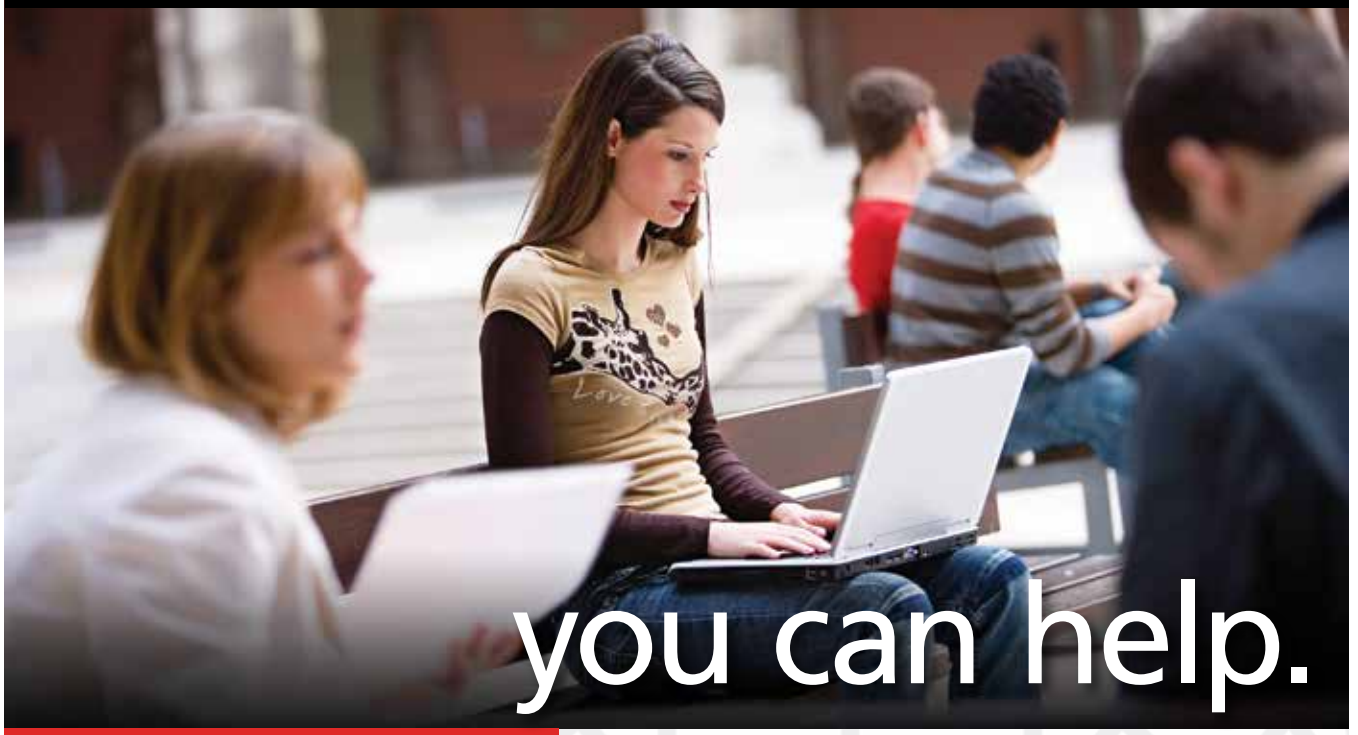
Luke Timothy Johnson on
Balthasar

Rita Ferrone on
Vatican II

$3.95 US/$4.50 CAN

www.commonwealmagazine.org

If you want *Commonweal* to reach the next generation of American Catholics,



you can help.

A $100 contribution to our College Subscription Program will provide five year-long *Commonweal* subscriptions to promising students at the country's leading colleges and universities.

We thank you for your tax-deductible donation.

Commonweal
475 Riverside Drive, Room 405
New York, NY 10115
phone: 212-662-4200 | fax: 212-662-4183
e-mail: college@commonwealmagazine.org

Commonweal

I agree that Catholic college students need *Commonweal* to help them understand the issues facing contemporary society.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Number of subscriptions I will sponsor at $20 each (minimum of 5, please):
☐ 5 ☐ 10 ☐ 15 ☐ other _____

May we identify you as the donor?
☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Check enclosed.
☐ Please bill my credit card: (Amex, Mastercard, Visa)

CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

For more information, visit:
www.commonwealmagazine.org/college

Commonweal

APRIL 12, 2013 • VOLUME 140 • NUMBER 7

SHORT TAKES

ARTICLES

UPFRONT

COLUMNISTS

SCREEN

MUSIC

THEOLOGICAL BOOKS

POETRY

THE LAST WORD

Founded in 1924
Commonweal

Editor
Paul Baumann

Associate Editors
Grant Gallicho, Matthew Boudway, Mollie Wilson O'Reilly

Print & Digital Production
Tiina Aleman

Digital Editor
Dominic Preziosi

Copy Editor
Susanne Washburn

Digital Media & Marketing
KeriLee Horan

Editorial Assistant
Ryan O'Connell

Business Manager
James Hannan

Development
Christa A. Kerber

Poetry
Rosemary Deen

Screen
Richard Alleva, Rand Richards Cooper

Stage/Media/Television
Celia Wren

Columnists
Lawrence S. Cunningham, E. J. Dionne Jr., John Garvey, Cathleen Kaveny, Jo McGowan, Charles R. Morris, Mollie Wilson O'Reilly, William Pfaff, Margaret O'Brien Steinfels

Subscription Information
212-662-4200

Advertising Manager
Regan Pickett
commonwealads@gmail.com
540-349-5736

Publisher
Thomas Baker

Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] *A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts*, is published twenty times a year by Commonweal Foundation, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 405, New York, NY 10115. Telephone: (212) 662-4200. E-mail: editors@commonwealmagazine.org. Toll-free: 888-495-6755. Fax: (212) 662-4183. Advertising correspondence should be sent to Regan Pickett. POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Commonweal*, P.O. Box 3000, Denville, NJ 07834-9982.

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Book Review Digest, and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, OH 44691. *Commonweal* articles are also available at many libraries and research facilities on CD-ROM and in electronic databases. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional offices. Single Copy, $3.95. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $59; Canada, $64; foreign, $69. Special two-year rate: U.S. $89; Canada, $94; foreign, $109. Annual rates for air-mail delivery outside U.S.: Western Hemisphere, $86; Europe, $91; other parts of the world, $101. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Cover design: Cecilia Guerrero Rezes
Cover image: CNS photo by Marcin Mazur

www.commonwealmagazine.org

LETTERS

THE TRUE FACE OF AMERICAN ISLAM?

I found Bethe Dufresne's profile of Ingrid Mattson quite troubling ("A View from the Edge," February 22). She provides us a sanitized version of Islam. Mattson reassures us by noting that "American Muslims have generally been more critical of injustices committed by the American government than of injustices committed by Muslims." That must change, she says. And when she mentions the diversity of the Islamic world, and the high levels of education for women, it is impossible not to find her account of Islam appealing. (Saudi Arabia's treatment of women—who cannot drive, vote, or travel—is "not a representative example.") While Mattson embraces an obligation to speak out against "abuses of Muslim 'leaders' in other countries," she does not condemn them. My major concern is sharia law.

Dufresne writes that Mattson "argues that sharia is a 'concept, not a codified set of laws, so there's a lot of diversity' globally in its application and emphasis." But the five hundred Qur'anic verses that constitute the basis of sharia are precise; they cover specifics such as wearing gold jewelry and how to respond to a sneeze. They outline specific punishments for many actions, such as adultery and drinking (but nothing for homicide). If you are open to those laws, how do you support a secular government? We need a broader discussion of citizenship and religion. While Ingrid Mattson may be the public face of Islam, I wonder whether she's truly representative. When she accuses critics of "cherry-pick[ing] a statement from some extremist," it seems like she is doing the same thing in order to make Islam more palatable to the masses.

MARY FADHL
Danville, Calif.

INGRID MATTSON REPLIES

Mary Fadhl makes a number of false assertions about Islam and about me. Despite her attempt to lend an air of credibility to her claims by citing facts, instead she demonstrates her ignorance of Islam by getting them wrong. The Qur'an, for example, says nothing about wearing gold or sneezing, nor does the Qur'an specify any punishment for drinking. Fadhl wonders whether I am "representative" (of Islam? of Islamic scholars?). If it is possible to make such an assessment, certainly Fadhl is not qualified. Thousands of American and Canadian Muslims elected me to speak for them in religious matters. I speak globally to Muslim audiences, and I am a member of widely representative, orthodox scholarly bodies such as the Aal al-Bayt Foundation for Islamic Thought in Jordan. Fadhl's claim that I have not condemned human-rights abuses and terrorism in the name of Islam is easily disproved. As president of the Islamic Society of North America, not only did I issue numerous statements condemning terrorism, bigotry, and violence in the name of Islam (statements that are available online), I spent a great deal of time and resources developing programs to prevent these injustices: partnering with the Union for Reform Judaism and the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding to combat anti-Semitism, working with Peaceful Families Project to stop domestic violence in the Muslim community, and working with Women in Islam and others to fight for an equal place for women in the Muslim community. As a signatory to the Amman Message (2004), I opposed violence against Shiites by Sunnis, and as a signatory to *A Common Word* (2007) and as a scholar writing and lecturing on pluralism, I have argued passionately for equal rights for religious minorities in Muslim-majority countries. Bethe Dufresne had to be selective in choosing which of my publications and views to cite. Anyone who is interested in a fuller look at my views can easily find them. Rather than expressing my views only in academic publications, I have made them accessible to the general public through multiple means: denominational magazines, recorded lectures, blogs, public-radio interviews, and Twitter (@IngridMattson).

From the Editors

Bridge Builder

Anyone who followed media coverage of the papal conclave that elected the Argentine Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, couldn't help noticing that the same breathless questions were raised again and again by commentators assessing the future of Catholicism. Will the church ever allow priests to marry? Will it ordain women? Will it change its teaching on homosexuality or birth control? Will it permit the divorced and remarried to receive Communion? Is clergy sexual abuse still a problem? Will bishops ever be held accountable for covering up that abuse?

When it comes to these persistent conflicts it seems the scrum has barely budged over the past forty years. While most American Catholics think the church should change its positions—or at least moderate its tone—on these neuralgic issues, the hierarchy and a group of conservative Catholics influential in Rome remain intent on stressing the "countercultural" aspect of Catholicism, its power to push back against the overwhelming secularity of American life (see "More Mission, Less Maintenance," page 29). The result is a church nearly as polarized as the U.S. Congress.

Meanwhile, the church in the United States has lost a third of its members and many doubt such losses can be stanched as long as certain teachings—say, about sexual morality or the role of women—do not change. Conservative Catholics respond that in comparison with the even more dramatic decline of mainline Protestant churches that have embraced supposedly more enlightened attitudes, the Catholic Church is doing fine. Any church that accommodates itself to our individualistic, egalitarian, and morally promiscuous secular culture, they say, is doomed to irrelevance. Better to stay the course; that way, even if losses are high, there won't be a complete collapse. This often seemed to be the default position of Benedict XVI. If Francis's initial remarks and actions are any indication, he promises to engage the larger culture from a less defensive posture.

Inevitably Catholics at both ends of the ideological spectrum look to a new pope for encouragement. And from the moment he made his first appearance on the balcony of St. Peter's, Francis seems to have given nearly everyone a reason to cheer. But whatever the direction in which the new pope steers the church, American Catholics struggling to make a life of faith in what is admittedly a vertiginous moral and cultural landscape will continue to take surprising turns, confounding the usual categories. Most practicing Catholics reject the teaching on contraception. At the same time, more than a few younger Catholic women eschew the pill in favor of the church's "natural" approach to family planning. Home-schooling is more popular than one might imagine, and not just among the politically conservative. Some younger Catholics are also intrigued by the solemnity of the Latin Mass. Religious "seekers" of all stripes happily mix and match what were once predictably conservative or liberal political and theological positions. This is a Catholic strength, not a weakness. Catholicism has never quite made peace with capitalism, for instance, and here all sorts of esoteric Catholic objections to modern liberalism merge with a rejection of the materialism and crass commercialism of American society and the hegemony of Wall Street. The Catholic critique of the modern economy may be needed now more than ever before, and Francis's promise to make concern for the poor central to his papacy could confound the powerful in surprising ways.

The philosopher Charles Taylor has written that, although Catholics will continue to disagree on many questions, they still "ought to be able to reach out to each other." And in order for that to happen we must look to those among us whose zeal does not merely confirm our biases, but rather the opposite. What we need, each one of us, is to be thrown off balance by the self-sacrificing example of others. For some it might be the devotion to family shown by a Latin Mass enthusiast who home-schools her children. For others, it could be a same-sex couple intent on raising their children Catholic. "The church, by which I mean all of us, has a very challenging task," Taylor writes. That task is how to hold "together in one sacramental union modes of living the faith which have at present no affinity for each other, and even are tempted roundly to condemn each other."

Yes, the church must preach the gospel, but it must also live it. That is something Pope Franics has done to wide acclaim in his native Argentina. Popes are a sign of unity, or so the Catholic tradition teaches. ("Pontiff" is from the Latin word for "bridge builder.") Francis will have to be a master builder if the church is to make its message heard in a time of great discord. Bringing a divided flock together, after all, is the first responsibility of a good pastor. ■

March 26, 2013

Cathleen Kaveny

Reading the Tea Leaves

WHY THE SUPREME COURT IS UNLIKELY TO BLOCK THE CONTRACEPTION MANDATE

Many of the groups challenging the contraception mandate in the Affordable Care Act on religious-liberty grounds hang their hopes on one Supreme Court case: *Gonzales v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente Uniao do Vegetal*. Decided in 2006, it is the only case regarding the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) to have come before the High Court thus far.

The superficial attraction of *O Centro* is obvious. As mandated by RFRA, the Court applied the "strict scrutiny" test, and the religious claimants won. The Court decided that the federal government had not proved a compelling state interest in stopping a tiny religious sect from using hoasca, a sacramental tea made from a hallucinogen banned under federal law.

Congress passed RFRA in 1993. It was a direct response to *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), in which the Supreme Court held that the Free Exercise Clause did not require the state of Oregon to exempt Native Americans using peyote in their worship services from antidrug laws, which were neutral laws of general applicability. RFRA attempted to restore the pre-*Smith* "strict scrutiny" test in order to broaden exemptions for religious groups to otherwise generally applicable laws.

In light of this history, *O Centro* was an uncommonly straightforward RFRA case. Noting that Congress had long exempted Native American ceremonies from federal drug laws, the Court pointed out the incongruity of prohibiting the religious use of hoasca. In short, if RFRA didn't apply in this case, it's hard to see when it would apply.

But the Court also recognized that not all religious-liberty cases can be resolved in the same way. The justices emphasized that the claimants were a small sect asking for a narrowly defined and contained exemption to a general legal prohibition. That exemption would apply only in limited circumstances—to members of the sect in question and only in the particular context of their worship services. It would not permit members to use the hallucinogenic tea outside that setting. Moreover, the scope of the exemption was highly limited—the Court stressed that only thirty people belonged to the sect in the United States. Finally, it was clear that no third parties would be affected, much less harmed, by granting this carefully delineated exemption.

By contrast, the exemption being sought from the contraception mandate by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and others would be far broader in both scope and effect, particularly on third parties. It is not an exemption from a negative prohibition, but an exemption from a positive requirement, which is designed to secure an array of health benefits for the general population, benefits that affect their entire lives, not merely their work lives. According to the National Institute of Medicine, first-dollar coverage of contraceptives as part of a preventive-service program improves the overall health of women and their unborn children.

Hoasca

Furthermore, *O Centro* dealt with a clearly defined object of the exemption: sacramental tea containing a particular hallucinogen. In contrast, the same arguments used to justify the objection to the contraception mandate can immediately apply to other services in the health-care benefit package. What if an employer refuses to cover HPV vaccinations for girls and young women because they might encourage sexual immorality in young people? What if an employer decides not to cover breast-feeding supplies because she has read literature documenting their abortifacient effects?

