A Review of Religion, Politics & Culture

Commonweal

JUNE 1, 2013

THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN SAINT
KATHLEEN SPROWS CUMMINGS

CARDINAL O'MALLEY'S BIG DIG
LUKE HILL

THE TRIALS OF JACQUES DUPUIS
MATTHEW ASHLEY

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LETTERS

Marriage, papal names, Guantánamo Bay

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

As strongly as Andrew Koppelman critiques *What Is Marriage?* ("More Intuition than Argument," May 3), his own argument runs in strange symmetry with that of the three authors whose reasoning he rejects. For the authors of *What Is Marriage?,* homosexual people are unable to marry: "There is no bodily good or function toward which their bodies can coordinate." The case is open-and-shut. But the same goes for Koppelman. Marriage, he says, "is not 'essentially' anything. It is a contingent cultural formation." Now that Gallup has shown that 53 percent of Americans approve of same-sex marriage, it is time for a redefinition: marriage is "a practice which can be modified freely as our understanding of human needs change." Again, open-and-shut. In both cases, for and against, we have marriage in the head (D. H. Lawrence famously complained against attempting to figure out "sex in the head"). Catholics have every reason to doubt the open-and-shut case on both sides of the argument.

Koppelman has written prodigiously on the subject of gay marriage, including an article in a Minnesota law journal eight years ago, in which he claimed the debate over gay marriage is "administrative." The debate concerns "nothing as exalted as intrinsic value. It is the more mundane question of how resources should be allocated." Take a head count about how to allocate resources, and we have a definition of marriage—at least for a while. But marriage *is* something. Vatican II called it a *totius vitae communio*, a communion of total life. The question is whether homosexual persons are able to live such a communion. We don't need marriage in the head. We need the witness of virtuous homosexual people who over time will teach us whether their lasting commitments are marriages in the way that the lasting commitments of heterosexual couples are. Catholic theologian Rosemary Haughton showed the way ahead almost forty years ago, when she wrote: "Although truth itself, the eternal wisdom, is unchanging, the discovery of truth and wisdom by human beings is a long, strange, and unpredictable voyage of exploration, in which new kingdoms are discovered in every era. Old insights are added to new ones, modifying both and enriching the Christian heritage of each generation with new treasure. Yet the search is never over, the full wisdom is always beyond the reach of human language, however inspired." When it comes to homosexual marriage, we are on that voyage of discovery. People of virtue will help us find the truth here.

WILLIAM McDONOUGH
Minneapolis, Minn.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Paul Moses asks, "Why 'Francis'?" and answers that the new pope's choice of a title indicates "that he places humility and compassion for the marginalized at the heart of his ministry" (April 12). I ask: "Why not George?" Why choose any imperial throne name, be it Francis or Pius or Leo, over one's baptismal name? How does this pretention of royalty serve as a sign of humility? How does the practice of adopting a regal title square with the teachings of Vatican II on the primacy of baptism? Have we Catholics become so accustomed to ecclesiastical titles that we are no longer able to sense their inherent incongruity? In his 1979 book *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, Raymond Brown wrote: "I wonder what impression a future pope might make upon being elected if he decided not to accept a special regal name but to retain his baptismal name by which he was sealed as a Christian and made known to Jesus Christ. That gesture would demonstrate the belief that an identity as a Christian is

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THE LAST WORD

more important than an identity gained from authority." I wonder how long we must wait for a bishop of Rome humble enough to keep his or her baptismal name.

WILLIAM HUNT
Somerset, Wisc.

SHARED SHAME

Regarding your May 17 editorial "Broken Promises": President Barack Obama recently addressed the hunger strike at Guantánamo Bay, saying, "I don't want these individuals to die." But his promise to close that prison five years ago remains unfulfilled, and some will die. This prison is recognized around the world as a shameful place of torture, and as a symbol of America's disregard for international law. Amnesty International called it a "toxic legacy" for human rights. Guantánamo Bay prison shows how we have become like those we abhor. More than 100 of the 166 prisoners are fasting in protest of their desperate conditions and indefinite detention. Some are too weak to move. These are strapped into chairs and force-fed through a tube that runs from the nose into the stomach. Some have been imprisoned for twelve years; eighty-six were cleared for release but still remain imprisoned. Some have never been charged of any crime during their twelve years of incarceration. The facility costs $200 million a year to operate; it has become a recruitment tool for extremists.

Many people deserve blame for this open wound to our nation, beginning with former President George W. Bush, Obama, and Congress. A 2010 CNN poll showed that 60 percent of Americans favored keeping the prisoners there. Abraham Joshua Heschel, famous teacher of the Talmud said, "The prophets remind us of the moral state of a people: Few are guilty, but all are responsible." Our nation claims to be a beacon of light on a hill. We cannot claim the moral high ground as long as that prison remains open. Our leaders are guilty, but we are all responsible.

(REV.) RICH BRODERICK
Cambridge, N.Y.

Time to Intervene?

Syria's civil war has been going on for more than two years. Seventy thousand people have been killed, most of them civilians. More than 3 million Syrians have been driven from their homes, nearly a million taking refuge in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. The war, increasingly a sectarian battle between the Sunni majority and the ruling Alawite minority, may yet ignite a more direct confrontation between Shiite Iran and Iraq and their Sunni antagonists in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and Turkey. There have already been bombings in Turkey and Lebanon, and the Israelis have made preemptive strikes against Hezbollah in Syria. The extremely precarious situation seems to call for a robust international response. Yet as the United States learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, any large-scale military intervention in the Islamic world is more than likely to fail.

Bashar al-Assad, Syria's Baathist dictator, continues to cling to power thanks to the protection and aid provided by Russia, a long-standing ally, and the military and material assistance of his Iranian and Iraqi co-religionists. The Alawite minority of 4 million remains loyal to Assad, fearing they will be slaughtered should the Sunnis come to power, and willing to resort to ethnic cleansing themselves to forestall that outcome. On the rebel side, radical Islamists have flocked to Syria and are now the dominant opposition force. Their goal is to create an Islamist state, a prospect that alarms Israel, the United States, and the Arab monarchies in equal measure. Military aid to the rebels, mostly from Sunni Arab states, is being funneled through the more secular opposition leaders, but fear of arming jihadists has limited the types of weapons being supplied. Without anti-aircraft missiles, the rebels cannot contest the regime's air superiority. The result is stalemate.

No one knows which side will prevail in this savage conflict, and few knowledgeable observers think the fighting will soon end even if the United States provides the rebels with more potent weaponry. Nevertheless, enormous political pressure is building for the United States to act in some decisive way, especially in the aftermath of what appears to be the use of chemical weapons by the regime. Although his policy is widely derided as timid or worse, President Barack Obama appears determined not to allow the United States to be drawn into yet another war. Such caution should be commended. Only the most unrepentant advocates for the invasion of Iraq think the United States has the tools and the knowledge to fundamentally change the course of events in Syria. U.S. intervention might be warranted if there were a reasonable prospect that it would bring the killing to a quick end, but almost no one thinks that would happen under the current conditions.

Still, there are many eloquent, morally serious advocates calling for intervention, and their views should not be dismissed lightly. Most of them urge the United States to supply the rebels (but somehow not the jihadists) with advanced weapons, establish a no-fly zone, and create "humanitarian corridors" where refugees can be protected from Assad's murderous militias. Even the administration's most vocal critics, however, do not advocate sending in ground troops. Yet what if these partial measures were to fail, as they are likely to? At that point, the pressure to commit ground forces will be nearly impossible to resist, especially if U.S. military personnel are at risk. Containing Assad's large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons presents an even more daunting problem. Bombing those facilities is not an option, and the best-case scenario for securing the weapons would require at least seventy-five thousand U.S. troops and would most likely result in significant civilian and U.S. military casualties.

There are no good military options available to stop the carnage in Syria. One possible sign of hope is the agreement between the United States and Russia to convene a conference on Syria within the next few weeks. Up until this point, Russia has blocked every effort to oust Assad. Evidently the Syrian regime's willingness to use chemical weapons has set off alarms in Moscow, which has its own reasons not to want such weapons to fall into the hands of jihadists in control of a failed state. Russia also knows that the United States and the international community will feel compelled to act should Assad use those weapons on a broader scale. At the moment, the best chance for a negotiated settlement—one that would include elements of the current regime in a coalition government, thus avoiding the sort of anarchy that followed the overthrow of Saddam Hussein—depends on the Russians exerting pressure on Assad. That is not much of a hope, but every possible alternative must be pursued before we resort to military intervention. ■

May 14, 2013

John Garvey

Confidence v. Certainty

THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT WE CAN'T KNOW

At the end of *The Wizard of Oz* (still wonderful after all these years), the Wicked Witch of the West is confounded, a failure. Dissolving in puddle of water, she moans, "What a world, what a world." I'm with her.

Many religious people feel a need for clarity. They need to have a sense that they are right, or at least on the right path and relatively sure of their direction. This is an understandable yearning, but what may be insufficiently appreciated is the important place for confusion and uncertainty in our spiritual life.

What we cannot possibly know or understand with certainty occupies much more of the universe than what we do know, and our uncertainties may be a more important part of who we ultimately will be. I think of the depth of what the Incarnation must mean for all created life, for all matter, and realize that the dogma as we know it, profound and deep as it is, is only the surface. What cannot possibly be put into words matters more than what can be.

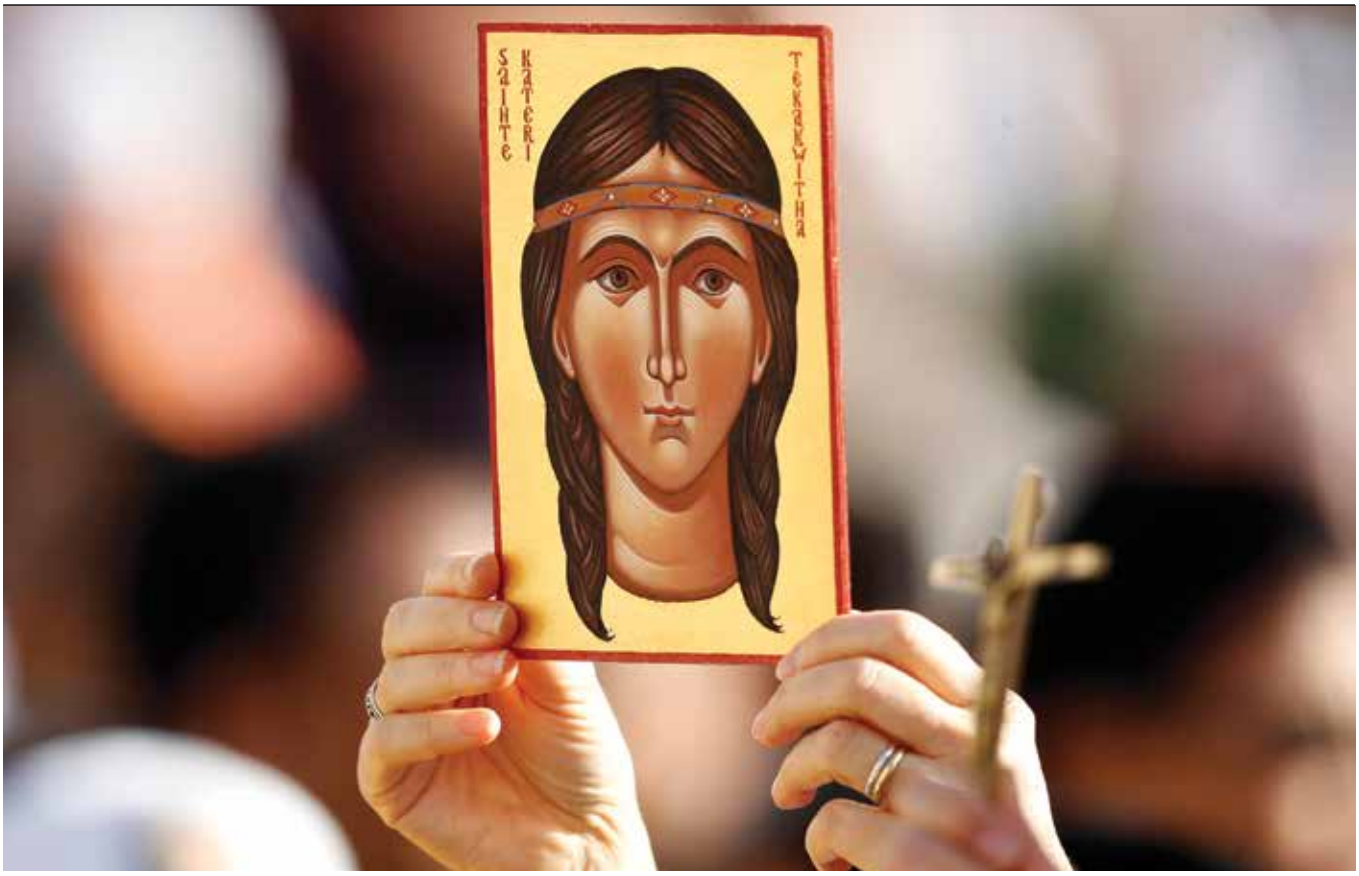
The desire to be absolutely clear about the best doctrinal or moral path is understandable but probably misguided. I remember a time when as a young man I went to confession, trying to make sense of a moral dilemma that was a knotted mess. The old priest listening to me said, "Just confess it as it is before God." No doubt this saved him some time, but it was also liberating. I saw that God obviously knows what I cannot know about myself, can fathom it and deal with it and heal it, and I can do none of this. But even putting it this way anthropomorphizes God. It doesn't account for the constant mystery of God's presence.