Moreover, unlike the sect protected in *O Centro*, the number of people affected by an exception to the mandate is not negligible. Hundreds of thousands of people are employed by Catholic institutions across the country. Ironically enough, the spate of religious-liberty cases now being brought by Catholic and other groups actually undermines their argument, by showing the administrative unwieldiness of the exemption they claim. In American law, facts matter, not merely legal principles. And the facts of the contraceptive mandate are very different from those in *O Centro.*

In response to objections by the bishops and others, the Obama administration recently proposed a reconfigured exemption to the mandate, which broadened the protection for not-for-profit employers. Is this exemption, or one even broader to cover for-profit employers, required under RFRA, according to the framework set out in *O Centro*? I doubt it. In fact, I think the original, narrow exemption would have survived litigation. It's time for the bishops to take yes for an answer. ■

SASCHA GRABOW

Paul Moses

Why 'Francis'?

WHAT THE POPE'S NAME SIGNALS

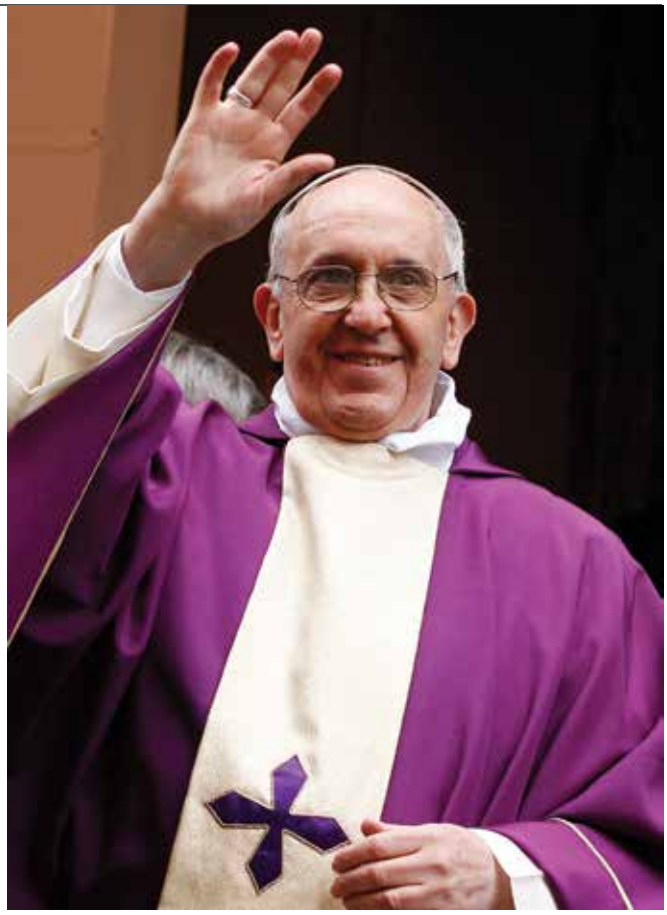
Of the many virtues associated with St. Francis of Assisi, humility was the first to occur to me as Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio stood before the multitude for the first time as Pope Francis. Popes are expected to be larger-than-life figures, but the new pope had chosen the name of a man who always diminished himself. That's one reason that, nearly eight hundred years after his death, the saint still looms so large as a model of the Christian faith.

Perhaps the reason no pope had decided sooner to take the name of the great saint from Assisi is that he humbly avoided all church honors and instructed his friars to do the same. It's one of the points Francis emphasized in his dying days in a document called his Testament. "I strictly forbid the friars, wherever they may be, to petition the Roman Curia, either personally or through an intermediary," he wrote, insisting that his order not become entangled in the messy politics of the church. In the same document, St. Francis also described the turning point in his life, which came when he worked up the courage to embrace and kiss a leper, completing his conversion from spoiled rich kid to herald of penance and peace. "What had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of body and soul," he wrote.

Pope Francis's choice of title and his actions in his first days as pope indicate that he places humility and compassion for the marginalized at the heart of his ministry—"servant leadership," in today's church parlance. Francis of Assisi "gives us this spirit of peace, the poor man who wanted a poor church," the pope told an audience of journalists. "How I would love a church that is poor and for the poor."

No one could administer the church in the way St. Francis tried to lead his movement, forbidding friars to touch money and barring any ownership of property, even by the order. But the choice of Francis's name sets a tone for reform of the church, based on the famous story of the cross of San Damiano and the call from Jesus to "repair my church." Pope Benedict XVI picked up on this theme in an audience on January 27, 2010. "At that time the church had a superficial faith which did not shape or transform life, a scarcely zealous clergy, and a chilling of love," he said. "It was an interior destruction of the church."

The contrast between Franciscan holiness and the decadence of the papal court was noted as early as 1216 by Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acre and a future cardinal. Arriving in the papal court just after Pope Innocent III died, he wrote a letter expressing disgust that thieves had stripped away the expensive vestments the pope was to be buried in and left his corpse unclothed. The curia was awash in worldly intrigues, the bishop complained, adding that hardly anyone there was concerned with spiritual matters. In contrast, he found hope in the "Lesser Brothers" and "Lesser Sisters," whom he described as "secular people of both sexes" who "left all things for Christ," evangelized vigorously, and lived in the way of the primitive church.



CNS PHOTO / PAUL HARING

Pope Francis after celebrating Mass in Vatican City on March 17

There is ample evidence that St. Francis hoped his example of poverty, penance, and peacemaking would help purify a church that suffered from greed, pride, and a penchant for warfare. He avoided speaking out against church authorities or miscreant clergymen, and instead made his point through example: the extremes of his poverty and penance, his shocking acts of compassion for all creatures, his constant efforts at peacemaking. Pope Francis also seems to be speaking to church leaders through example—taking the bus instead of a Mercedes, for starters.

It should be said that St. Francis's ministry was carried out within a framework of obedience to church authorities, a point he himself stressed. Benedict made the same point. He said it was St. Francis, not the very powerful Pope Innocent, who was called by God to save the church. "On the other hand, however, it is important to note that St. Francis does not renew the church without or in opposition to the pope, but only in communion with him," he said. "The two realities go together." I suspect that Pope Francis would agree. ■

Paul Moses *is the author of* The Saint and the Sultan: the Crusades, Islam, and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace *(Doubleday).*

Julia Young

The Church in Latin America

CAN FRANCIS MEET THE CHALLENGE?

A Latin-American pope! From Chile to Mexico—and among U.S. Latinos—there was a collective gasp of surprise and excitement over the news of the conclave's election of Argentina's Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis.

In Buenos Aires, ecstatic worshipers waving Argentine and Vatican flags packed the Metropolitan Cathedral. In Mexico City's main plaza, the Zócalo, cathedral bells rang. Even Venezuela's new president, Nicolás Maduro, got in on the action, happily speculating that recently deceased Hugo Chávez must have pulled strings in heaven so that Jesus would appoint a South American to the job. In the United States, Latino immigrants from Los Angeles to Wilmington, North Carolina, expressed joy and thanksgiving at the selection of a pope who shares their language, culture, and heritage.

Some pundits speculated that the enthusiasm over the selection of Bergoglio may strengthen the political position of the Latin-American church. In the *New York Times,* novelist Martín Caparrós proposed that an Argentine pope would raise the power of conservative groups in that country to "uncharted heights." Other commentators focused on the potential for Pope Francis to revitalize and reenergize the Latin-American faithful.

In order to assess the possible impact of the new pope on Latin-American Catholicism, however, it is necessary to understand several highly complex and deeply entrenched challenges. Although Latin America remains predominantly Catholic, its various national societies are changing in ways that will affect both institutional Catholicism and the life of the Catholic masses.

The first of these challenges is demographic. Today, Latin America and the Caribbean are home to about 40 percent of the world's Catholics. Across the region, however, Catholics have been leaving the faith in droves. Most of those who have left converted to various strains of evangelical Protestantism, but many are also simply becoming secularized. According to the Pew Research Center, the share of the region's population that is Catholic has decreased from about 90 percent at the beginning of the twentieth century to 72 percent in 2010.

The most striking fact about this attrition is how recently and rapidly it has occurred. According to scholar Virginia Garrard-Burnett, the Catholic population in Brazil—Latin America's most populous country—has declined by 20 percent over the past thirteen years. In Guatemala over the past several decades, almost one-third of the country's Catholics have left the church. Sociologist Roberto Blancarte estimates that the Catholic population in Mexico has declined by 4 million (from 89 to 82 percent) since 2000.

The picture is similar among Latinos in the United States, who today make up about one-third of U.S. Catholics. A January 2013 Gallup poll determined that the percentage of Latino Catholics is decreasing relative to Latino Protestants in the United States, and that religious enthusiasm is significantly higher among Protestants than among Catholics. Even more notable are the changes within the younger generation of Latinos: the same poll found young Latino Catholics (between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine) are much less likely to identify as "very religious," while 24 percent did not consider themselves religious at all.

At the same time that Catholics are leaving the faith, the institutional Catholic Church in Latin America has faced a second, more enduring challenge: a long decline in its historical position of privilege, power, and political relevance—and a concurrent decline in its public image.

Ever since the region's nations gained independence from Spain, governments have struggled with the Catholic hierarchy over the role of the church relative to the state. Throughout the nineteenth century, liberal politicians and intellectuals—emboldened by Enlightenment ideas about the separation of church and state—sought to restrict the powers, property, and privileges that the clergy had held since the colonial period. Conservatives, by contrast, tried to preserve a central role for the church in the public sphere, especially in education. As a result, the institutional church tended to support conservative governments in the nineteenth century, even though the Catholic masses—and often, the lower-level Catholic clergy—were more ideologically diverse.

This alliance between the hierarchy and conservative governments was complicated somewhat during the twentieth century. In the early 1900s, the church seemed poised to head to the left: in the wake of the 1891 papal encyclical *Rerum novarum*, the church had entered a period of heightened concern for the welfare of the working classes, and increased its involvement in and support for social action. As ideological conflicts in Latin America became increasingly polarized between conservative military dictatorships and leftist and populist regimes, however, new political divisions arose.

As historian John Schwaller describes (see "A Transplanted Faith," December 21, 2012), by the mid-twentieth century the church was divided between a highly conservative political and cultural right wing opposed to social change; a radical left (primarily among the lower clergy) that sympathized with revolutionary armed struggles; and a large and moderate center that sought to work within existing

Celebrating the election of Pope Francis outside the Metropolitan Cathedral in Buenos Aires March 13

CNS PHOTO / ENRIQUE MARCARIAN, REUTERS

political structures to bring about social justice, economic equality, and human rights. Thus, the church's response to political developments in twentieth-century Latin America depended upon the relative strength of each wing within any a particular country.

In the case of Argentina, the conservative hierarchy remained largely silent during the country's "dirty war" (1976–83), in which the military government was brutally repressive toward people accused of being leftists. (Hence the barrage of questions and accusations about Bergoglio's actions and involvement with the government during that period.)

In other countries, however, the Catholic Church actually stood up to right-wing dictators. In the Dominican Republic, a new generation of liberal bishops broke with dictator Rafael Trujillo in the early 1960s; in Brazil at the same time, the progressive bishops took a public stand against the military dictatorship and defended victims of torture and repression. In Central America during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, members of the hierarchy were persecuted and killed for expressing sympathy for the poor and for actively and publicly opposing military governments. Most famously, numerous prominent clergy supported Catholic liberation theology, which emphasized the need to redress economic and social inequality and give special attention to the poor (the Vatican has strongly critiqued these teachings, but both John Paul II and Benedict XVI spoke in Latin America about the problem of economic inequality).

These human-rights accomplishments should have helped burnish the image of the Latin-American church. Yet, in recent years, the church has struggled to respond to a new wave of leftist regimes, often taking a critical stance toward populist leaders such as Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and Bolivia's Evo Morales. For their part, these politicians have reminded their supporters of the historical association between the Catholic Church and reactionaries, wealthy elites, and the military. Thanks in part to those ties (and thanks also to a growing scandal over the sexual abuse of minors by priests in Latin America), the hierarchy in Latin America today has something of an image problem.

There is a third and final challenge that Pope Francis will confront in Latin America, and this may be the most daunting of all: the newest wave of social and cultural change that is occurring across the region, particularly in urban areas.

Since the 1990s, Latin Americans have become more socially liberal on issues such as same-sex marriage, contraception, and abortion. Argentina legalized same-sex marriage in 2010, and Uruguay in 2013. Mexico City, which hosts an enormous gay-pride parade every year, legalized same-sex marriage in 2010 (though it is not legal nationwide).

Although abortion is still widely restricted across the region (and is completely banned in five countries), Mexico City legalized first-trimester abortion in 2007, and Uruguay voted to legalize it in 2012. Finally, the church's position on contraception is widely ignored in most countries, some of which have initiated state-sponsored programs that distribute contraceptives. Bergoglio was an outspoken opponent of such initiatives. Some new sociological and anthropological studies, such as one by anthropologist Lara Braff, demonstrate that women are increasingly unlikely to take Catholic doctrine into account when deciding how many children to have.

While Latin-American Catholics are still more socially conservative than those in the United States and Europe, there's still an important gap between popular religiosity and doctrinal adherence. Popular Catholicism across the region is a syncretic mix of precolonial beliefs, African-influenced religious practices, rural and popular folkways (such as shamanism and *curanderismo*), and personal and regional devotion to individual saints. To the persistent frustration of the Catholic hierarchy from colonial times to the present, Latin-American Catholics have had historically low rates of sacramental participation, especially among the poor. Relatively few nonelite couples, for instance, chose to participate in the sacrament of marriage. This practice goes back to the colonial period. Historically, Latin Americans have had markedly lower levels of Mass attendance than those in the United States.

The three challenges that Pope Francis must confront in Latin America—attrition, a growing image problem, and sociocultural change—are deep and historical, but they may not be intractable. After all, the Latin-American church is still enormous, with an active and dynamic laity who have deep devotion and a strong sense of cultural Catholicism.

Perhaps Francis, who has named himself after a saint well known for his devotion to the poor, will turn the church's attention squarely back to issues of social justice and inequality. This would certainly be welcomed by Latin-American Catholics, as well as by Latinos in the United States. Patriotic excitement and enthusiasm over his appointment may even help to stem the tide of converts to evangelical Protestantism. And although it is hard to imagine that Latin Americans will become more socially conservative, especially on questions of sexual morality, perhaps this will not be Francis's principal focus in the region. However he proceeds, the new pope will have his work cut out for him. ■

Julia Young *teaches Latin-American history at the Catholic University of America.*

Tom Quigley

Complicit?

BERGOGLIO & THE DIRTY WAR

Virtually everyone in Latin America (and North America as well) had reason to be thrilled with the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio, SJ, cardinal archbishop of Buenos Aires, to the papacy. Still, there were some who have raised questions based on their views of what Bergoglio, as Jesuit provincial, did or did not do during Argentina's *guerra sucia*. The main sources for Bergoglio's critics are articles published in the Buenos Aires paper *Página 12* by veteran journalist Horacio Verbitsky concerning the abduction of two Jesuit activists, Orlando Yorio and Francisco Jalics.

The era of the "dirty war" extended from the time of the military coup of 1976 to the junta's end in 1983. The first years were the worst, and 1976 is remembered as an *annus horribilis*, beginning with the Videla military coup on March 24. In that one year, Monica Mignone, daughter of famed human-rights lawyer Emilio Mignone, was abducted from her family's home on May 14 and never seen again. Three Pallottine priests and two seminarians were murdered in the rectory of the San Patricio parish on Sunday, July 4. Bishop Enrique Angelleli of La Rioja was killed when his automobile was forced off the road on August 4. That same month American La Salette missionary Fr. James Weeks was arrested and tortured but released through the intervention of the U.S. ambassador. The following month, Irish national Fr. Patrick Rice of the Little Brothers of the Gospel was similarly arrested, tortured, and released through his government's intercession.

During that period, according to Emilio Mignone's *Witness to the Truth: The Complicity of Church and Dictatorship in Argentina*, some sixteen priests were murdered or disappeared, nine of them in 1976 alone. And on May 23, the two Jesuits, Jalics and Yorio, residents of the Bajo Flores shantytown, were arrested. Five months later, they showed up, drugged and beaten, in a swamp, apparently deposited there from a helicopter.