When I was younger I expected certain forms of guidance and moral direction from prayer, but I have come to think that we never get these things except in ways that are potentially misleading. Instead of clear direction, we may be blessed in prayer with a sense of presence and mystery, which tells us nothing.

As Christians, we tend to make too much of morality. On the right there is an emphasis on "family values" and sexual morality, and on the left social justice, but Jesus has little to say about specific forms of moral behavior. Here a certain case can be made for those who speak of being "spiritual but not religious." This designation may often indicate a shallow understanding, but it may also be a natural reaction to the moralism of people for whom being religious means having strong opinions about everything from same-sex marriage to gun control (on either side of those issues). The spiritual but not religious may find themselves more moved by the experience of beauty or feelings of gratitude than by the things openly religious people point to as important, and they are not wrong to feel alienated from what is often presented as Christianity.

Jesus does not challenge us to be good; he says, "You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." True compassion comes not from decent behavior, important as that is, but from insight born of the gratitude and surrender. It requires a thorough transformation. We start out on that path to the Kingdom by becoming "like little children." And here we have to take care not to fall into a sentimental trap. Our current notions of childhood are only as old as the Victorians and come clouded with visions of innocence and purity. The English Dominican Simon Tugwell has pointed out a more ancient meaning: Little children don't know anything. When we understand this about ourselves we are ready to begin.

Our true understanding of the following of Christ comes when we are willing to place ourselves in the hands of the living God, not knowing anything that has not been shown to us in Christ, not knowing where we may be led, but having confidence that whatever God has in store for us will involve the depth of the love we see in Jesus' Cross and Resurrection. Confidence isn't the same thing as certainty. It matters more. It opens a door that certainty closes, and it allows us to hope. ■



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Native Daughters

Making Saints in a Divided Church

Kathleen Sprows Cummings

Last October the Roman Catholic Church elevated to sainthood two women of North America: Mother Marianne Cope, the German-American nun who spent her life providing solace to the lepers of Molokai, and Kateri Tekakwitha, the seventeenth-century convert known to devotees as the "Lily of the Mohawks." As one of eighty thousand pilgrims who gathered in St. Peter's Square for the celebration, I was able to see how canonization affirms the gospel truth, "He who humbles himself shall be exalted"—or in this case, as with the majority of American saints, *she* who humbles herself....

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The process of getting there, however, can be tortuous—as in the case of Tekakwitha, whose elevation culminates an effort launched over a century ago. It began at Baltimore's Third Plenary Council in 1884, when U.S. bishops drafted a petition asking Pope Leo XIII to open Tekakwitha's cause for canonization, the first step in that direction on behalf of any person from the United States. Over the next century, Tekakwitha's cause would gather, lose, and regain momentum. Because saints become popular in particular contexts, studying a cause for canonization often reveals more about the people promoting the saint than about the candidate herself. Tekakwitha's cause offers an especially illuminating glimpse into American Catholic history. Her path to sainthood tells us a great deal about how U.S. Catholics have understood themselves, both as members of the church and as citizens of the nation, and how those understandings have shifted over time.

Catholics in the 1880s adopted Tekakwitha as a prospective patron because her life corresponded to their ideal vision of American Catholicism—and they were eager to promote that vision. U.S. bishops hoped that Tekakwitha's life of virtue would inspire the Holy See to recognize that holiness had indeed been incarnated on American soil. In addition, they asked that the causes of Isaac Jogues and René Goupil, two Jesuits captured by the Iroquois in the 1640s and martyred near Tekakwitha's subsequent birthplace, also be initiated. Tekakwitha's hagiographers had long attributed her conversion to the martyrs' grisly sacrifice. The "first fruit of their blood," she was presented as a validation not simply of their deaths, but of the entire Catholic missionary enterprise in North America. The bishops wrote eloquently about the spiritual benefits that would accrue should the Vatican agree to introduce the causes, arguing that a saint with whom American Catholics shared a common geography would inspire them to ever more fervent levels of devotion.

In fact, the canon of saints already included Rose of Lima, canonized in 1671 and designated the patron of the Americas "from Cape Horn to Alaska." But Catholics in North America paid Rose scant attention. In the words of the prominent nineteenth-century church historian John Gilmary Shea, they longed for saints who had "lived and labored, and sanctified themselves in our land, amid circumstances familiar." By 1870, fully seventeen men and women from Central and South America had been elevated to the ranks of sainthood—yet not a single person from either Canada or the United States was even being considered for the honor. Rose of Lima became a flash point in an attempt to redress this imbalance, with U.S. Catholics expressing the need for a Rose of their own. Tekakwitha's devotees often invoked her sobriquet, "Lily of the Mohawks," to highlight the contrast between a saint-deprived culture to the north and a saint-saturated one to the south. Surely Tekakwitha, the "fairest flower of the American forest," had equaled the "lovely Rose of Peru" in holiness. Should she not match her in heavenly status?

U.S. Catholics attributed their lack of a patron to a dearth not of holiness but of influence. They argued that the "modern" process of canonization, implemented in the seventeenth century, disadvantaged those Catholics living on the church's periphery, far from its center of wealth and power. "Without monarchs or wealthy communities to undertake the long and often expensive investigations demanded at Rome," one American Catholic grumbled, it was little wonder that no one north of the Rio Grande had ever even been proposed for canonization. One American priest, Rev. Edward McSweeny, suggested that the Vatican appoint a special group of cardinals to glorify the "hidden saints" of countries whose people were too poor to sponsor a cause.

There was no such simple remedy for the second obstacle U.S. Catholics saw thwarting them in their search for a native saint: anti-Catholicism in their own country. In seeking to elevate one of their own to the altars, North American Catholics would have to contend not only with a daunting and costly process but also with a Protestant supremacy that held them in contempt. Many outspoken anti-Catholics reserved special scorn for sainthood and viewed the prospect of an "American saint" as a travesty. In 1841, the politician and Presbyterian minister Robert Breckinridge had "beseech[ed] God" that "no American papist may ever be corrupt, debased, and infamous enough during his life, to be esteemed by Rome worthy of being a saint in her calendar after his death."

And indeed, the 1884 petition on behalf of Tekakwitha set off warning bells in some Protestant circles. Recognizing that the United States was now a step closer to a canonized saint, the editors of the *Methodist Review* warned that if Catholic immigration continued apace, American Protestants would soon have to tolerate not only the canonization of "an inconspicuous Indian maiden" but also an abundance of U.S. saints drawn from among "the present superstitious masses of our country—[Catholics] of Irish or Italian extraction." Such vitriol fueled the anti-Catholicism that surfaced in the 1880s, when a dramatic rise in Catholic emigration from Eastern and Southern Europe, amid a context of rapid urbanization and industrialization, generated widespread nativist anxiety. Aware of the manifest disdain with which many of their fellow citizens held Catholicism in general and its saints in particular, some U.S. Catholics despaired of ever securing a patron to call their own. The fact that canonization "smacks too much of Rome," one observed, made it impossible for U.S. Catholics even to venerate the "old saints" properly, let alone advocate the canonization of new ones.

By the late nineteenth century, however, a number of Catholics began to argue precisely the opposite—that promoting a local saint might actually *diminish* anti-Catholicism. Could one of the most provocative markers of Catholic difference truly boost assimilation? Archbishop John Ireland thought so. The leader of a group of "Americanist" bishops eager to weave Catholicism more seamlessly into the American fabric, Ireland encouraged U.S. Catholics to find "a saint...whose name at once commands respect and admiration" from American Protestants. John Gilmary Shea agreed, insisting that the process of canonization would highlight a candidate's contribution to American history even as it emphasized his or her sanctity. These arguments point to a dual mission in U.S. Catholics' quest for their first patron saint—to convince Vatican officials of U.S. holiness, but also to display Catholics' Americanness to a skeptical Protestant public. In this respect Tekakwitha functioned especially effectively, since her life story established the important presence of Catholics in North America from the earliest days of its history—a message that people who had been dismissed as recent and unwelcome visitors were desperate to send.

Yet even though Tekakwitha's credentials made her a clear favorite in the quest for the first U.S. saint, her canonization ended up taking more than another century. That she was not a member of a religious community surely accounts in part for this delay, since congregations provide both the funding and the institutional memory necessary to sustain a cause over decades or even centuries. But something more fundamental was at play. While devotees tend to view holiness as timeless and eternal, in fact—viewed from the distance of history—it is rather more fluid and contingent. The culture in which the faithful exist influences the saints they embrace, and when that culture changes, favorite saints change along with it. By 1930 a great deal had changed for U.S. Catholics since their bishops had sent the petition on Tekakwitha's behalf almost half a century earlier.

Perhaps the most significant change was demographic. Due to restrictive immigration legislation enacted in the 1920s, the American Church in the '30s was absorbing far fewer new immigrants than it had in decades. Most American Catholic ethnic groups, moreover, were well into their second, third, or even fourth generation. Barriers to assimilation were lower than ever before. Time, in other words, had provided the distance from the "superstitious masses" that advocates had once relied on Tekakwitha and other prospective saints to supply. And American Catholic hagiography reflected this shift. While Catholics of the late nineteenth century had defined the missionary enterprise as both the sine qua non of holiness and their own singular contribution to North America, their counterparts in the 1930s thought differently. As one U.S. Catholic opined, "Even if every Red Man had been converted and remained faithful, the effect would have been meager in the face of the millions of Americans who came from Europe."

To understand why Tekakwitha was overshadowed as a prospective patron, it helps to examine the cause of the woman who rocketed past her, Mother Frances Cabrini. Cabrini was a latecomer in the quest for the first U.S. saint; when she arrived in New York City in 1889, the causes of Tekakwitha and a half-dozen others were well underway. Yet Cabrini would overtake all other candidates; she was beatified in 1938, a mere twenty-one years after her death. Her canonization was speeded in part by the strong support her cause received from bishops in Italy, where she was born, and in Chicago, where she died. But episcopal influence alone cannot account for her extraordinary popularity among U.S. Catholics in the '30s. They embraced her for the same reasons their counterparts had embraced Tekakwitha a half-century before: her life mirrored the story they wanted to tell about themselves as Americans.

AT THE ACCADEMIA, VENICE

These painters loved the Virgin Crowned.
In blue and white or white and gold,
on every canvas glorified,
she bows to let her son confer
the kingdom. Exquisitely gowned,
freed from the grave or growing old,
she's one man's mother, no man's bride.
We love her, but cannot envy her.

—Gail White

By the 1930s, U.S. Catholics had defined their past as an immigrant story, and although canonically Cabrini was a missionary—and her writings demonstrate that she thought of herself as one—her devotees routinely described her as an immigrant. They latched on to Cabrini's 1909 naturalization, claiming it as a sign of her attachment to the United States and of her understanding of the American mentality, while arguing that it made her a more logical candidate as a patron saint than either Tekakwitha or the French Jesuits. Above all, they presented her as a person to whom modern, urban Catholics could relate. In 1942, Cardinal Samuel Stritch praised Cabrini for having confronted "the same conditions and the same difficulties which surround us in our own lives." Another U.S. Catholic marveled that Cabrini had lived "right in the middle of the twentieth century with its streetcars and automobiles," adding that "she saw these trolley tracks and these buildings…and now she's in heaven." The saint of the skyscrapers had eclipsed the Lily of the Mohawks as the perfect embodiment of American Catholicism, and was canonized by Pius XII in 1946—the first U.S. citizen to achieve sainthood.

U.S. Catholics had no sooner secured their "citizen saint" than they zeroed in on obtaining an American-born one. Tekakwitha would certainly have qualified, but here again the hagiography reveals how a woman once defined as the quintessential American had become not quite American enough. "Kateri Tekakwitha—she is not an American!" complained one priest while making a case for his own favorite candidate, Elizabeth Ann Seton, the New York–born convert to Catholicism who founded the first women's religious congregation in the nation. Seton was duly canonized in 1975—after the Vatican waived one of the required miracles for her cause, reportedly in a gesture of respect for North American bishops—and her devotees characterized her canonization as the ecclesiastical equivalent of the election of John F. Kennedy.

As for Kateri Tekakwitha, she might never have been canonized had it not been for significant developments both in the Catholic Church and in American culture. One was the 1979 election of John Paul II, who streamlined the saint-making process, in part to give Catholics from nations without wealth or influence a better chance to secure saints of their own—in effect following the advice Rev. Edward McSweeny had proffered a century before. As a result, John Paul II canonized more people than all of his predecessors combined, a total of 482 saints. He also beatified 1,341 people, including Kateri Tekakwitha in 1980.