Convinced that their superior, Fr. Bergoglio, had not only not gone to bat for them but may even have facilitated their arrest, Yorio left the Jesuits and incardinated in Argentina's diocese of Viedma. He has since died. Jalics, a Hungarian, left Argentina to join his fellow Jesuits in Germany. In 2000 he and Bergoglio (by then a cardinal) met, celebrated Mass together, and proclaimed their reconciliation. And in March, Jalics released a statement explaining that it is "wrong to assert that our capture took place at the initiative of Fr. Bergoglio."

It is the brother and sister of the late Fr. Yorio who seem determined to revisit the question of Bergoglio's alleged complicity in the kidnappings, with Verbitsky as chronicler.

The strongest charge is Verbitsky's curious account of what he takes to be Bergoglio's "betrayal" of his fellow Jesuits. In his book *The Silence*, Verbitsky writes, "Bergoglio withdrew his order's protection of the two men after they refused to quit visiting the slums, which ultimately paved the way for their capture."

"Visiting the slums" was what Bergoglio himself later became famous for as archbishop, with fellow Argentines coming to dub him their *papa villero*, their slum pope. The two Jesuits were doing more than visiting—they were involved in activities that, from the Junta's point of view, were clearly subversive. Bergoglio says he warned them that they were risking arrest, if not worse, and urged them to be more prudent. According to an AP report, "Bergoglio has said he told the priests to give up their slum work for their own safety, and they refused." And they were kidnapped—or, if you prefer, extrajudicially arrested.

What now seems clear is that both men were freed after Bergoglio took measures to protect them. On one occasion he persuaded Videla's personal chaplain to call in sick so Bergoglio could say Mass in the president's home, where he pleaded for the two priests, most likely saving their lives.

It's known as well that Bergoglio regularly hid people on church property and once gave his personal ID to a man with similar features, allowing him to slip across the border.

Verbitsky's telling seems to imagine some great power held by the Jesuits in that country. What has been too little noted in all the furor since Bergoglio's election as pope is the relative impotence of the religious communities in Argentina during the dirty war, as compared with the vastly superior influence of the country's ultra-conservative bishops. Mignone's book names no fewer than twenty-five bishops and two cardinals whom he considers indifferent, if not hostile, to concerns for human rights. There are even bishops he terms "integrist." The "good" bishops he numbers at seven or eight. In that climate, the relatively young Jesuit provincial had his work cut out for him.

And although Mignone doesn't say so, Bergoglio, Angelleli, and other churchmen were fortunate to have as papal nuncio Archbishop Pio Laghi (1974–80), later nuncio to the United States. It was to Laghi's office, not to that of the archbishop or of the bishops' conference, that loved ones of the disappeared turned for information and help (see "Tennis with Tyrants," May 20, 2011).

Bergoglio's essential responsibility as provincial of the Jesuits, given the dramatic context of a murderous regime and bands of hardly nonviolent "subversives," was to protect his men. When some of them courted confrontation with the regime, we have every reason to believe he did what he could to rein them in. With Jalics and Yorio he tried, initially failed, but eventually succeeded in saving them. ■

Tom Quigley *is a former policy adviser on Latin-American and Caribbean issues to the U.S. Catholic bishops.*

Thwarted

AN EXCHANGE ON THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATISM

Steven P. Millies

In the months since the 2012 presidential election, much attention has focused on how Republican fortunes have shifted because of demographic changes in the United States. The number of minority voters is growing quickly at the same time the percentage of minority voters who vote Republican is shrinking. That story is important, but it is just one part of a larger problem that ought to worry conservatives.

Russell Kirk, the author of *The Conservative Mind* (1953), identified a short list of things that conservatism resists: "industrialism, centralization, secularism, and the leveling impulse." To most readers today, that list probably looks a little puzzling. It names four prevalent social forces of the past century that have been accepted, if not always welcomed, in most parts of world. A conservatism that defines itself as resisting what now looks like faits accomplis faces significant disadvantages. It's hard to recruit followers to a lost cause. By itself, nostalgia might be enough to power an ideological movement, but not to form a winning electoral coalition.

When William F. Buckley Jr., a disciple and promoter of Kirk's conservative vision, founded the *National Review* in 1955, he proclaimed that its mission was to "stand athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it." American conservatism as we have known it for three generations began with this imperative, which has now led it to a political impasse. Yelling "Stop!" may be good theater but it does little to thwart history.

Eventually, Buckley begat Barry Goldwater, and Goldwater begat Ronald Reagan, who stitched together an unlikely coalition of evangelical Christians, rural populists, and economic libertarians. But those halcyon days of American conservatism did not last long. Conservatives were quick to call George H. W. Bush an unworthy heir to Reagan, and punished him in the 1992 election for breaking his oath not to raise taxes. (In a 1993 memoir, John Podhoretz wrote about a dinner party where former President Reagan reportedly told intimates, "I guess I really effed it up in 1980"—that is, by picking Bush as his running mate.) It was around this time that conservatives coined the term "RINO" to describe Republicans like Bush the elder: "Republican in name only."

By the time Republicans took control of Congress in 1994, Reagan's conservative coalition had hardened into a rigid ideology as bent on policing dissent within its ranks as it was on restoring America to a fantasy of pre-1960s purity. But the biggest battles in the culture wars—which Barack Obama would later describe as "the psychodrama of the baby boom generation…played out on the national stage"—came after the election of Bill Clinton (the first baby boomer in the White House) and continued into the presidency of George W. Bush. The old conservatives themes remained the same: small government, traditional values, and a strong national defense. But the tone became ever more strident. Suddenly the struggle was for control not just of government but of the nation's soul.

Since then, the Republican Party seems to have wandered away from the sort of reasoned conservatism Russell Kirk celebrated. Kirk, who traced the history of modern conservatism back to Edmund Burke (1729–97), was no less wary of state power than contemporary conservatives are, and, like them, he believed in a universal moral order. He derived both of these convictions from Burke, and identified them as general characteristics of conservatism. But a close look at Burke's conservatism reveals some surprising complications.

Burke was a member of Parliament during a tumultuous time. He is remembered best for his opposition to the French Revolution, but he was also a passionate advocate for American revolutionaries. He supported religious toleration for Irish Catholics and the rights of Indians under the rule of the East India Company. Some commentators have said that Burke's defense of individual liberty and constitutional government (as opposed to absolute monarchy) make him a liberal, but Kirk offered a more enigmatic explanation:

Portrait of Edmund Burke by Joshua Reynolds, circa 1768

"Burke was liberal because he was conservative." Burke's conservatism was not nostalgia; it was not the preservation of what was old *because* it was old. Rather, it was a devotion to principles that had endured and achieved acceptance because they mostly worked. He did not champion the British system of government because it was British but because that system had proved durable and helped Britons flourish. "He detested 'abstraction,'" wrote Kirk. Instead, Burke preferred a politics that took account of "human frailty and the particular circumstances of the age."

In other words, conservatism—or at least Burkean conservatism—is not a one-size-fits-all program. Instead, it is a disposition to honor and protect what already works in a particular place at a particular time. It moves from practice to theory, not from theory to practice. But it does not try to freeze-frame history. As Kirk wrote, "Burke has no expectation that men can be kept from social change." Societies and governments change as surely as the world spins, and conservatives will no doubt resist some changes more ardently than others. But a real conservative always values the community he's seeking to protect more than his own resistance to an unwelcome change. "Conservatism," Kirk wrote, "never is more admirable than when it accepts changes that it disapproves, with good grace, for the sake of a general reconciliation." Certainly, Kirk did not mean that conservatives should acquiesce to evil with "good grace." Rather, Kirk was pointing toward a truth that many self-described conservatives no longer recognize: Political order is not an ideal to be reached through ideological struggle. It is a daily negotiation to salvage what is best in ourselves and in our history from ordinary human frailty and the entropy of human institutions.

One reason many conservatives were so surprised by the results of the 2012 election is that they've become detached from this Burkean understanding of conservatism. Negotiation is not in their lexicon. Instead of addressing and, when necessary, accommodating the concrete circumstances of their own age, they have spun a cocoon around themselves. From within its closed comfort, they reassure themselves that an earlier, better America is still within reach—one where all families resemble the one in *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, where (nongovernmental) institutions enjoy unquestioning trust, and where minorities are forever in the numerical minority. Conservatives succumbed to a nostalgia that not only doomed their electoral hopes but also raised fundamental questions about how they would govern.

If, as Rush Limbaugh lamented the day after the election, conservatives "have lost the country," that is mainly because they have lost touch with the country. A conservatism blinded by nostalgia and out of touch with how people actually live will be powerless to conserve anything.

The real challenge for conservatives, as for their rivals, is to identify the best ways of managing the dislocations of an industrial (or post-industrial) economy, of mitigating the tendency of centralization—whether of money or of power—to homogenize everything it touches, and of dealing with the complex consequences of a radical pluralism that can make everything seem contestable. No political party can claim it has found perfect solutions to any of these problems. As much as Americans accept the blessings of modern life, we crave thoughtful solutions to the new problems it has created. Conservatives won't be up to the task of offering such solutions until they emerge from their cocoon.

Steven P. Millies *is associate professor of political science and chairs the Department of History, Political Science, and Philosophy at the University of South Carolina Aiken. He is completing a book on Edmund Burke's political thought.*

Gerald J. Russello

Steven P. Millies's thoughtful piece identifies the central issue of conservatism: conservatives want to conserve but cannot be trapped in, or by, the past. Contemporary conservatism, with few exceptions, fails this test. It combines a libertarian conviction that all government should be as small as possible with a contradictory instinct to use state power to shore up moral standards or bring "democracy" to some hapless nation across the world. For Millies, conservatism should instead be a form of political crisis management, balancing the competing claims of modern industrial society with those of tradition, pointing a finger now and again at some excesses, but not moralizing and certainly not standing "athwart history, yelling Stop."

In saying that Republicans are wrapped in a 1950s cocoon, Millies accuses them of thinking that the world should not change and that, if it does, they should change it back to some imaginary ideal state. But then again, some on the left look forward to an equally imaginary utopia of universal health care, sexual liberation, and government-induced equality of condition. The right looks backward for its ideal; the left looks forward. But both have their attention fixed on an illusory perfection. From Russell Kirk's perspective both are mistaken. As Millies acknowledges, Kirk was opposed to any kind of ideological perfectionism.

Millies's critique, however, echoes an argument against conservatives that has existed since at least the '50s, when modern conservatism began. Gordon Lewis, in a review of the first edition of Kirk's 1953 classic *The Conservative Mind*, focused on the "weakness of logic characteristic of all conservative thought: it erects a philosophy which must oppose fundamental change and then, when change has been effected by the operation of social-cultural factors, it proceeds to incorporate its compelled accommodation to the new facts as an example of the remarkable wisdom of willing concession." Thus, conservatives must either be mere temporizers who first resist social change and then offer it their post facto blessing, or reactionaries outside the

TWO DUCKS

There they were, in conventional prose,
dabbling together in a break in the ice,
unnoticed, unnoticing of the surrounding glass.

The caught train of lightning in the face
of the rising mallard and his brown wife
shook the sun and held the wind

back, while they obliquely swam
nowhere, together, in the distant fun.
for us and for them. For the dead hand
of winter and for all swimming swam.

—William Meyer

William Meyer is a freelance writer and artist living in Beaumont, Texas.

march of history. Neither response is likely to be successful, socially or politically.

Kirk was doing something quite different, which is why he distinguished between reactionaries and true conservatives. He was concerned with the centralization not just of political power but also of money. He was concerned with cultural homogenization, but also with the loss of a sense of overarching order that binds one generation to the next. He saw the parallels between the radicalized Baby Boomer and the hyper-libertarian, and was as opposed to Ayn Rand as to Lyndon Johnson, each of whom he thought had adopted a reductionist view of the human person. Randian man, Kirk believed, was cut off from family and community and so became a monster of selfishness, while Johnsonian man was essentially a social engineer, for whom individuals were only cogs in a wheel called "the Great Society." Kirk did not seek a "middle ground" between these two reductionisms. Instead, he wanted conservatives to rethink the connection between history and progress and the claim tradition had on our daily lives. So on some issues Kirk sounded like a conservative; he certainly had little use for ambitious federal programs. Yet, like his hero Burke, he had empathy for those who had been marginalized by history or the dominant culture. (There isn't much evidence of such empathy in contemporary conservative thought.) And he shared the view of T. S. Eliot and the historian John Lukacs that individuals *shape* history and tradition rather than simply receiving it passively. This gives Kirk's conservatism its respect for true pluralism.

But this is one reason Kirk is misunderstood among contemporary conservatives: he speaks in a language they no longer use. Kirk tried in his writings to create a rhetorical space in which to examine what a postliberal world might look like, as he was convinced liberal reason was a short-lived historical phenomenon. His evocative books present an alternative to liberalism's story of inevitable progress toward the end of history. Rather than trying to "thwart" history, Kirk believed there was an important element of mystery in social change, as there was in each person. The idea that we understand where history is headed well enough for liberals to advance it or conservatives to thwart it was foolish, in Kirk's view. To talk of metaphysical "history" as a justification for policies that threaten or destroy concrete human goods was a liberal trap, and conservatives were wise to avoid using such language.

Conservatives must use their own language, invoking community (not as an anodyne abstraction, but as a concrete historical reality), duty (not only rights), and freedom (not license). But while he believed in eternal norms, Kirk did not believe these entailed a single set of policies to be applied across all times and places, and this makes translating his work into a political program difficult. There is a role for government—Kirk was no anarchist—and even for activist government, but local initiatives were preferable to federal programs; policies could vary from place to place according to local needs and customs. Kirk, following Orestes Brownson, called this "territorial democracy." He would have no sympathy for the hawkish American exceptionalism that now dominates the Republic Party, since nothing corrupts tradition and community more than large-scale military establishments. Kirk might think it more conservative to have universal health care and a noninterventionist foreign policy than the reverse. Similarly, economic conservatives' obsession with open borders and "global capitalism" undermines the stability necessary for a social order that protects and fosters community. Thus, a Kirkian conservatism would focus on reducing military commitments abroad, and controlling immigration at home. But it would also probably insist on better conditions for workers and more stringent environmental controls.

Millies is right: The conservative coalition has cracked, perhaps beyond repair, but neither economic nor social conservatives have enough strength on their own to create something truly new. Kirk, along with Christopher Lasch and Wilson Carey McWilliams (both longtime *Commonweal* contributors), represents a lost tradition of American thought, one that is attentive to the importance (and fragility) of local community, respectful of cultural variety, and therefore committed to the structures of American federalism. It is a tradition worth revisiting. ■

Gerald J. Russello *is editor of the University Bookman (www.kirkcenter.org) and author of* The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk *(University of Missouri Press).*

Michael Peppard

Testing the Boundaries

WHAT IT REALLY MEANS TO THINK WITH THE CHURCH

Over the past few years, Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, D.C., has been at the forefront of attempts by Catholic bishops to define the scope of Catholic theology in the United States. To his credit, he is keen to engage with younger theologians in Catholic colleges and universities. His most recent effort to explain the relationship between bishops and theologians ("The Noble Enterprise," *America*, February 4) situates the theological task within the "New Evangelization." In short, we are to "think and feel with the church (*sentire cum Ecclesia*)."

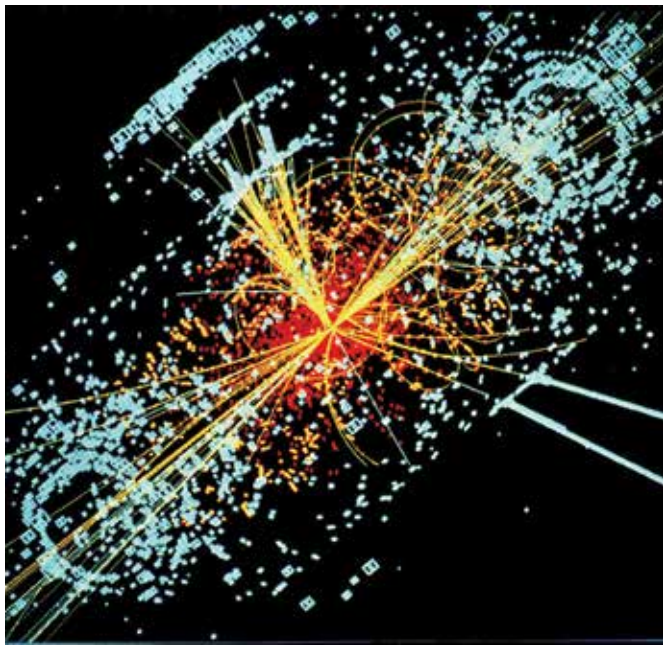
I could not agree more. But where the rubber meets the road—namely, in addressing the question *What is the ecclesial task of the theologian?*—Wuerl's argument leaves at least this young theologian uninspired. His essay acknowledges that theology is not "simply catechesis," yet its argument allows for very little by way of newness in theological research. "Authentic theology does not presume to generate new teachings," Wuerl writes; rather, theologians must go "beyond" catechesis "in depth, in intensity, and in precision." While this deepening describes one aspect of thinking with the church—and the work of many theologians—there also exists a strain of theological thinking that seeks to broaden the field of inquiry. And here Wuerl expresses concern. He exhorts us "to delve more profoundly" but to stay within the "boundaries;" he stresses "accountability" as a means of keeping theologians "responsible."

In a previous statement, "Bishops as Teachers: A Resource for Bishops," Wuerl used a sports analogy to explain the relationship between bishops and theologians, casting bishops as "referees" or "umpires" in a theological tennis match. The bishop, Wuerl wrote, has the duty "to make the call and to declare, if necessary, certain notions out of bounds, the bounds of Christian revelation." His recent essay deploys a less playful metaphor to refine the same argument. To explain how one ought to be "responsible" in theology, Wuerl invokes the natural sciences, asserting that theology is "always tethered to the faith taught by the church, much as a natural scientist's work is tethered to the facts of physical laws." The "church's teaching office," whose "judgments are determinative of good theology," discerns abiding truths for theologians, just as physical laws constitute the "foundational truths" that delimit scientific research.

Yet this is not really how science works; indeed, Wuerl's peculiar analogy ultimately *opposes* the view of theology he means to defend. Scientists are not bounded by unchanging laws. Scientists themselves postulate these "laws," such as the law of gravity or Newton's laws of motion, through observation, hypothesis, and experimentation, and then actively test them—often in order to break them! In the twentieth century, it was precisely the breakdown of Newtonian laws of motion at the frontiers of observation—astrophysics and quantum physics—that caused the paradigm shift in scientific truth that we associate with Einstein, Heisenberg, and the rest. At the scale of the very big and the very small, our "laws" of nature turned out to be wrong—and openness to new truth on the part of scientists led to a vision of the cosmos far more beautiful and mystical than imagined before. Through this course correction, twentieth-century science took on a poetic and even theological voice. Quantum reality is articulated through metaphors of "cats" (Schrödinger's) and "clouds" (of electron probability). The paradox of "spacetime" is "infinite but bounded." A particle is a "wave" or, in the case of the Higgs boson, even compared to God.

Wuerl further wants the "autonomy" of theologians to be "bounded," like that of scientists, "by the standards of the field and the boundaries of what constitutes spurious or fruitless investigation." Here again he seems mistaken about how science proceeds. Science's standards are: the challenging (and expanding) of received truths, peer review, the repeatability of experimental findings, and benefit to society. Correspondence to previously received knowledge is only one consideration.

Where Wuerl's essays show a fondness for boundaries—theology is "bounded," "tethered," "cared for," and



A simulated Higgs boson event

AT THE BURIAL OF AN ABBESS

Under the pine trees and the snow,
black on white, and row on row,
we leave our sisters when they go.

We age and die, we fill our space
and no one younger takes our place.
What a mysterious thing is grace

that makes us willing to be gone,
forgotten in our soundless lawn,
even the Order passing on.

Whatever good we might have done
is like the prints where foxes run,
lost when the snow melts in the sun.

But what we've learned above the ground
is to love silence more than sound,
white more than any color found.

The work of all our lifetime lets
us look on death with no regrets:
We vanish as the snow forgets.

—Gail White

"deposited"—the writings of Benedict XVI on theology, by contrast, are filled with verbs of exploration. In Benedict's terms, to do theology means to walk a path; to search; to thirst; to suffer with the questions of contemporary men and women; to question oneself about the reasonableness of faith; and thus to develop strength for seeing the path (see "Discourse at the Conferral of the First 'Ratzinger Prize'"). Benedict's vision of theology is not only broad, but itinerant and expansive.

Along these lines, thinkers as different as C. S. Lewis and Serene Jones have argued that if theology—the erstwhile "Queen of the Sciences"—is in fact at all like a science, it is most akin to cartography. Many of the best Christian theologians have explored the frontiers of observation, wielding not a microscope but a compass, a translator, and a field journal. Consider examples from our past. The apostle Paul perceived, through years of exploration in the field, the ways God was working among the Gentiles, and accordingly changed his view on the received law of how God makes covenants with the peoples of the world. Athanasius searched both natural and scriptural revelation for the best image to capture the emerging orthodoxy about the Triune God in a new landscape, describing God as fountain-stream, the radiance of the sun, and even as the bond between the Roman emperor and his statues.

That last one would likely get him in trouble today for its unorthodox Christology. But sometimes the unexpected analogy is what helps one test boundaries, seeking out new ways to capture for new people the uncontainable essence of God. Centuries after Athanasius, Matteo Ricci, SJ, and other missionaries to China struggled to comprehend the structures of honor, status, and divinity in a foreign language and culture, in order to understand how God was working among them, and how the message of God's Son might be theologized in a place without the same word or concept of "God." In our own day, theologians such as Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, chart the "frontiers of faith and action" that are revealed when the church finds the Holy Spirit active in new and "strange situations."

Some of these strange situations occur right in our own classrooms. Just about every day, theological educators must channel Paul at the Areopagus, tailoring our methods to an audience that has no idea what we are talking about (Acts 17). Following Paul's lead, we meet our students where they are, in order, God willing, to bring some of them forward on a path (*educere*). In that process of theological education—not catechetical instruction (*instruere*)—we learn and change together.

Like most natural scientists, most theologians are not activists. Like scientists however, we test new hypotheses and encounter new data. Most of the time, change is incremental. But as in science, theological paradigm shifts do occur, even if the magisterium prefers not to acknowledge "substantive changes" in the teaching of the church. Some of these are so recent it hardly seems necessary to mention them: the teachings on religious liberty, for instance, or the status of the Jews in Catholic theology. These were preceded long ago by changed rules on the eligibility of women for the diaconate or whether clerical celibacy should be mandatory.

Astute observers note that God does do new things in the world, often to our surprise. One thinks of the shock of the early Christians at their first theological paradigm shift, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles—the Gentiles!—and did so even before they were baptized (Acts 10:44–48). Now *that* was out of bounds. Most were saying, "God makes covenants with Jews only—that's the rules." But Peter's openness at the frontiers of observation showed his ability to think and feel with the church.

It is an episode I keep at the ready when I teach theology. You see, in my experience of American theologians, most of us already do think and feel with the church. And the church thinks and feels right back. Ever ancient, ever new. ■

Michael Peppard *is an assistant professor of theology at Fordham University in New York. He is the author of* The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in its Social and Political Context *(Oxford University Press).*

Theology & Censorship

A Surprsing History, a Hopeful Future

Leo J. O'Donovan

When Cardinal Avery Dulles died in December 2008, a distinguished German theologian friend of mine who had known him for many years told me that Avery was "one of the noblest men" he had ever met, blessed with a holy readiness to listen to every side of an argument or discussion. Neither my friend nor I knew at the time of a "discussion" Dulles had had with certain diocesan authorities shortly before the publication of his influential 1974 book *Models of the Church*. The case may offer a useful object lesson regarding the relationship between official teaching and theology—an issue raised recently by two controversies to which I shall later return.

In 1971, then-Fr. Dulles had published *The Survival of Dogma: Faith, Authority, and Dogma in a Changing World*, a book that aimed "to achieve a general vision of the dialectical interpenetration between stability and change, fidelity and initiative, in the areas of faith, authority, and dogma." *The Survival of Dogma* had borne a nihil obstat and an imprimatur, and when preparing to publish *Models of the Church*, Dulles expected to follow the same procedure. With his superior's permission, in January 1973 he again negotiated a contract with John J. Delaney at Doubleday. He asked Francis A. Sullivan, SJ, the distinguished professor of ecclesiology at the Gregorian University in Rome, to read the manuscript. Sullivan made some useful suggestions, and after revising his book accordingly, Dulles suggested to his provincial superior that Sullivan might serve as the censor for the *imprimi potest* appropriate for a Jesuit—which Sullivan agreed to do, writing his positive assessment of the manuscript the following August.

Preparing for diocesan approval, and having been asked to expedite the publication of his manuscript, Dulles wrote to Msgr. Daniel V. Flynn of the Archdiocese of New York to suggest that Sullivan might serve as the censor for the archdiocese, as he had for the Jesuits. The suggestion was rejected, and Dulles was informed that a censor from the archdiocese would be given the assignment. On October 18, 1973, Flynn wrote John Delaney at Doubleday to tell him that neither the first reader of *Models* nor a second had approved the book. He enclosed the first reader's comments, which asserted that "the tenor of the entire work and especially the ambiguity of many statements call into question certain fundamental teachings of the church concerning her

CNS FILE PHOTO

Avery Dulles

Leo J. O'Donovan, SJ, *a frequent contributor, is president emeritus of Georgetown University.*

own nature, her divine constitution, her relation to other Christian Church and ecclesial communities." Citing basic truths found in the documents of Vatican II and represented by *Mysterium ecclesiae* (1973), the censor faulted "statements of the author… [that] appear to question or leave ambiguous" these truths.

Read today, the criticism clearly seems to misunderstand Dulles's style of presentation; the censor demanded of the book precisely the kind of definitional approach whose limitations the book set out to explain. Though the censor does not deny the importance of historical variability, open dialogue in the church, or the ecumenical imperative, his sympathy for the text is clearly minimal. Some statements are startlingly authoritarian. "A distinction between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church is implied here (and throughout the work)," he writes, "and is unacceptable in Catholic doctrine." And: "It is positively taught that the church of Christ is essentially complete in the Catholic Church in which it subsists." He disputes Dulles's suggestion that the thesis of vicarious satisfaction needs reexamination, insisting that it is simply biblical and traditional doctrine, and wonders what could be meant by saying that "it is anomalous for the Eucharist to be celebrated in solitude." To Dulles's view that Modernism began as an effort "to bring the church abreast of the times," he responds: "It was a heresy."

The censor did not see how the book's inadequacies could be remedied "unless an entire chapter be included expounding the Catholic position." Dulles demurred. As a result, *Models* was published in 1974 with neither a nihil obstat nor an imprimatur. The book's reception was enthusiastic, and Dulles pronounced himself "very pleased...though of course there are a few shrill voices on the extreme right who find all sorts of errors in this as in anything else I write."

The years after the publication of *Models of the Church* saw several milestones in the evolution of church censorship. In 1975 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued the decree "On the Vigilance of the Church's Pastors Regarding Books" (*Ecclesiae pastorum*), which radically narrowed previous legislation on prepublication censorship of printed material. (The *Index of Prohibited Books* had been abolished in 1966.) *Ecclesiae pastorum* served as the basis for much of the treatment of "Instruments of Social Communication and Books in Particular," canons 822–832, in the new Code of Canon Law of 1983. Regarding permission to publish, the *Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, published in 2000, notes that the operative canon (827 §2) "envisions manuals or texts which are written and structured so that they serve as the framework and basic reference for courses in these subjects. It does not include other books written on these same topics, even if they are occasionally referred to or assigned as required readings in school courses. The operative category is 'textbooks.' The vast majority of theology-related writings are neither published nor actually used for textbooks." It is not enough, then, that a book happens to be used as a textbook; it must have been *written* for use as a textbook, created expressly to serve as the framework and basic reference for a course.

This distinction was more recently confirmed in 2004, when the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Doctrine issued "The Permission to Publish." That document draws on the 1983 code, a circular letter of 1990 from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and a 1992 Instruction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It identifies two primary forms of authorization, permission (*licentia*) and approval (*approbatio*), and notes that while the term "imprimatur" has become "customary" in the United States, it is not used to express either form of authorization in the law of the Latin Catholic Church. The writings that require permission include catechisms and books on "Sacred Scripture, theology, canon law, ecclesiastical history, and religious or moral disciplines, if they are to be used as texts upon which instruction is based."

Against this background, two recent cases put the question of censorship in a new light. As is well known, in 2011 the USCCB Committee on Doctrine issued a statement, declaring that Elizabeth A. Johnson's book *Quest for the Living God* "does not accord with authentic Catholic teaching on essential points." There followed significant public criticism of the statement as a misrepresentation of Johnson's book—a misrepresentation published, moreover, without prior discussion with Johnson herself (see *Commonweal*, June 3, 2011). These points were included in a response on April 9 from the Board of Directors of the Catholic Theological Society of America, which also noted that the committee's actions raised troubling issues "for the exercise of our vocation as theologians."

Commenting on the statement when it was made public on March 30, 2011, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, who chaired the committee, said that while "an imprimatur is not required for all books that treat Sacred Scripture and theology, it is still a recommended practice (see c. 827 §3). By seeking an imprimatur, the author has the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the bishop concerning the Catholic teaching expressed in the book." The Committee on Doctrine, Wuerl added, "is always open to dialogue with theologians and would welcome an opportunity to discuss Sr. Elizabeth's writings with her." The difficulty between the committee and Sr. Johnson might have been avoided, in other words, had she requested an imprimatur before publishing her book.

The cardinal's remark seemed implicitly to acknowledge that the range of publications requiring permission had been decidedly narrowed in recent decades, and that since *Quest for the Living God* was written as a theological exploration, *not* as a textbook, a request for permission to publish was not required, but merely recommended. The invitation to "dialogue" before publication, however, becomes less persuasive when one reads Johnson's response to the committee ("Observations," *Origins,* July 7, 2011). There she proposed ten issues for a dialogue with the committee, including as a

central point the difference between a work of catechetics and a work of theology. Yet no such dialogue ensued. (It is worth noting here as well that according to the norms established by Pope John Paul II in his 1998 Apostolic Letter *Apostolos suos*, the criticism of Johnson does not have the teaching authority of a doctrinal statement issued by the USCCB but is rather a judgment published by the conference's Committee on Doctrine.)

The second recent controversy concerning official church criticism is that surrounding Margaret Farley, RSM, the recently retired Yale ethicist and theologian. On June 4 of last year the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a Notification alerting the faithful that Farley's 2006 book, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics,* had been judged to contain positions not in conformity with the hierarchical teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on five specific issues of personal sexual morality. Reaction to the Notification among American Catholic theologians was again overwhelmingly negative, again raising the question: Is *this* a book for which an imprimatur would be required? And what sort of dialogue might one hope for between the author and her ecclesiastical critics?

The issue centers on what one considers a theologian's proper duty. In the Catholic Church theologians are called to interpret the gospel for today's world and to pursue that calling within a church understood to have a divinely assured teaching office. As the International Theological Commission's document of 2010 put it, "*Dei verbum* teaches that the Word of God has been 'entrusted to the church,' and refers to the 'entire holy people' adhering to it, before then specifying that the pope and the bishops have the task of authentically interpreting the Word of God. This ordering is fundamental for Catholic theology." "The *sensus fidelium*," continued the document, "is the *sensus fidei* of the people of God as a whole who are obedient to the Word of God and are led in the ways of faith by their pastors." In their attention to the *sensus fidelium*, "bishops and theologians have distinct callings, and must respect one another's particular competence, lest the magisterium reduce theology to a mere repetitive science or theologians presume to substitute the teaching office of the church's pastors."

Thus the work of theologians *develops* within an active, believing community, and does so both from and for that community. Often a theologian is called to interpret past or present official teaching. But often, too, he or she is called to explore questions arising out of new human situations, new understandings of the world of nature and of human personality—and may yield previously unrecognized truths that bear centrally on the conduct of human life. This, I would argue, is exactly what Dulles, Johnson, and Farley hoped to achieve.