By then the Lily of the Mohawks symbolized something quite different from the Tekakwitha whose name had appeared on the Baltimore petition a century before. No longer an effective national symbol, she had reemerged as an ethnic one. Since the 1970s, Tekakwitha's most enthusiastic devotees have been Native-American Catholics, both in Canada and in the United States. It is telling that while all U.S. church leaders had supported the 1884 petition that initiated her cause, only one issued a public statement when it finally succeeded: Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia, the lone Native American in the hierarchy. The canonization celebrations in Rome last fall, meanwhile, clearly reflected the significance of the moment for indigenous Americans, and not only with regard to Tekakwitha; even the events honoring Marianne Cope, a woman born in Germany and raised in Syracuse, featured native Hawaiians dancing the hula.

These tangible signs of inculturation are reasons for celebration. Still, a contrast between the age in which Tekakwitha's cause began and the age in which it ended also suggests something to lament. In 1884, canonization offered the American church—divided then, as now, by ethnic and ideological conflict—a way to rally behind a common goal. Today, canonization reveals just how tribal U.S. Catholicism has become. The appropriation of Dorothy Day as a prolife saint is the most publicized example. The cause of the canon lawyer John Hardon, SJ, attracts support from Catholics who wish for more rigid adherence to church teaching. The causes of August Tolton and Henriette Delille appeal exclusively to African-American Catholics; Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, to Irish Americans. The list goes on.

The new millennium discloses a paradoxical moment for American sainthood, a kind of embarrassment of riches. Thanks to the changes implemented by John Paul II—and to the wealth and influence of the American Church—there are now more than fifty open causes for canonization originating in the United States. Yet none of them seem to attract devotees beyond their immediate circle or interest group. Surely this fact reveals more about the state of our church than it does about these holy men and women. Do we no longer yearn for a canonized saint who lived among us but could rise above our divisions? ■

The Big Dig

Reconfiguring the Church in Boston

Luke Hill

Last fall, the Archdiocese of Boston released an ambitious plan designed to stem the decline it has experienced—in priests, Mass attendance, and treasure—since the 2002 wave of sexual-abuse scandals. The plan, called "Disciples in Mission," will be phased in throughout Boston's 288 parishes over five years. Cardinal Seán O'Malley hopes it will not only slow the decline of the archdiocese—some of it self-inflicted, some caused by powers beyond its control—but will also create the conditions for eventual growth. Whether the plan will work remains an open question. That *something* needs to be done is a sentiment shared widely among Boston-area Catholics. That recognition—along with the openness to change it implies—may be the most important factor in the plan's prospects for success.

Fifty years ago, Catholics in Boston glowed with pride because one of their own was America's first Catholic president. A century after their immigrant ancestors had been met with implacable hostility by the wealthy, powerful, confident Protestant Yankees whose grandfathers had started the American Revolution, a Boston Catholic had made it to the White House. More important, all across eastern Massachusetts Catholics were moving into their *own* houses, spreading out from the working-class neighborhoods in the region's economically decaying cities, moving into the mainstream of U.S. society.

Roughly two in three Catholics attended Sunday Mass regularly. The popular Cardinal Richard Cushing had continued his predecessors' building efforts, and shepherded a flock of nearly 2 million Catholics in more than four hundred parishes. St. John's Seminary produced scores of priests every year. When—in response to Pope John XXIII's call for priests to serve in Latin America—Cardinal Cushing formed the Missionary Society of St. James, it was common knowledge throughout the archdiocese that Cushing also had a more practical reason for encouraging priests to serve overseas: he didn't have enough bedrooms in rectories to accommodate all the priests he ordained every spring. Like their counterparts elsewhere in the United States, Boston Catholics had built a parallel set of institutions—schools, hospitals, retirement homes, social-welfare agencies—to meet the spiritual, physical, and social needs of their people, and of the poor among them.

Today only one in six Boston Catholics attends Mass regularly. The network of Catholic hospitals across eastern Massachusetts is gone—sold in 2010 to private equity giant Cerberus Capital Management (recently in the news for owning the company that makes the rifle used in the Newtown massacre). The parochial school system is decimated—replaced by a growing network of publicly funded charter schools. After decades of slow decline, the number of parishes contracted dramatically to 288 in 2004 when then-new Archbishop Seán O'Malley closed sixty-five parishes in the wake of the sexual-abuse scandal.

Apparently that wasn't enough, so last November, now-Cardinal O'Malley announced "Disciples in Mission." The pastoral plan directs that "the 288 parishes of the Archdiocese of Boston be organized into approximately 135 Parish Collaboratives, these collaboratives consisting usually of two or three parishes, but sometimes only one, and, in rare occasions four parishes." Each collaborative will be assigned one pastor—a clear response to the seminary's single-digit graduating classes.

Having decided against a "priest-less parishes" model, the archdiocese determined the number of collaboratives according to the number of priests expected to be available for ministry after the remaining priests from the large classes ordained in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s retire. With archdiocesan revenues still lower than they were at the turn of the century, the baselines for establishing a collaborative were a minimum of sixteen hundred parishioners per priest and annual offertory revenue of at least $500,000. According to the archdiocese, the primary purpose of the new pastoral plan is "strengthening parishes for the work of the New Evangelization," which is defined as "the particular work of reaching out to Catholics who are not currently active in the church."

The dark cloud hanging over "Disciples in Mission" is of course the trauma suffered by Boston Catholics after the sexual-abuse scandal erupted into public view. Early in 2002, there was a moment when it was unclear how Cardinal

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Cardinal Seán O'Malley

CNS PHOTO, PIER PAULO CITO, CATHOLIC PRESS PHOTO

Bernard Law—arguably the most powerful prelate in the country—would respond, and how the archdiocese he had led for eighteen years would be affected. If ever a situation called for reckless penitence—confession and begging for forgiveness regardless of the legal, personal, professional, and institutional costs—on the part of a bishop, this was probably it. One can imagine an alternate history in which Law walked out of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross after Ash Wednesday Mass, led a procession 1.5 miles down Washington Street to the Boston Common, where he rent his garments, poured ashes on himself, and then set off on a forty-day pilgrimage of repentance around the archdiocese, walking from one parish to the next, listening—not speaking—to the those who'd had their bodies violated, their trust betrayed, their faith shattered.

Who knows what would have resulted? Would such efforts have become a powerful channel for the public expression of private pain, even healing? Or would they have been viewed as a pathetic attempt to evade accountability? It's impossible to say.

In any case, it didn't happen that way. Rather than draw upon the church's wealth of symbols and ritual, Law drew upon the resources of his Harvard education and his decades as a prominent figure in American public life—and lawyered up. If not for the Archdiocese of Boston's Achilles heel—and the willingness of the faithful to strike at it—a long and ugly legal stalemate might have ensued. But, for all its wealth and power, the archdiocese had a peculiar financial system. Many dioceses levy a 10-percent "tax" on parish revenues. Not Boston. And with no endowment to generate investment income, the archdiocese relied almost entirely on the annual Cardinal's Appeal to cover operating expenses.