The full equality of women in society strikes me as one such revolutionary truth, and the centrality and complexity of human sexuality as another. It is not surprising that such truths spark controversy. Any author who undertakes a creative approach to the sexual sphere of human relationships with an emphasis on how they might be newly understood and enacted through a fundamental understanding of justice is doing something exploratory. The issues dealt with in such an exploration will sometimes be troubling, and any proposed framework for addressing them often tentative. Such work may be accepted by church and society, or not. Yet just as the questions are new, so almost certainly must any answers be new. Only time will tell whether and to what extent they are found to be true. And then reform may or may not take place, guided by the light of a more just and humane future.

Just Love, it seems to me, is such an exploration. Clearly it is not a book to which canon 827 §2 applies. Nor does it claim to represent official church teaching on a number of topics it treats. But shouldn't the fact that it powerfully treats issues of violence against women and true justice for them in society have found more sympathy with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—after all, who would dare to say the church does not teach these things? While the situations of Avery Dulles, Elizabeth Johnson, and Margaret Farley differ in significant ways (one criticized by diocesan censors, one by an episcopal conference committee for opinions she denies she holds, and the last by a Vatican Congregation offering little if any argument for its Notification), each suggests a significant shift of emphasis and expectation concerning teaching in the church.

Though the controversies stirred up by these two more recent books may look like setbacks, it's clear to me that a great deal has changed with respect to censorship and the imprimatur in the post–Vatican II era. Despite the long history of misuse of censorship in its various forms, a document such as "Permission to Publish" may indicate a move toward less restrictive approaches not only to censorship, but to teaching altogether. I do not claim that such approaches make the teaching of bishops less valuable or the explorations of theologians less responsible to their communities. But I do believe that the council heralded a new, more pastoral and intellectually agile approach to evangelization—and that such a shift holds the promise of the future.

What seems certain is that if such a course had been followed in 1973, when Avery Dulles dutifully applied for an imprimatur for a book now deemed a classic, a needless rebuke to a man of undoubted orthodoxy—a man later deemed worthy to be a cardinal—might have been avoided. Dulles himself may have been a severe critic of some theological positions later in his career, but he also remained consistently averse to official censuring of theologians. "Flexibility is not the antithesis of structure," he wrote on the last page of *The Survival of Dogma*, "but the condition of preserving it in a changing world." And his book's warning epigraph came from Alfred North Whitehead: "Those societies which cannot combine reverence to their symbols with freedom of revision, must ultimately decay either from anarchy, or from the slow atrophy of a life stifled by useless shadows." ■

Larger than Legend

Saving Chesterton from the Chestertonians

Michael W. Higgins

Richard Linklater's bittersweet 2008 film *Me and Orson Welles* tells of an impressionable teenager who gets the chance to work with his idol, Orson Welles, in the famed Mercury Theater production of *Julius Caesar*, and in the process learns a great deal about the seductions of hero-worship. Unlike the Welles devotee in Linklater's movie, I never got to meet my hero, Gilbert Keith Chesterton (he died twelve years before I was born), but I did study under one of his *G. K.'s Weekly* staff members, Michael Sewell. By the time I met him, decades later, he was Brocard Sewell of the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance—an author, editor, and esteemed biographer of fin-de-siècle writers. Thanks to Sewell I read a list of eccentric English writers, including John Gray, Olive Custance, Montague Summers, and Cecil Chesterton. And through Cecil I encountered the brother in whose shadow Cecil lived.

Over four decades I have maintained an abiding interest in Chesterton, the gentle Catholic giant whose commanding breadth of interest, inexhaustible curiosity, and plenitude of mind and spirit make him an enduring inspiration. I have published on him, organized an academic conference on his life and thought, and written a radio play titled *GKC versus GBS: On Socialism, Sex, and Salvation*. The pleasures of Chesterton and Shaw are endless—intellectual adversaries whose exchanges over the decades were graced by civility and grand style. Chesterton delighted in mocking Shaw's Puritanism, teetotalism, and vegetarianism, and during one debate chided his fervid interlocutor for having distorted a claim, made by Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, on behalf of that most common and beloved of drinks: beer. Noting that "Belloc and I are not maintaining that beer is a glory, only that it is a normal habit and a natural right," Chesterton quipped, "We do not get excited about beer. It is Shaw who gets excited about beer. And it really seems a pity to get drunk on beer when you have not even drunk it." Through many such bantering exchanges Chesterton and Shaw remained respectful and affectionate friends, as the letter GBS wrote to GKC's widow, Frances, poignantly demonstrates: "It seems the most ridiculous thing in the world that I, eighteen years older than Gilbert, should be heartlessly surviving him," Shaw wrote. "The trumpets are sounding for him; and the slightest interruption must be intolerable."

Chesterton was thoroughly contemporary; he lived in his time and addressed it as an active, critical thinker. This is not to suggest that his thinking was without prejudice or blinders. Despite his prophetic denunciation of Hitler's persecution of the Jews, he was prey to the casual anti-Semitism endemic in Britain; his flirtations with the corporatist state disposed him, initially at least, to a sympathetic view of Mussolini; and his view of women was more courtly than enlightened. He opposed women's suffrage, arguing that women already ruled the world from the home. Yet when he died in 1936 his status as the Catholic of record seemed unassailable. His popularity in the public realm—Catholic and non-Catholic alike—easily surpassed that of many of the modern theological giants of the tradition, whether Karl Adam or Lord Acton. Despite his lack of formal training in

G. K. Chesterton

Michael W. Higgins *is vice president for Mission and Catholic Identity at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. He is currently writing the official biography of Henri Nouwen.*

the sacred disciplines, Chesterton seemed to be *the* voice of Catholicism in the first half of the twentieth century—and this despite the fact that he did not convert from Anglicanism until he was forty-eight years old.

But things changed. By January 1959—the month Pope John XXIII announced his decision to hold an ecumenical council that would become Vatican II—Thomas Merton was noting in his diary, with a large dollop of acerbity, that Chesterton's reputation was on the wane. Chiding Chesterton for his "complacent windiness," Merton dismissed him as "badly dated," with a "voice [that] comes out of the fog between the last two wars." Chesterton, he complained,

evokes problems that stand to become, for him, a matter of words. And he always has a glib solution. With Chesterton everything is "of course," "quite obviously," etc. etc. And everything turns out to be "just plain common sense after all." And people have the stomach to listen and to like it! How can we be so mad?

Half a century later, people again have the stomach for Chesterton's style, and a Chesterton revival is well underway, especially among "orthodox" Catholics. Several biographies over recent decades chart the path. Dudley Barker's *G. K. Chesterton: A Biography* (1973), Michael Ffinch's *G. K. Chesterton* (1986), William Oddie's *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy: The Making of GKC 1874–1908* (2008), and Ian Ker's magisterial *G. K. Chesterton: A Biography* (2011) all signal renewed interest in a man who was a literary force of nature—raconteur, controversialist, columnist, cartoonist, novelist, short-story writer, poet, essayist, editor, biographer, and popular historian.

The revival has been a long time in the making. Merton was right to suggest that in 1959 Chesterton's sensibility and attitude were dismissed by many as so much dated triumphalism; and the next decade or so witnessed Chesterton's near-complete eclipse. Then, in 1974, an entrepreneurial priest of the Congregation of Saint Basil, Ian Boyd, who did his doctoral dissertation on Chesterton at the University of Aberdeen, founded—with a cohort of like-minded enthusiasts—the Chesterton Society at Spode House in England, which published a journal called the *Chesterton Review*.

Initially the society was not seen as partisan; its vice-presidents included a liberal Canadian cardinal, George Flahiff, and the progressive U.S. public intellectual Garry Wills (author of one of the best books on Chesterton), and the journal's advisory board included such writers and critics as Hugh Kenner, Sheila Watson, and Marshall McLuhan. If the orientation was generally conservative, it was a broad conservatism, neither ideological nor narrowly Catholic in its appeal. In time, however, and especially after the election of John Paul II, the "official" Chestertonians became increasingly more assertive about GKC's place in the Catholic pantheon, extolling his special love for Poland—

increasingly seen as the geographical and spiritual heart of Christian civilization in an age of godless barbarism—and trumpeting his thought as the ideal expression of John Paul's social and economic teaching. Aligning themselves with right-wing think tanks in the United States and abroad, they became increasingly negative about postconciliar developments in the church. Today the *Chesterton Review* is published by the G. K. Chesterton Institute for Faith and Culture at Seton Hall University, and promotes a version of the Chestertonian vision that is traditionalist, if not downright reactionary.

Given GKC's radical love for the church, the affable intellectual pugilism that enabled him to demolish the arguments of his adversaries without a trace of personal contempt, his enviable ease with emissaries of the media, and his prominence not only in British society but throughout the world, it is easy to understand why many Catholics want to retrieve Chesterton from the battles of the past and ready him for the wars of today. But which wars? As noted, the Chesterton restoration is especially rife in the precincts of the theologically "orthodox." There is growing support for GKC's sainthood among powerful boosters—including Benedict XVI—who view him as the perfect British complement to the American television prodigy Fulton J. Sheen. Both men are model pillars for the architecture of a new, tradition-minded evangelization that is determined to resist secularization and committed to the recovery of lapsed Catholics, especially Catholics alienated by the reforms of Vatican II. Chesterton and Sheen fit the bill as media stars whose orthodoxy is considered beyond reproach.

What is it that makes Chesterton so appealing as a model for the new apologetics? In great measure the answer can be found in his confident epistemological realism. Things may not be what they appear to be, Chesterton averred, but they are what they are; when we distrust common sense, we dislodge the anchor that holds us to reality and readily become hostage to solipsism and antinomianism. His appeal can also be found in his repudiation of intellectual elitism, his profound belief in the democratic instincts of the ordinary person, and his corresponding disdain for the narrow cleverness of professional savants. Chesterton had little truck with those who created utopian systems, who misread dogma as constraint rather than creative limitation, or who preferred the novel to the traditional.

It's not difficult to see the attractiveness of Chesterton as a champion for Catholicism today. In a world where Christianity routinely faces derision, when its singular role in the shaping of Western civilization goes unacknowledged in the E.U. Charter, when its institutions and mores are increasingly proscribed, and when the authority of Peter is regularly devalued, Chesterton's modus operandi offers solace to a beleaguered body of the faithful, the holy remnant. But this is precisely where moderate Chestertonians like myself experience some unease; we flinch at the prospect of such a big-tent thinker—a writer possessed of a rare expansiveness of insight—recreated simply as Mr. Orthodoxy, both champion and captive of a cadre of rigorists who view themselves as sole gatekeepers to the Truth.

For these hounds of orthodoxy, Chesterton offers certitude in a time of disconcerting flux, stability in a time of chaos. In him they find reassurance that the essentials of the Christian tradition, the undiluted power of the gospel, and the saving function of the church can be communicated with amiable but passionate conviction—not because you need to persuade, but simply because what you say is true. They find in him the joy that comes with certainty. Journalist and evangelical polemicist Michael Coren views Chesterton as the model Catholic journalist, "who wrote the truth of permanent things, of first things, of Catholic things." The British writer Joseph Pearce sees in him the supreme expositor of orthodoxy, one who influenced such prominent English converts as Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene. And the prolific Chesterton aficionado Dale Ahlquist acclaims him "the complete thinker":

> Just as Chesterton warned that the popularization of Darwin would lead to a belief in mindless progressivism in politics, he warned early on that the popularization of Einstein would lead to an acceptance of relativism in philosophy.

Even an admirer of Chesterton, however, can see that this isn't complete thinking on Chesterton's part; it's partial, lazy thinking. He was a professional journalist who had not one but several daily deadlines, and his arguments sometimes suffered as a consequence. Chesterton could deflate the self-assured and the pompous with matchless facility; but he could also indulge in cheap caricaturing, deploy reductio ad absurdum arguments profligately, and play indulgently with paradox—in the process frequently confounding profundity with whimsy.

Ever the journalist, GKC was more interested in distilling the truth into his era's equivalent of a sound bite than in tentatively essaying its legitimacy. This is not to say he was incapable of an extended exploration of an idea, insight or thesis. His biographies of Blake, Dickens, Robert Browning, and others amply demonstrate his ability to weave a big tapestry—of work, life, and legacy—that introduces us afresh to figures we thought we already knew. But Chesterton's true métier, his genius really, was to probe, prod, and prognosticate. His analysis of the unchecked damage inflicted by market capitalism and Socialist statism looks impressively prophetic after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the global economic collapse that continues to afflict us. In *The Well and the Shallows* Chesterton makes clear the reasons for his detestation of capitalism: it undermines the family unit, corrupts domestic values, corrodes morality, usurps the right order of relationships by making the employer more important than the parent, and encourages "for commercial reasons, a parade of publicity and garish

novelty, which is in its nature the death of all that was called dignity and modesty by our mothers and fathers."

And lest the socialists or Communists think they have their man, Chesterton thunders in his *Autobiography*:

> I had early begun to doubt, and later to deny, the Socialist or any other assumption that involved a complete confidence in the state. I think I had begun to doubt it ever since I met the statesmen.

When it came to the church, however, this probing, prodding, and skeptical method—his calling into question the prevailing ideologies of his time—was never deployed. GKC could see no role for the committed Catholic dissenter, the institutional reformer. Translated to the ecclesial world, those very qualities that made him a perceptive critic of the corporate and political establishment, that ensured his independence from the dominant aesthetic and philosophical theories of the salon and the academy, simply fell apart.

Marshalling Chesterton's formidable gift for exposing cant and intellectual shallowness, many of his current disciples claim him as the apologist par excellence for Rome's new evangelization. But this claim fails to acknowledge how far the ecclesiastical world Chesterton so eloquently represented—the official church world, that is, leaving out the silenced Catholic giants in philosophy, theology, patristics, and liturgy who would be rehabilitated after the Second Vatican Council—has given way to a different theological environment. The Pilgrim People of God has replaced the *societas perfectae*; the laity today does more than simply submit faithfully to the miter, and the secular order is less to be feared and more to be embraced—albeit cautiously—as the place of God's enduring love.

The Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor, drawing on Robert Wuthnow's distinction between "seekers" and "dwellers," describes the former as those who wrestle with "the enigmas that accompany a life of faith," and the latter, in contrast, as those who rest secure in the organic tradition that feeds them, at peace and in deep conversation with an authority they trust. The aching search for authenticity in our postromantic and postmodern world—an incontrovertible sign of a transformative cultural shift—doesn't fit the religious imagination and discourse of the dweller. A Catholicism that traffics in easy certainties, meanwhile, may not seem credible to the religious seeker.

To a moderate Chestertonian like me, the reclamation of Chesterton as a seeker rather than a dweller represents perhaps the only way to free him from the stranglehold of his present-day champions. There are excellent reasons for doing this. The Chesterton who wrestled with the insecurities and trials posed by conflicting worldviews, who understood viscerally the dread of nihilism and unreality, and who sought the mystery of being with a capacious thirst—*this* is the Chesterton who can appeal to a twenty-first-century Catholic. Chesterton, one should recall, was no stranger to despair. As a youth, and particularly as an

art student at the Slade School of Art, he drank from the trough of contemporary pessimism and experienced, as he writes in his *Autobiography*,

> a strong inward impulse to revolt; to dislodge this incubus or throw off this nightmare. But as I was still thinking the thing out by myself, with little help from philosophy and no real help from religion, I invented a rudimentary and makeshift mystical theory of my own. It was substantially this: that even mere existence, reduced to its most primary roots, was extraordinary enough to be exciting. Anything was magnificent as compared with nothing.

In other words, Chesterton allowed himself to explore possibilities outside the orthodoxies of his age and culture; in order to be truly orthodox he needed at one point in his life to be genuinely heterodox. The seeker in him saved him, and made possible the dweller.