So, when Boston-area Catholics withheld donations, the effect on the archdiocese's finances was immediate—and dramatic. Despite repeated extensions of the Cardinal's Appeal, the total collection dropped by nearly half from the previous year. And in many parishes weekly collections fell by nearly 25 percent. Among the many actions taken by parishioners to express their anger, this may have been the most effective at communicating to Rome the need for change. Angry priests signing letters and unhappy laity issuing statements and holding demonstrations are one thing. But the precipitous financial decline of the fourth largest diocese in the United States is quite another. Bankruptcy appeared imminent. By the end of the year, Cardinal Law was gone.

Boston's present trouble is a self-inflicted trauma in at least two ways. There is the trauma caused by the decades-long toleration and cover-up of the sexual abuse of children. Then there is the trauma that resulted from the determination of many, perhaps most, Boston-area Catholics in 2002 not to let the institutional well-being of the church matter more than the lives of their friends, neighbors, family members, and fellow parishioners who had been harmed, some grievously, by the culture of silence (a culture in which many of us were to some degree complicit).

Between 2003 and 2004, the Archdiocese of Boston carried out its "Reconfiguration" plan. It was a crisis response to a crisis situation following Law's departure. The process was short, constrained, and almost inevitably divisive. Priests and lay leaders were asked to meet in geographical clusters of six to eight parishes in order to provide the chancery with answers to two questions: First, if the archbishop decides it's necessary to close a parish in your cluster, which do you recommend? And second, if the archbishop decides it's necessary to close *two* parishes in your cluster, which do you recommend? As one might imagine, these were not pleasant meetings. (In at least one cluster, two pastors almost came to blows.) Nearly a decade later, wounds are barely healed, and lay leaders from six parishes still have appeals to reverse their closings pending at the Vatican.

O'Malley then set about reorganizing the archdiocese's finances. He began by revamping bookkeeping practices to bring them in line with generally accepted accounting practices for nonprofit organizations. He also increased transparency by putting annual audited financial statements on the archdiocese's website. The Cardinal's Appeal was rebranded as the Catholic Appeal, and has slowly but steadily rebounded from a low of $7 million to $13 million last year. In 2008, the archdiocese began rolling out a 10-percent parish tax. This new arrangement explicitly links the well-being of the archdiocese with the well-being of its parishes (something that hadn't always been the case, and was a source of tension between some pastors and chancery officials). The cardinal's actions are also driving greater financial transparency within parishes.

The new director of pastoral planning for the archdiocese, Fr. Paul Soper, has been frank about the ways the new reorganization plan has been shaped by the failures of the previous one. "People look at this with greater wariness because of our experience in 2004, there's no doubt about that. We have a higher hill of credibility we have to get over." Where Reconfiguration took a few short months, Disciples in Mission is the result of nearly two years of work by an Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Commission, a commission created in response to conversations with priests, pastoral staff, and lay leaders. Where Reconfiguration led to the immediate shuttering of sixty-five parishes, Disciples in Mission will close no parishes and will leave future parish-closing decisions up to the new collaboratives. What's more, it states that "the formation of the parish collaboratives (will) be phased in, with appropriate flexibility, over a period of five years"—a stark contrast to the swift and relatively inflexible implementation of Reconfiguration.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the new plan calls for extensive training and leadership development for the New Evangelization: eight days of training for pastors, seven days for pastoral team members (and for archdiocesan staff), followed by ten days of training within each collaborative over the following four months, as well as a few days of training for lay leaders as the collaborative begins, followed by three more days of training with the pastoral staff. The investment of that much time and energy into training for evangelization *could* have a powerful effect throughout the archdiocese.

Whether it will is another question. Opportunities to evangelize disaffected Catholics tend to occur when they reconnect with the church for a specific, immediate reason: a couple wanting to get married, a family needing to bury a loved one, a mother wanting her child baptized, parents sending their children to a Catholic school, an adult seeking a sacrament of initiation. These are among the most common—and most potent—occasions for evangelization, for helping people to begin reweaving their connections with God and with the church.

JULIAN OF NORWICH

For Brother Louis the Hermit

What honey this gold bee
made in her cell,
fanning a vision's nectar
with her wings,
she who could scarcely bear
the thought of hell
and thought that God
must rectify such things,
she who made even
Margery Kempe sit still
in awe of her,
who saw God in a point
and knew that He
cannot forgive because
he can't be angry,
but must still anoint
our wounds with love
that never started and
will never end,
that all is well
and we're kept safe
in unknown ways forever:
this is the honey,
she is the cell.

—Gail White

That evangelization will take place in a society in which church teaching and public-policy positions related to sexuality are increasingly at odds with the views of most Massachusetts residents (especially the young)—including most Catholics. If the New Evangelization leads with a vigorous assertion of church teaching on those and similar issues, then it's likely to face some tough sledding. If, on the other hand, the New Evangelization leads with what the old evangelization at its best did—open hearts (and ears), respectful presence, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy—then it may tap into reservoirs of faith that still exist among many who have recently distanced themselves from the church.

Settling into life in Boston twenty-five years ago, my wife and I found ourselves at St. Francis de Sales, a small but vibrant, welcoming, predominantly African-American parish. A few years later, when our pastor left for a new assignment, St. Francis merged with the neighboring St. Philip's Church. (During his eighteen years in Boston, Cardinal Law quietly merged or closed about sixty parishes in response to changes in the numbers of both priests and parishioners.) In Boston, as in the rest of the country, there is a long and powerful tradition of lay leadership among African-American Catholics. (This is due in no small part to the racism institutionalized in the historic refusal of most seminaries, dioceses, and religious orders to accept black candidates.) When Reconfiguration was announced in 2003, black Catholic leaders from eastern Massachusetts met and agreed on the importance of maintaining a parish that could serve as a center for African-American Catholics. At our cluster meetings, leaders from St. Francis de Sales–St. Philip's and St. John–St. Hugh's—the two remaining predominantly black churches in the archdiocese—offered a detailed proposal to create a new parish that would serve that purpose. O'Malley accepted the proposal, along with the new name: St. Katharine Drexel, after the founder of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters, who ran a beloved mission in Roxbury for much of the twentieth century. As part of a reconfiguration of ethnic ministries away from the chancery and into parishes, the Nigerian Catholic community became part of the new parish too, beginning on Pentecost Sunday 2005. Since then, we've worked at building a life together as a church, just as other parishes have done across the archdiocese.