Those drawn to Christianity in the twenty-first century, meanwhile, will find in Chesterton a figure of fascination—a towering Victorian polymath whose range of intellectual curiosity was as expansive as his girth, and a writer at once amusing and very serious. The opening paragraph of *Autobiography* speaks volumes of a man who wrote volumes; it speaks to that grand magnanimity of spirit that drew me to read him so many decades ago:

> Bowing down in blind credulity, as is my custom, before mere authority and the tradition of the elders, superstitiously swallowing a story I could not test at the time by experiment of private judgment, I am firmly of opinion that I was born on the twenty-ninth of May, 1874, on Campden Hill, Kensington; and baptized according to the formularies of the Church of England in the little church of St. George opposite the large Waterworks Tower that dominated that ridge. I do not allege any significance in the relation of the two buildings; and indignantly deny that the church was chosen because it needed the whole water-power of west London to turn me into a Christian.

Playful, for sure, but ever earnest: these qualities attracted a wide audience among his contemporaries and continue to do so in our time. But the agreeable prose and warm persona would not be sufficient to command a perduring relevance by themselves. Similarly—and despite the stratagems of those who would now have him do battle on behalf of their assertive brand of theological conformity—one must note that as a Catholic *apologist* Chesterton is not timeless; indeed, his time came and went. As a Catholic *thinker*, however, a thinker for whom religion is constitutive of human meaning, and for whom the quest for God is a wondrous admixture of romance, myth, imagination, and reason—as this kind of thinker, Chesterton goes deeper and lasts longer. He is not about to fall back into obscurity. ■

Rand Richads Cooper

A Nation of Two

'AMOUR'

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

As part of my annual catching up with Oscar, I overcame my reluctance and saw Michael Haneke's *Amour*. Haneke's preoccupation with cruelty, both physical and psychological, typically makes for heavy going, and inclines one to approach any film of his titled "Amour" in the dread expectation of some appalling irony. He's one of those European directors (Lars von Trier is another) whose achievement is inseparable from the will to torment characters and audience alike; in place of *épater la bourgeoisie* he proposes *massacrer la bourgeoisie*, and thus subjects us to a family committing suicide in *The Seventh Continent*, and to the two-hour nightmare of *Funny Games*, in which a vacationing couple and their young son are set upon by two posh-seeming young men who knock at the door, asking politely to borrow an egg, then proceed to brutalize the family in a weekend of torture and death. Such cinematic sadism combines with an intense and enigmatic visual style to make Haneke that most problematic of directors: hard to watch, and hard to stop watching.

For me this knotty paradox was untied by his last film, *The White Ribbon*, a somber study of a village in Germany between the wars that hid its unstated subject—what sort of childhood created Nazis?—inside a meticulous portrayal of profoundly authoritarian family and communal relationships. Muted, dark, and finely observed, it derived its power from an immaculate restraint, à la Robert Bresson, and stirred up a quiet understated dread. It was as if Haneke had finally found his subject; he could stop gratuitously lacerating his characters and explore the pain that was already there. *Amour* continues this evolution, and in the process does something heretofore unthinkable for this director—expresses love, both between and for its characters. Its title turns out to be gratifyingly non-ironic.

The film's setup is simple. In a once-grand but now decaying Parisian apartment building, a couple in their eighties, Georges and Anne (French screen titans Jean-Louis Trintignant and Emmanuelle Riva), experience a drastic health setback in the form of Anne's stroke, and settle in its aftermath into a life of dependence and caretaking. Haneke keeps us entirely inside the apartment, giving us an unimpeded view of the intimacies, indignities, sorrows, and rages that beset a loving couple headed toward death. The claustrophobic quality of the film increases steadily as Georges, overwhelmed and sinking into despair, shuts himself off from all help and contact, brusquely rejecting the overtures of the couple's daughter, Eva (Isabelle Huppert).

Claustrophobia and despair are not new themes to Haneke. What is new is a recognition that humans can and do treat each other—sometimes over many decades—with tenderness and respect. Where *White Ribbon* was interested in people as types, and studied them, remorselessly, within a matrix of ideas about history and society, *Amour* conveys an unexpected readiness to treat Georges and Anne as individuals. They are at once any loving couple facing death and *this* loving couple. There is nothing gratuitous in what Haneke puts them through, never a moment when either they or we are subjected to anything more than what life—and death—themselves entail.

And that is surely enough. I can't recall any film, other perhaps than Cristi Puiu's *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*, that portrays dying more comprehensively, with such unsentimental detail. To anyone who has accompanied a loved one through a long death, *Amour* will be achingly familiar. Through Anne's suffering Haneke evokes the awful transformation that dying works on those we love—the strange and random callings-out, the hoots and howls of distress; the temporary upticks when the spirit of life returns briefly, bringing lucidity, only to slip away just as quickly. The downward curve is inexorable. "What happens now?" Eva asks in shock after observing her mother's decline for the first time.

"What happens is more of what has

been happening," he says. "It will get worse, and then it will be over."

Using the dreariest of colors, *Amour* paints a vivid portrait of marital love. Kurt Vonnegut, in *Mother Night*, described marriage as "a nation of two," and—for better and worse—Georges and Anne's marriage is just that. They seem very much cut off from others, willingly habituated to each other's company as exclusive life mates. Their routine depends on a steady exchange of comfortable old jokes and teasing banter, and when this routine begins to break down under the pressure of Anne's debility, both struggle desperately to prop it up; at one point, with Anne struggling to get words out, Georges leads her through a rendition of "Sur le Pont d'Avignon." Anne's physical neediness provokes poignant ironies; when Georges laboriously helps her get from her wheelchair to a living room chair, holding and hugging her as the two take tiny steps in tandem, we realize we are watching a sad simulacrum of a waltz. *Amour* is full of such heartbreaking moments. Paging through a photo album at the kitchen table, Anne murmurs, "It's beautiful." "What?" Georges asks. "Life," she whispers. "The long life."

The human story depicted in *Amour* is obvious and affecting, but the film's power and intricacy as a work of art are more subtle—hidden, in effect, by the seeming point-by-point factuality with which its anatomy of death proceeds. But Haneke does interesting things with the camera. Long takes from a fixed point of view accent the atmosphere of somber quietude. When a former music student of Anne's, now a celebrated concert pianist, comes to visit, unaware that Anne is unwell, Georges sits him in the living room while he goes to the bedroom to get Anne. Instead of following Georges, the camera stays on the young visitor, catching him as he waits with vague unease—instinctively nervous in the presence of some unhappiness he doesn't yet comprehend. In the film's opening scene, we look out from a stage as a large audience prepares to enjoy a concert. Amid the crowd we note, perhaps, the older couple, her white shirt making a glowing V as the lights go down. It is the one and only time, it turns out, that we will see Georges and Anne out and about in the world.

Haneke's strength has always been the power to unsettle; and this power, imbued with a new humanism, gives *Amour* mood combinations that his other films have never aspired to. The scrutiny he applies to human nature is rigorous but forgiving. For Georges and Anne, God is seemingly absent; we sense that art, music, and conversation have been both the currency of this couple's togetherness and their mutual joy and solace. But art provides solace only so far; after a certain point its beauty, all beauty, becomes unendurable. "Turn the music off," Anne says curtly, moments after requesting a favorite piano concerto; and when Georges complies, we understand how severely all the rituals and realities that have sustained them in their marriage are threatened by Anne's approaching death. In one fascinating sequence we dive into a montage of closeups of the landscape portraits that hang everywhere in their apartment, viewing them from ever closer perspectives until we seem to be actually inside the landscapes, as if escaping into a gleaming alternate world.

There is nothing random about these sometimes eccentric choices of perspective and framing. Throughout his film Haneke inserts brief and highly realistic renderings of non-real moments, representing dreams or wish fulfillments, as when Georges pictures Anne at the piano, playing as of old. Taken together, these excursions prepare the way for a carefully composed, mysterious, and deeply satisfying ending. Haneke's is a realism so austere that all poetry would seem to have been ruthlessly excluded. Yet in the end, *Amour* makes a surprising move toward metaphor and, perhaps, transcendence, via a closing scene in which Georges and Anne at last manage to escape the apartment that has both sustained and confined them. After long suffering and captivity—and after even longer love—the door opens, and the two inhabitants rise and walk briskly out, leaving only empty rooms. ■

Steve Futterman

Buried Treasure

Miles Davis Quintet
Live in Europe 1969
The Bootleg Series Vol. 2
Sony—Legacy Records, $49.98

When it comes to musical rediscovery, this is nothing less than a golden age. Consider the treasures unearthed in the past few years alone. Pop fans have been rewarded with the release of the Beach Boys' legendary, unreleased *Smile* project of 1966–67; country fans have precious, previously unheard Hank Williams tracks to sift through; and devotees of Barbra Streisand are enjoying a wealth of once-sequestered gems. The list goes on, spanning genres, with little slowdown in sight. The rule seems to be that if any significant music was ever recorded in the studio or in live performance—and obviously far more than we ever imagined has been—it will eventually be released for general consumption.

Case in point: Once, not a single officially released note existed from the mythic ensemble that Miles Davis led through the bulk of 1969, a fertile period that found the famed trumpeter and bandleader radically sculpturing jazz to his own image. But with the arrival of *Miles Davis Quintet: Live in Europe 1969—The Bootleg Series Vol. 2*, we now have three CDs of live performances as well as a DVD of the band captured in full flight. What did we do to deserve such riches?

Before the garlands are strewn, a bit of history. By the late summer of 1968, Davis was witnessing the second of his "classic" quintets dissolve. The celebrated five-piece of 1955–56 had featured the saxophone deity John Coltrane; the ensemble that had formed in September 1964 made brilliant use of a team of equally creative players: the tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter, the pianist Herbie Hancock, and the bassist Ron Carter. Each album that Davis recorded with this group seemed to make conscious evolutionary strides. You can hear them vigorously chip away at formal constraints still lingering from the bebop and hard-bop eras of the 1940s and '50s: landmark albums such as *Nefertiti* and *Miles Smiles* took full advantage of the spirit of musical freedom and inventiveness that fostered the creative music, no matter the genre, of the 1960s. But all great things come to an end, and with the departures of Hancock, Williams, and Carter, Davis made some decisive changes that would radically alter the character of his music.

MILESDAVIS.COM

Three young musicians, each as technically accomplished and venturesome as the others, came on board: the bassist Dave Holland, the drummer Jack DeJohnette, and the pianist Chick Corea. (Notice how the seven aforementioned teammates each went on to illustrious careers—Davis's unerring instinct for talent hadn't yet failed him.) The new quintet took to the road playing club and festival dates in the United States and making two European visits in 1969. Yet no albums documenting this transformation ever saw the light of day—

studio productions never took place, live recordings were never scheduled. While aficionados might get their hands on pirated bootleg recordings of live gigs that occasionally surfaced throughout the ensuing four decades, to the general public deprived of any evidence, "The Lost Quintet" took on legendary status. Those who were lucky enough to have heard Davis and crew in performance back then spoke of a roiling energy and bursting improvisational fervor that distinguished that ensemble from any of the trumpeter's previous bands. We had to take them at their word.

Until now. *Live in Europe 1969* captures the quintet during their summer and winter jaunts overseas. From note one of the set opener, the aptly named "Directions," the band kicks loose like a bronco released from the corral. Davis's new directions are clear. The influence of R&B and rock that Davis was obviously allowing to slip into his aesthetic can be felt most prominently in the sheer power of the band's attack rather than through any blatant borrowings of au courant pop styles.

Make no mistake, things have drastically changed: Corea is concentrating on electric piano; DeJohnette, uncontained, continually draws blood from his drum kit; Holland enthusiastically darts about, often eschewing a steady rhythmic flow; Shorter, his tenor work more abstract in nature than ever, is now also wailing on the higher-pitched soprano horn. And Davis reacts to the controlled tumult in kind; his trumpet solos rip through space, tone and pitch taking back seats to pure emotive expression.

Yet as the entire set affirms, the leader, for all his obvious daring, may have been the most conservative player in the band. Each of the four younger improvisers had been seriously affected by the proliferation of free jazz, the radical loosening of harmonic and rhythmic structures ushered in by Ornette Coleman at the turn of the '60s. Throughout all four discs there are plenty of extended passages of hairily abstract, open-ended improvisation, not for the faint of heart. The unexplored waters could often get too murky, as even Corea has since declared—it took Davis to pull the band into focus. You can hear this again and again, as a not always fully engaging group improvisation is brought back on track by a single defining trumpet note from the leader. The youngsters were obviously feeding Davis the energy and suspense that he thrived on, but the older master still needed to enforce formal boundaries to insure expressive depth.

That carried over to his vaunted sense of lyricism. Nestled among vigorous performances of such signature tunes as "Footprints," "It's About That Time," and "Nefertiti," as well as new pieces from his not-yet-released fusion breakthrough album *Bitches Brew*, including "Miles Runs the Voodoo Down" and the title track, are ruminative interpretations of Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight," Shorter's mysterious "Sanctuary," and—executed as a gorgeously restrained duet with Corea—the 1940s standard "I Fall in Love Too Easily." Davis could still break hearts with his wounded tone and exquisite sense of drama, and thankfully was still inclined to do so. (Speaking of old-school values, listen, on disc 3, as Corea's only extended appearance on acoustic piano adds subtle warmth to the band's sound.)

The DVD alone is worth the price and may actually be the best place to start the journey. Turning in a magnificent forty-five-minute set, the band interacts with coiled intensity, the visual element adding immeasurably to the power of the compressed performance. Davis, sweat pouring off his face as he bores deeper into each charged note, electrifies the screen with his unequaled charisma. In bringing back his much-missed presence, as well as provocative, often splendid, music we thought we might never get to hear, *Live in Europe 1969* is a gift. ■

Steve Futterman *has written about jazz for the* New York Times, *the* Washington Post, *and* Rolling Stone *and for the past two decades has contributed the weekly "Jazz and Standards" listings for the* New Yorker.

William L. Portier

More Mission, Less Maintenance

Evangelical Catholicism
Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church
George Weigel
Basic Books, $27.99, 280 pp.

In March of 1979, Pope John Paul II opened his first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, with these words: "The Redeemer of humanity, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history." This simple proclamation, coming as it did after the tumultuous decade that preceded the new pope's election, signaled his intent to reorient the church around its true center. In 1979 many saw the faith languishing amid the postwar dissolution of Catholic subcultures in Europe and the United States. John Paul II understood the sociological truism that living churches must evangelize or die, and did not wring his hands in anxiety about Catholic identity. In the spirit of Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii nuntiandi* and its reminder that the church exists to preach the gospel, he became the world's first evangelical pope. With his own preaching, from papal visits to world youth days, John Paul II initiated the "New Evangelization."

This programmatic vision of the church as agent of the New Evangelization is the primary basis for George Weigel's *Evangelical Catholicism*. In the Anglophone world, Weigel is arguably the most widely recognized interpreter of John Paul II. And while Avery Dulles twenty years ago was already using the term "evangelical" to specify the new thing John Paul II was up to, Weigel has his own particular take on Wotjyła's legacy—one deeply rooted in a particular religio-political location, a site staked out over the years by the late Richard John Neuhaus in such projects as the "Hartford Appeal," "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," and, preeminently, the magazine *First Things*.

Weigel divides his book into two parts, the "Vision of Evangelical Catholicism" and the "Evangelical Catholic Reform" of church life. Though he provides chapters on the lay vocation and the church's public-policy advocacy, he is primarily concerned with the church's internal life, and he devotes chapters to the episcopacy, priesthood, liturgy, consecrated life, the church's intellectual life, and the papacy. Weigel's vision of Evangelical Catholicism fits into an idiosyncratic historical narrative much indebted, as he acknowledges, to the scholar Russell Hittenger. In this framework Leo XIII emerges as the "founder of the modern papacy," while the years from John Paul II to Benedict XVI appear as "a pilgrimage from Counter-Reformation Catholicism to Evangelical Catholicism." The biggest losers are Vatican I (largely invisible through Weigel's "Leonine lens"); Vatican II, which provokes a crisis in Catholic identity; and Benedict, whom Weigel depicts as a transitional figure between the Counter-Reformation era's end, engineered by John Paul II's authoritative interpretation of Vatican II, and a future of Evangelical Catholicism. Weigel's sketch of this future Catholicism joins theological hallmarks of evangelical Christianity in America (e.g., "friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ" and the centrality of the Bible) with essential features of Catholicism such as liturgy and sacraments.


George Weigel

Evangelical Catholicism takes truth and mission as the criteria for authentic reform. Discussing the prophetic nature of reform—and obstacles to it—Weigel invokes the parable of the weeds and the wheat. Though he insists that the "deep reform" of his book's subtitle "is not a matter of preemptively burning out the weeds," it does "involve some radical clarification of what are in fact weeds." As this clarification unfolds, it becomes clear that, for Weigel, many self-identified Catholics don't even qualify as weeds. His sometimes chastening observations confound conventional political labels. The discourse of maturity in faith that he deploys to criticize merely canonical approaches to institutional maintenance in the church hints at his own liberal Catholic past, while references to John Paul II and the New Evangelization will strike some readers as conservative. But for Weigel, progressives and traditionalists are both "stuck within the

BASIC BOOKS

Counter-Reformation model" like "fossils in amber." This strikes me as dead right. Despite my affection for liberal Catholics, I agree with Weigel's judgment that they don't have the juice to pass on the faith to future generations. The historical and sociological conditions that help make liberal Catholics possible simply no longer obtain on any large scale. This is why, for the past fifteen years, I have been telling anyone who would listen that the future of the church will be evangelical.

Though Weigel is clearly aware of the history and sociology of American Catholicism, his account of Evangelical Catholicism fails, for the most part, to include these dimensions. This leaves him with a largely moral picture of how we make a difficult transition from the "Counter Reformation" era to a more voluntary, gospel-oriented Catholicism suited for religious life under pluralistic political conditions. Weigel's inflammatory language signals his in-your-face moralism. Take, for instance, his discussion of what he derisorily calls "baptized Catholic pagans." Having ceased to believe that the gospel is true, these pagans are in "psychological schism," yet still dare to maintain a canonically "legal residence" in the church. The failure of bishops and pastors to challenge part-time Catholics in a defective state of communion with the church is mere "institutional maintenance Catholicism." Such rhetoric amounts to a sustained sneer at any Catholic who disagrees with his analysis.

Though in Part 2 Weigel offers some insightful thoughts on bishops, clergy, the Mass, and the papacy (his treatment of the "ancient orientation" of the liturgy, for example, is worth reading for the sense it gives of Benedict XVI's intent in promulgating the "extraordinary form" of the Roman liturgy), the rancorous tone predominates. His treatment of the LCWR and the Jesuits, whom he lumps together with the Legionaries of Christ, epitomizes his take-no-prisoners approach, criticizing John Paul II's Vatican and its "mitred discussion leaders" for failing to take a sufficiently tough line in dealing with religious who are "de facto schismatics." A chapter on the church's intellectual life is disappointingly thin, and largely ignores the vitality, expressed in new journals, blogs, and professional societies, of cross-generational alternatives in post–Vatican II Catholic theology that are both ecclesially and intellectually rigorous.

But it is when *Evangelical Catholicism* focuses on marriage and life issues that Weigel most clearly reveals his religious politics. One might agree with him on the need for the "redemption of marriage amid a toxic cultural environment." Americans who have recently approved gay marriage laws, however, do not see them as harmful to traditional marriage, and reject the notion that opposition to gay marriage is "a rationally defensible matter of public order." In any case, scornfully denouncing a "'gay marriage' insurgency" and comparing it to Nazism and Stalinism is surely not the best way to promote the goods of marriage. This book was likely in preparation during the 2012 election campaign, and while Weigel mentions neither Mitt Romney nor Barack Obama—or their political parties—it's hard not to read the chapter on the church's "Public Policy Advocacy," with its emphasis on the failure of Catholics to exert sufficient "political muscle" in defense of marriage and life issues, as the author's postelection meltdown.

Weigel's argument on public policy situates life and marriage as central priorities in the New Evangelization's social doctrine. He argues that such priorities, being close to first principles of justice, take precedence over mere policy advocacy, and require a "paradigm shift" in advocacy at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which in his view can no longer function as just another "all-purpose public policy lobby." Such conceptual prioritizing may work in the abstract. But Weigel's way of combining Neuhaus's two kingdoms theology with the residual modern dualism in John Courtney Murray's theology of nature and grace troubles his own distinction between "first things" and policies. In effect, Weigel confuses his own prudential judgments about how to promote the goods of life and marriage in a pluralistic political environment with what the church teaches as revealed—while quarantining everything else to separate policy spheres in which the church is incompetent to speak.

It is time to admit that the "Americanist" tradition Weigel inherited from Murray and inflected with Neuhaus is dead. If there was ever a harmonious fit between America and the Catholic natural-law tradition, there certainly isn't now. Catholics will not save America, as Murray dared to hope in 1960. Neither City on a Hill nor pagan cesspool, the United States is just our country. Prolife Catholics must live and work politically with the majority of Americans who do not accept the church's teaching on life issues and marriage. They are left to make prudent judgments about how best to maximize good without sacrificing principle. I share Weigel's frustration with Catholics who are callously indifferent to this task. But for the rest, "first things" and policies are harder to keep separate than Weigel's easy distinction suggests.

The Counter Reformation–era Catholics he treats so dismissively did in fact possess a method of moral reasoning—namely, casuistry—designed to relate "first things" and policies. John Paul II gave casuistry a needed course correction in *Veritatis splendor,* but it remains central to Catholic moral thinking. Indeed, as his arguments in favor of preemptive war illustrate, Weigel himself knows how to use this tradition—and it is very much in play in some of *Evangelical Catholicism*'s better moments. For example, when he writes of those who "work to embody in law and public policy the *opposite* of the truths to which the Church witnesses," it's hard not to think that he has in mind direct formal cooperation in intrinsic evil. Weigel has to know how few of our political judgments land this cleanly. But his rhetoric makes it seem otherwise.

In the end I am of two minds about this book—enthusiastic, to the extent

that John Paul II's vision for the New Evangelization drives its reform proposals, yet wary of being bullied by Weigel into political positions I resist on prudential grounds. His Evangelical Catholicism, after all, is hardly a big-tent concept. Forget about the millions of "baptized pagans" he peremptorily dismisses; his church scarcely has room for those who *accept* church teachings as revealed yet don't share his practical political judgments about how to promote and defend them. In keeping with this tendentious streak, the book is marred by Weigel's consistently strident tone and eagerness for combat. Take, for instance, his characterization of Evangelical Catholicism as a "culture-forming counterculture"—an overheated term he invokes to set up an opposition to the "ambient public culture." As contemporary Americans we all participate in multiple cultural networks; and integrating our resulting divided loyalties is a task of ongoing conversion and the struggle to lead a virtuous life. How does Weigel's facile counterculture-versus-public-culture dichotomy promote the kind of serious reasoning that might convince people to form a culture based on the New Evangelization?

Such posturing can make the "New Evangelization" sound arcane or even ominous. But, as Cardinal Angelo Scola once said, it's simply the evangelization we need now. Despite *Evangelical Catholicism*'s hectoring tone and the particular set of political judgments into which it straitjackets John Paul II, readers ultimately can't afford to ignore Weigel. When Cardinal John O'Connor of New York died, Geraldine Ferraro wrote an appreciation remembering him as a beloved pastor who not only publicly questioned how some of her policy positions could be compatible with her faith, but also met regularly with her for lunch and counsel. This is how it should be among evangelical Catholics, and I think—and hope—that Weigel would agree. ■

William L. Portier *holds the Mary Ann Spearin Chair of Catholic Theology at the University of Dayton.*

Luke Timothy Johnson

God's Eye View

Balthasar
A (Very) Critical Introduction
Karen Kilby
Eerdmans, $23, 188 pp.

A half-century after the opening of the Second Vatican Council, it is worth remembering that many important twentieth-century Catholic theologians suffered years of neglect, rejection, or official condemnation before finding vindication at the council. Among those disciplined or silenced by the Vatican were Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, Teilhard de Chardin, Henri de Lubac, and John Courtney Murray. After decades of steadfast struggle to engage theology with the philosophical and cultural challenges posed by modernity, these theologians succeeded in helping shape a new framework for the church in the modern world. Yet although their work fundamentally shaped the documents of the council, the full impact of their ideas continues to be resisted by the Vatican—and none of them sits at the center of theological excitement in the increasingly conservative church of the early twenty-first century. Today the buzz belongs instead to Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Hans Urs von Balthasar and Henri de Lubac

Karen Kilby's excellent introduction to the Swiss theologian notes that Balthasar's career had the same basic pattern as his contemporaries', but with an even longer period of neglect. Unlike many of his peers, Balthasar owed this neglect not to his theological opinions so much as to his personal life decisions. Receiving his doctorate in German literature and philosophy at twenty-three, he joined the Jesuits; upon finishing his training, he was offered a position at the Gregorianum in Rome but chose instead to be a university chaplain at Basel. There, together with Adrienne von Speyr, a Protestant doctor and mystic, he founded a lay institute, the Community of St. John. Balthasar's involvement with the institute led him to leave the Jesuits in 1950. Cut adrift from institutional security, he supported himself as a lecturer until he was finally incardinated as a diocesan priest in 1956. The same year, he took up residence with von Speyr and her husband. Until her death in 1967, and after, Balthasar devoted great energy to making von Speyr's mystical teachings known. Late in life he also became a fervent supporter of the Marian apparitions at Medjugorje.

Although outside the official loop, Balthasar was well-connected—he counted Karl Barth and Henri de Lubac among his admirers—and extraordinarily productive. In addition to the fifty-plus books he wrote himself, some of them fresh and valuable studies of patristic authors, he midwifed, via dictation, dozens of books by von Speyr concerning her mystical experiences and insights. Balthasar's own works are marked by an astonishing level of erudition across all the humanities; he was described by de Lubac as perhaps the "most cultivated [man] of his time." The work that established him as a theologian stretches across sixteen volumes: *The Glory of the Lord* (seven volumes), *Theo-Logic* (three volumes), and *Theo-Drama* (five volumes, plus an epilogue).

Though he was not invited to participate as a *peritus* at the council, Balthasar in time enjoyed a vindication exceeding that of almost anyone else. His reputation grew, and kept growing. He received honors from universities and was one of the founders of the international journal *Communio*. John Paul II made him a cardinal in 1988, declaring him "a great son of the church." Balthasar died three days before he could be installed; at his funeral, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger declared that "the church itself... tells us he is right in what he teaches of the faith." Unlike many of his theological contemporaries who sought to engage modernity, Balthasar set himself resolutely against its premises. Needless to say, since the council this stance has increasingly been very much the Vatican's own. Balthasar now enjoys widespread academic attention and such favor that he can be called (as he is on the cover of his *Heart of the World*) "one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century, perhaps of all time."

Kilby views Balthasar as a fascinating thinker, but she is skeptical about his reputation as a theological innovator and giant, and seeks to provide a more balanced view. With welcome clarity she lays out the reasons an honest critical assessment of the theologian has proven so difficult. The sheer volume of his production is daunting; his approach to systematic theology is highly original, even eccentric; and although some of his shorter works are accessible—such as his little book on prayer—he typically

wrote in a discursive style that Kilby terms a "fog of impenetrability." Argument as such is almost absent from his work, replaced by a never-ending stream of confident assertions. One of the most disconcerting things about Balthasar, Kilby notes, is how he seems to float above particulars, assembling them according to his own vision of the whole—serenely confident that readers will either get it or not, but finding no need to persuade them.

Aptly Kilby characterizes Balthasar as an "unfettered" theologian. Something of an autodidact, with the mystic von Speyr his most important teacher, he remained largely unattached to ecclesial or academic structures and thus had no one to curb his worst tendencies through criticism. Such an unfettered life, Kilby acknowledges, gave Balthasar a remarkable freshness of approach. He never would have built his systematic theology on the basis of aesthetics had he been shaped by the theology of his day, nor would he have moved so widely among ancient and contemporary writers. But this autonomous status encouraged what Kilby views as the greatest weakness in Balthasar's thought: "a theology which often goes too far, which knows and asserts too much, which argues too little, which has a persistent tendency to exceed all bounds—a theology, indeed, that does not seem to hold itself accountable to Scripture, tradition, or its readers, but somehow soars above them all."

Ample support for this assessment buttresses the four chapters that constitute the bulk of this study. Bathasar was a profoundly non-linear thinker, and Kilby appropriately devotes two chapters to central images or patterns that recur in his work and define how he approached theological questions. "The Picture and the Play" addresses the aesthetic dimensions of Balthasar's thought: the importance of the experience of beauty, of "seeing the form" as a means of participating in being, and the use of drama as a means of speaking both about human experience and history and (above all) about the inner life of the triune God. "Fulfillment and the Circle" identifies habits and patterns in Balthasar's thinking. His emphasis on "fulfillment"—on replacing the inadequate with the adequate—applied not only to Christ as the fulfillment of other religions, but also to his own theological positions over against others—to his belief that his solutions were not only better than others, but that they subsumed and elevated what was good in the others. The "circle" identifies Balthasar's characteristic way of moving around a central mystery, avoiding a premature definition and seeking "from countless perspectives" to locate lines of convergence that point to a truth. Given the difficulties of getting a grasp on Balthasar's vast and intricate corpus of writings, Kilby's indirect approach to it, through image and pattern, is both helpful to the reader and consonant with her subject's own habits.

With great nuance *Balthasar* examines two of the theological topics that have helped shape its subject's reputation both positively and negatively. Kilby's analysis of Balthasar's Trinitarian theology applauds the way in which he integrates soteriology with the life of the Trinity: Christ simply is his mission in the world, and that mission brings the life of God into history. At the same time, in Kilby's view, Balthasar's distinctive position concerning Jesus' death on the cross (that it involved the descent of Christ into hell as a form of ultimate alienation from God) threatens to bring "elements of darkness into the divine light," and leaves her puzzling at both the astonishing vividness of Balthasar's account—how can he possibly know all that he asserts?—and at his tendency to project human experience into the divine life.

Balthasar's notions on "Gender and the Nuptial" receive Kilby's most withering criticism, and it is not hard to understand why. The theologian's thinking about male and female was essentialist and conservative, if not reactionary. Configuring the male as active and the female as passive, he projected these gender characteristics onto God (always male), humans (female in relation to God), and even onto the inner life of the Trinity (the divine "holy family"). This could justifiably be called theology as projection. Kilby shows convincingly that Balthasar's conception of the "nuptial mystery" is not derived from Scripture, but rather constitutes a pervasive premise that shapes his anthropology, Christology, Mariology, ecclesiology, and Trinitarian thought. To make bluntly explicit what Kilby is too careful and fair to say directly, Balthasar's elaboration of this theme is not only "original," it is quite loony. There can be little doubt, moreover, that it is precisely this aspect of Balthasar that makes him especially appealing to a Vatican stiffly resistant to broadening the role of women in the church (see my July 14, 2006 *Commonweal* review of Cardinal Angelo Scola's *The Nuptial Mystery*).

With typical evenhandedness, Kilby closes her book by asking whether she has been fair in arguing "that Balthasar's theology is fundamentally over-reaching, that it silently presumes a position which by its own account ought to be

impossible"—namely, that the theologian, despite claims to theological humility, assumes a "God's Eye" command of reality. She approaches this question from three directions. First, she takes up de Lubac's statement that truth is symphonic, and concludes that "the way Balthasar writes about the symphony of revelation is a way which would not be possible if it really is *God*'s symphony, [but rather] a way which would only be possible if it is in fact Balthasar's symphony." Second, taking up the claim that Balthasar's theology is distinctively a "kneeling theology" that dissolves the distinction between theology and sanctity, she concludes that his work is less a theology driven by prayer than one redolent of spiritual direction, in which Balthasar "conflates the authority of the spiritual guide and the authority of the scholar"—and makes even more dangerous his claim "to know more than can be known." Finally, in response to the notion that *all* theologians do what Balthasar does, Kilby compares his tacit assumption of omniscience to the open and transparent method of Thomas Aquinas, whose dialectical approach makes objections explicit and demands argument as well as assertion.