The first set of parish collaboratives envisioned by Disciples in Mission was recently announced: twenty-eight parishes will become twelve collaboratives. They represent a cross-section of the archdiocese, and were chosen for their readiness to proceed and the likeliness that they will work well together and serve as models for the rest of the archdiocese. Our collaborative was not among them; it likely will form officially toward the end of the five-year process. Our pastor is nearing retirement age, as is the pastor of neighboring St. Patrick's; the chancery seems inclined to allow pastors within five years of retiring (age seventy-five) to finish out their terms. St. Patrick's is the center for Boston's large Cape Verdean community, and also offers Mass in Spanish and English. When our new collaborative finally gets up and running (likely in 2016 or '17), it's going to be a challenge—one we don't yet know how to meet. How will one new pastor handle a congregation that runs two schools and is made up of five cultural communities that speak four languages? It's hard to imagine.

Our challenges will be different from those of, say, the new city-wide collaborative in Salem, or the one serving the exurban towns of Lakeville and Middleborough. Yet the fundamental challenges of building and rebuilding relationships, of negotiating the practicalities of sharing pastors, pastoral associates, ministries, and buildings, of keeping alive and rekindling the light of faith with one another, of evangelizing by example will be similar across Boston. We're not the same archdiocese we were fifty years ago. We're humbler, and that's a start. ■

Richard Alleva

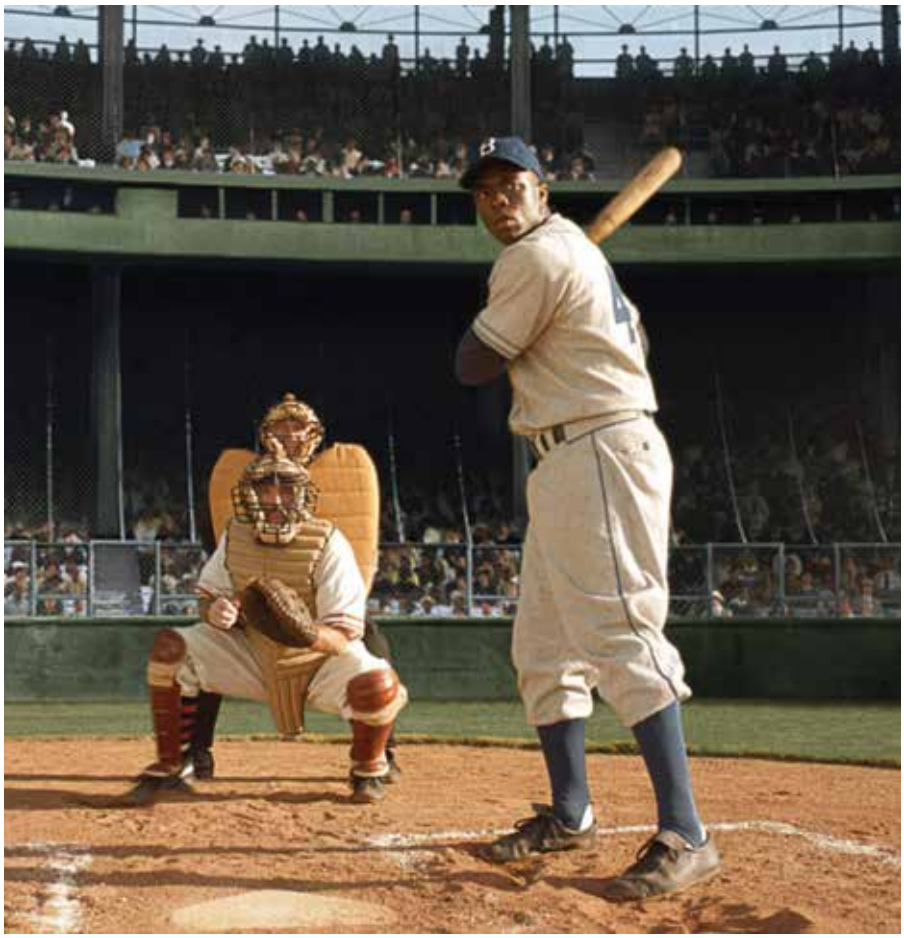
A Natural

BRIAN HELGELAND'S '42'

When historical events fall into line with Hollywood's eternal quest for easy thrills and easy tears, the result can be a movie like *42*. The story of how Branch Rickey began the integration of major-league baseball by hiring Jackie Robinson to play for the Dodgers lends itself naturally to the big screen by offering a stark confrontation of goodness with the evil of racial bigotry. Some critics have complained that the film's portrayal of Robinson lacks psychological depth, but *42* isn't a cradle-to-grave biopic. It deals with a single course of action in a single year (1947). There's no need here for psychological probing, and to introduce moral ambiguities into this story would be as much of a falsification as to withhold ambiguity from a movie about the causes of the Vietnam War.

The real artistic challenge for writer-director Brian Helgeland was to avoid merely coasting on the obvious sentimental opportunities inherent in this true story and to capture the reality of a time when a certain American goodness and a peculiar American evil clashed with a gratifying outcome. The period recreation is convincing without being fussy (though the golden-brown tone of Don Burgess's photography is a little too nostalgic for my taste). We find ourselves back in an era when men wore hats, jackets, and ties to the office, and there weren't any dress-down Fridays; when radio announcers like Red Barber (nicely impersonated here by John C. McGinley) translated baseball action for TV-less homes via sentences of Jamesean sinuosity; when a black couple could be bumped from a plane because the wife entered a "whites only" bathroom; and when a team manager, Leo Durocher (played by a dangerously simmering Christopher Meloni), could be suspended for adultery, while another manager, the Phillies' Ben Chapman (limned with putrid, slack-faced veracity by Alan Tudyk), got away with using obscenely racist language in public. With the historical context so firmly established, you understand how courageously disruptive Rickey's decision was, and how much courage Robinson needed to be the instrument of change. And you are also forced to realize that this period of custom-bound inequities wasn't ready for the bravura of a Muhammad Ali but could accommodate only the tacit resistance urged on Jackie by his boss: to have "the guts not to fight back" when taunted, beaned, or spiked.

Playing a man on a taut emotional leash, Chadwick Boseman as Robinson compels the camera to stay close to him, so that we can read his internal struggle. Praising the actress Teresa Wright, James Agee wrote of her ability to use her face "with delicate and exciting talent…and with something of a novelist's perceptiveness." Boseman too has this kind of fine-grained talent. The muscles in his face speak the anguish and fury he's forbidden to utter, and he also conveys something darker within the hero's personality, hidden under layers of civility: a wariness of humanity in general; a frustrated, impossible yearning not to be dependent on anyone's good offices. Such a man can become the victim of his own suppressed anger



WARNER BROS. PICTURES

(Robinson died young), but one scene lets that anger loose. Walking into an unoccupied corridor after a soul-shredding round of racial epithets, Robinson shatters his bat, screams, and drops to his knees, quivering with rage. It may be the most volcanic emotional explosion since Jack Nicholson unloaded on that unfortunate waitress in *Five Easy Pieces*. Though the script refrains from exploring psychological depths, Boseman's fine performance suggests them.