This tough-minded yet irenic essay will not please those already convinced of Balthasar's superiority to all other theologians, but it is extraordinarily helpful to those who want to know what the excitement is about—and what the limits to that excitement ought to be. Kilby measures out the good—"Balthasar in fragments is important and worth pursuing, for there is much to learn from, to borrow, to develop"—then offers a measured warning. "When one tries to follow Balthasar as a whole, to treat him as one's theological guide, as a contemporary Church Father, then he in fact becomes dangerous," she writes. "The one thing in my view that one ought *not* to learn from him is how to be a theologian." ■

Luke Timothy Johnson *is the R.W. Woodruff Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University.*

Rita Ferrone

Praying with the Council

Vatican II
The Battle for Meaning
Massimo Faggioli
Paulist Press, $14.95, 144 pp.

True Reform
Liturgy and Ecclesiology in *Sacrosanctum concilium*
Massimo Faggioli
Liturgical Press, $19.95, 168 pp.

The fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council has produced a flurry of publications, programs on college campuses, and events in parishes to celebrate, review, and evaluate the council and its effects. Within this full array of appraisals, memoirs, and analyses, some stand out as contributions of lasting value. Two books by Massimo Faggioli belong in this category: *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning*, and *True Reform: Ecclesiology in* Sacrosanctum concilium.

Faggioli is an Italian scholar who studied church history under a renowned expert in the history of Vatican II, Giuseppe Alberigo of the University of Bologna. (Faggioli's doctorate is from the University of Turin.) Since 2009 Faggioli has taught at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. A prolific writer, he has published many articles, but these are his first books in English. *The Battle for Meaning* will appear also in Italian (Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna) and Portuguese (São Paulo, Editora Paulinas Brasil). *True Reform* will be published in Italian as well.

The Battle for Meaning is a thoughtful, nuanced, and wonderfully documented presentation of the history of interpretation of Vatican II. The story itself supplies plenty of drama, as the past fifty years have seen any number of conflicting interpretations arise. Faggioli organizes his observations under several headings: interpretations which question the legitimacy of the council, interpretations which see the council as a point of departure, the conflicting assumptions of neo-Augustinians and neo-Thomists, and the "clash of nar-

POPE JOHN XXIII AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, OCTOBER 11, 1962 / CNS PHOTO / L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

ratives" ("event" versus text, continuity versus discontinuity). The final chapter identifies some overarching issues, such as whether the council represents an end or a beginning, how the texts of the various documents interact, and how change and historicity have been integrated into our understanding of theology and church.

Finally, there is an epilogue in which he argues for the continuing importance of Vatican II and its interpretation both for the internal life of the church and for its relations with the world outside. He notes a certain "underestimation" of the council's value at the present time. "What is disturbing, especially in the last few years, is that younger generations of Catholics have been credited by theological pundits with a detached or even skeptical view of Vatican II that symbolizes polarization, culture wars, and division in the church—something these younger generations allegedly feel the need to take distance from, as if the common ground they seek could only be a ground as distant as possible from Vatican II." He contests this claim from his experience as a teacher, but more importantly the book itself is an antidote to any attempts to write off the council as yesterday's news.

The book will surprise and delight a wide range of readers, from those who know little about the council to those who have studied it and reflected on it over time. I was interested, for example, to read his illuminating description of the 1985 synod, and his account of "Vatican II beyond Rome," which included ecumenical dialogue, feminist and liberation theologies, and Catholic theology in Asia, Africa, and Australia. His notes and bibliography provide ample resources for further reading and study.

The more ambitious work—and ultimately the more important contribution to the discussion of Vatican II—is *True Reform*. The title alludes to Yves Congar's *True and False Reform*. The thesis of the book, however, is inspired by Giuseppe Dossetti, who claimed that the council's Constitution on the Liturgy enjoys not only chronological priority as the first document issued by the bishops, but also theological priority because of the ecclesiology it embodies.

Faggioli takes this insight and develops it vigorously and in depth. The resulting work lays out the connections between liturgy and the fathers of the church, liturgy and ecumenism, liturgy and rapprochement with the outside world, and—not least—between liturgy, life, and mission. The eucharistic ecclesiology of *Sacrosanctum concilium*, the first document of the Second Vatican Council, is more radically ressourced, he argues, than the ecclesiology of *Lumen gentium*, which sought to balance Vatican I with Vatican II. The liturgy constitution changed the landscape of our imagination concerning who we are by how it framed our act of worship. Scripture, baptism, and Eucharist became central. The liturgy as it is reformed expresses a self-understanding that serves as the springboard for ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. Without the liturgical reform, in short, you don't have Vatican II.

I was particularly struck by the richness and multifaceted dynamism of the liturgical reform that Faggioli describes. *True Reform* could be read as an introduction to the layers of meaning implicit in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, within the context of the whole of the council.

Given recent developments (specifically, the reintroduction of the unreformed Missal for unrestricted use, and the overtures to the Society of Saint Pius X) that seem to suggest that the liturgical reform is "disposable," this work is both thought-provoking and timely. It also questions the way the Constitution on Liturgy has been discussed and understood by liturgists. Technical, political, and aesthetic issues have predominated, at the expense of a deep appreciation of the eucharistic ecclesiology of the reform. Faggioli argues that, ironically, the only people who have grasped the deep implications of the liturgical reform are the ones who have opposed it. ■

Rita Ferrone *is the author of* Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium *(Paulist Press). She blogs at dotCommonweal.*

Thomas J. Reese

When in Rome...

The Vatican Diaries

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Power, Personalities, and Politics at the Heart of the Catholic Church

John Thavis

Viking, $27.95, 336 pp.

It's been a long time since I have read a book about the church that made me laugh out loud. In *The Vatican Diaries*, John Thavis presents many stories that will make you laugh or cry. Few people know the Vatican as well as Thavis. For more than twenty years, he covered the Vatican as the Rome bureau chief of Catholic News Service. Over the years he developed inside sources and expertise—he even took courses in Latin so he could read Vatican documents before they were translated.

The most amusing parts of the book deal with journalists trying to cover the Vatican, especially while traveling with the pope. Riding in the pope's plane is a highly sought and expensive privilege, but not one that makes covering him easy. Often those who fly with the pope see less of him than those who stay in the press room and watch on television. Vatican handlers, crowds, and security procedures challenge even the most resourceful reporters.

Among many tales, Thavis provides the inside dope behind the smoke that was supposed to announce the election of Pope Benedict XVI. By tradition, the papal ballots are burned after every round of voting. White smoke means we have a pope. Dark smoke means we don't. In 2005, however, the stove used for burning the ballots had a new design; it hadn't been tested. The smoke that appeared after Benedict was elected was neither dark nor white. There was a backup plan: once a pope had been elected, St. Peter's largest bell would ring. But the man responsible for ringing that bell wouldn't do so until he got word through proper channels. He refused to accept the word of a Swiss Guard. Confusion over the signal appears to be a Vatican tradition. Thavis relates that earlier in his career he saw a newspaper editor use Wite-Out to lighten the smoke in a photograph before publication.

Thavis's stories are not only funny but informative. For example, he tells how a journalist on the airplane heading to Brazil asked Pope Benedict whether he agreed with the Mexican bishops' excommunication of politicians who voted to decriminalize abortion. "Yes, this excommunication was not something arbitrary but is foreseen by the Code of Canon Law," the pope replied. "It is simply part of church law that the killing of an innocent baby is incompatible with being in communion with the Body of Christ. Thus, the bishops didn't do anything new, anything surprising or arbitrary." Though Benedict spoke for another twenty minutes, reporters "had heard two magic words: 'abortion' and 'excommunication,'" Thavis writes. The story hit the news wires almost immediately because reporters can now file stories from the air.

Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi, SJ, was soon spinning the pope's response because the facts presented in the reporter's question were wrong. The Mexican bishops had not excommunicated anyone, he pointed out. In trying to be supportive of the Mexican bishops, the pope had "waded straight into the swamp," Thavis writes. Lombardi had little luck correcting the coverage. "I'm not going to use that," one U.S. reporter explained. "It ruins the story." Experienced reporters like Thavis knew that canon law stipulates excommunication for those directly involved in an abortion, not for legislators who helped make it possible. Still, journalists were wondering how Pope Benedict could say what he did because, as former head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he would know that "the Vatican's own legal experts would consider automatic excommunication of proabortion politicians a misapplication—an abuse—of canon law," according to Thavis.

ANDREAS TILLE

Eventually, Lombardi offered more clarification: The pope was not saying proabortion politicians were excommunicated, but that they should exclude themselves from Communion. It was not until Lombardi said that he was "authorized" to make that clarification that the skeptical reporters began sending revised stories to their editors. "Authorized" is Vatican code for "it came from the pope." When the official Vatican transcript of the press conference was published, the pope's words were changed. Still, as Thavis notes, a question remained: How "this pope, reputedly the sharpest mind in the Vatican, could fumble so badly on an issue he had followed so closely."

In another behind-the-scenes account, Thavis reminds readers of Benedict's first homily after being elected pope. The sermon surprised journalists, not because it was in Latin, but because it stressed the importance of Vatican II as a "compass" for his papacy. He expressed the desire for "open and sincere dialogue" with everyone. He talked of ecumenism and the church's efforts to promote justice and peace. That was not a typical Ratzinger talk, and it was seen as an indication that he saw the job of pope as quite different from that of being prefect of the Congregation for

the Doctrine of the Faith. The media announced that the inquisitor had become a pastor.

Some time later, Thavis asked the Vatican Latinist Reginald Foster about the sermon. Foster guffawed. "Are you kidding? That was just a canned thing. We wrote it a week before the conclave!" Foster continued: "They needed something to hand the new pope, something all-purpose, got it? We had him say something about everything. It was generic: Vatican II was great, a bit about war and peace, something nice about young people, ecumenism, the whole bag." Thavis reread the homily in this light and concluded "it was Vatican boilerplate—surprisingly well-assembled boilerplate, though."

Of course, there are also chapters dealing with the dark side of the church. Thavis examines the inability of the Vatican to deal with the sexual abuse committed by the late Marcial Maciel Degollado—founder of the Legionaries of Christ—until almost the end of his life. Thavis also chronicles the on-again-off-again courting of the schismatic Society of St. Pius X. Another chapter deals with the Vatican's attitude toward sex.

In the final chapter, Thavis returns to the difficulty reporters have had covering Pope Benedict. "The consensus view was that the pope's media problem was that he hadn't defined himself, a failure that handicapped reporters tremendously. To sell the pope as a story, he had to have a persona—good or bad, but something with global impact. From the day of his election, the media had been searching for a Benedict persona, but nothing stuck." Reporters moved from "Benedict the Gentle," with his supposed love of cats, birds, and other animals, to "Benedict the Bold," who was going to undo the liturgical changes of Vatican II. Then for a brief period it was "Benedict the Green," because solar panels were installed on the Vatican's audience hall. And while Benedict saw himself as a teacher, reporters found this a hard sell with editors, especially when he avoided topical issues. As a result, Benedict was more apt to make the news when there were blunders, such as the negative reference to Islam in his Regensburg address, or his reference to excommunication on the plane to Brazil. And many of the gaffes reported in the media were not committed by Benedict but by underlings who were thought to speak for the pope.

As much as I liked *The Vatican Diaries*, I want Thavis to write another book—one in which he draws on his expertise to tell us how to reform the Roman curia. In the meantime, however, this book can be read and enjoyed by anyone interested in what really happens in Rome. ■

Thomas J. Reese, SJ, *author of* Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church, *is director of the Religion and Public Policy Program at Woodstock Theological Center.*

CLASSIFIED

RATES: $1.25 per word; 3-line minimum. Discounts: 3 times, 5 percent; 6 times, 10 percent; 12 times, 15 percent. Advance payment required. Discounts and monthly billing available for repeat advertisers. For additional information, contact Regan Pickett at: commonwealads@gmail.com.

Adult Faith Study

SYMBIOTIC Evolution. Ecumenical EUCHARIST. Download www.WordUnlimited.com

Book

The Tears I Couldn't Cry: Behind Convent Doors by Patricia Grueninger Beasley, pub 2009 AuthorHouse, ISBN 9781438962900

Award-winning memoir raises questions: Were sisters no more than pawns? Where were justice and accountability? Available at amazon.com. See customer reviews.

The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests seeks a Managing Director

The Applicant can familiarize him/herself with the Association's mission, vision, and guiding principles as found on its website: www.uscatholicpriests.org where information is posted ("Managing Director") on the Position Overview, the Managing Director responsibilities, required knowledge, abilities, and skills as well as useful competencies and characteristics, along with the manner to submit an application. Info4@uscatholicpriests.us

CNS PHOTO / PAUL HARING

On the Piazza

Grant Gallicho

Outdoor papal Masses are always a strange combination of stargazing and solemnity, and, at least in that regard, Francis's inaugural was no different. I inhaled secondhand smoke while watching a habited nun kneel on cobblestones for the consecration. And nearly tripped over a family having a picnic on my way to receive Communion.

But the surprising, even unfamiliar character of Francis's inaugural Mass was evident from the start. As he zigzagged through the piazza in the open-air popemobile, he made eye contact with people in the crowd, had brief conversations with some, gave a thumbs-up to others, stopped to bless a disabled man, and instructed his security to allow a child to be passed over the fence for a hug. Nearby photographers nearly passed out—and one father tried to persuade his young son to make a run for the popemobile; the boy wasn't going for it. But everyone else was.

Crowds rushed the barricades, waving smartphones and tablets, scrambling for a picture of the new pontiff. (They wouldn't be able to upload anything for hours—Rome's already weak cellular network had been overwhelmed by the masses.) Nervous security agents shouted down those who tried to climb over. Swiss Guards stood by, looking fabulous.

Many Catholics on the piazza had never seen a pope like this. Young people were everywhere, and from everywhere. Argentina (naturally), France, Spain, Brazil, the United States, the UK, Africa, Asia. Even though a national holiday had been declared in Italy, there weren't nearly as many Italians in attendance as there had been the night Francis was elected. Maybe they were poped out. Or dissuaded by news reports that a million people were going to show up for Mass (where they would fit was not explained—the piazza holds about two hundred thousand). Still, the Italians were there in spirit, as people from all countries had adopted their chant: "Viva il papa! Fran-ces-co! Fran-ces-co!"

While few of the young people I encountered had deep knowledge of the new pope—"He's a Jesuit?"—they had read his early signals loud and clear: humility, mercy, attention to the Spirit. "That he would come out on the balcony of St. Peter's and ask us to pray for him before he prayed for us," a college-aged American woman said, echoing the remarks of almost everyone I spoke with. "I couldn't believe it. He bowed—to us." And another: "He lived with the poor. He's a man of the people."

Some had simply come for the spectacle: "I'm not Catholic, but I wanted to see what this was all about," one twenty-something Londoner told me. "I won't stay too long." Others weren't terribly taken with the pandemonium: "I don't know if I got a lot out of it," an American student confessed. "My grandmother would have."

Nearly all the younger Catholics I talked with brought up four issues without prompting: homosexuality, the sexual-abuse scandal, tolerance, and women. "The church should be more accepting," a teenager told me. Of what? "Gay marriage." A secondary-school teacher said that "the biggest challenge Francis faces is making the church safe for children." A college student raised in the Philippines recalled dinners her parents would host featuring members of several religious traditions. "There were no arguments. People got along. We need more of that." The church "keeps women down," a high-schooler flatly declared. "Yeah, I want the next pope to be a woman," her friend joked—before expressing her sincere desire for the pope to "bring back Latin."

None showed resentment for the ways in which the church fell short of their hopes. Indeed, the question of whether Francis would actually change the church to suit their wishes seemed not to occur to them. They were caught up in the moment, witnessing history, surprised by this soft-spoken man who had just told the world that he wanted his papacy to be one of service.

And the kids weren't the only ones who were impressed. A late-middle-aged woman waxed ecstatic about Pope Francis. A lapsed Catholic, she wondered whether he might bring her back to the church. "The Holy Spirit has come," she laughed, looking up at the first blue sky after days of rain. "And so has spring." ■

Grant Gallicho *is an associate editor of* Commonweal.

Now available for the iPad

- Single issues or annual subscriptions
- Enhanced multimedia content

Available on the App Store

Visit commonwealmagazine.org/digital for all our digital options.