Much more extroverted roles fall to Nicole Beharie as Rachel Robinson and Harrison Ford as Rickey. The former is unavoidably stuck with the familiar tropes of any supportive-wife character, but she seizes every opportunity in the script (and Helgeland does provide them) to convey loving mischievousness and unbreakable strength. She's too smart and too sexy to allow her character to drift into dreary "credit to her race" territory.

During the first fifteen minutes of the movie, I was afraid Harrison Ford had turned Rickey into a scenery-chewing stunt. But gradually it becomes evident that it is Rickey himself, as Ford has imagined him, who is using his Dickensian tics—the cigar brandishing, the smiling snarls, the biblical injunctions laced with mild profanity—to persuade, intimidate, or jolly along everyone he has to deal with. This is an appropriately grand portrait of a supersized man.

Though every actor in the supporting cast leaves a mark, I would single out Lucas Black's Pee Wee Reese as the sort of performance, utterly devoid of theatrical flourishes, that often goes unremarked. Reese's famous gesture of solidarity—a white southerner putting his arm around a black teammate's shoulders before a hostile Cincinnati crowd—has been commemorated so often and in so many different media (children's picture books, a statue) that it's come to seem more legendary than real. Yet it happened, and Black's unlacquered skill makes us believe, or want to believe, that it happened just the way we see it here.

Working for other directors, notably Clint Eastwood (*Mystic River*, *Blood Work*), Brian Helgeland has long been a valued scriptwriter, and his *L.A. Confidential* (directed by Curtis Hanson) is the most perfectly structured script I know. His ability to marshal incidents within the narrative for telling contrast or emphasis is much in evidence here. An obvious example: Soon after Rickey tells his staff, "Money isn't black-and-white, it's green," we cut to a scene in which Robinson, still in a Negro league, finds himself denied the use of a gas station's bathroom, and so tells the owner, who is just beginning to fill the team bus's tank with gas, to take the nozzle out. The owner glowers but gives in. We're thus assured that Rickey has found not only a compliant athlete but a shrewd co-conspirator. Helgeland also sneaks in a few ironies, as when Rickey encourages Robinson's base stealing by evoking the example of Ty Cobb, the greatest base stealer in the big leagues but also the most virulent racist in the history of baseball.

Helgeland's direction is almost as good as his writing. Though I wish he had included more baseball action, what's there is thrilling, especially the over-the-shoulder shots that track the war of nerves between Robinson the base runner and the pitcher. But Helgeland's direction is often less subtle than his screenplay. A black child representing all youngsters inspired by Robinson is photographed so that his hero worship literally glows. And was it really necessary to out-*Natural* Robert Redford by filming the pennant-clinching home run in slow motion with spirit-soaring music? A movie as heartfelt as *42* doesn't need such clichés.

Though I can certainly imagine a Jackie Robinson movie with a grittier approach (did he never take his anger out on his wife after a particularly bad day? do we really need so many inspirational harangues by Rickey?), Helgeland has chosen to create the cinematic equivalent of a heroic ballad, not a psychological portrait. Of course, even a ballad might contain a few more dissonances than *42* allows, but would the song sound as sweet? ■

Matthew Ashley

'Grave Ambiguities'

Jacques Dupuis Faces the Inquisition

Two Essays by Jacques Dupuis on *Dominus Iesus* and the Roman Investigation of His Work

Edited by William R. Burrows

Pickwick Publications, $25, 197 pp.

This book documents the travails and the courage of the late Jacques Dupuis, the Jesuit priest and theologian whose work on what he called "a Christian theology of religious pluralism" drew scrutiny from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith during the last decade of his life. Dupuis was known not only for his pioneering work in theology of religions, but also for his detailed knowledge of the history of Catholic doctrine, which bore fruit in multiple editions of a comprehensive compendium of doctrinal statements, *The Christian Faith*, which he co-edited along with fellow Jesuit Josef Neuner, and which he was updating to include statements of Pope John Paul II at the time his work was being investigated. He was not, in short, a likely suspect for the charge of neglecting or endangering the church's doctrine. Nevertheless, at the end of his career he found himself ensnared in doctrinal disagreements that took a great personal toll. *Jacques Dupuis Faces the Inquisition* tells the story of this ordeal.

Born in 1923 in Belgium, Dupuis entered the Society of Jesus during World War II, and in 1948 went to India, where he would remain for the next thirty-six years. There he experienced firsthand the need for a more sophisticated theological understanding of religious pluralism, and devoted his theological career to crafting it—first in India and later in Rome, where in 1984 he went to teach at the Gregorian University. This labor culminated in a series of highly esteemed books: *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions* (1991), *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (1997), and *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (2003). *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, in particular, is a densely argued work marked by careful distinctions that would have made Dupuis' neo-Scholastic teachers proud. In that book Dupuis attempted to balance two often conflicting concerns. First, he demonstrated a sensitivity born of experience to the negative impact on interreligious dialogue of Christian theological interpretations of other religions that emphasize only their deficiencies and limitations. At the same time, however, he paid exacting attention to the authoritative claims of Christian tradition concerning the relationship of Christianity to the other world religions that emphasize Christ's uniquely central role in God's plan for the salvation of all peoples.

CNS PHOTO FROM REUTERS

A nun prays with Hindus and Buddhists at the site of a bomb blast in Indonesia, 2005.

Jacques Dupuis Faces the Inquisition presents four documents relating to the CDF's treatment of Dupuis over a three-year period between 1998 and 2001. As editor William R. Burrows notes in the introduction, Dupuis' approach to a theology of religious pluralism, while deemed insufficiently radical by many seminarians and theologians in India, was viewed in Rome as going too far. This negative reaction, first signaled by a 1992 book review of *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions* in *Civiltà Cattolica*, culminated in an investigation of *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* by the CDF that began in June 1998; three months later, Dupuis received a notification that his book contained "grave errors and doctrinal ambiguities on doctrines of divine and Catholic faith." He probably knew what was coming, since he had already been removed

from the classroom at the Gregorian University—a punishment administered, in effect, before a verdict was rendered, and bringing, in the last year before Dupuis' looming retirement, a painful end to a distinguished teaching career.

In response to the notification Dupuis composed and submitted almost two-hundred pages of text; seven months later, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger responded that Dupuis' answers were considered inadequate "for preserving the doctrine of Catholic faith free from errors." More questions were posed, which Dupuis answered with another sixty pages. There followed many months of silence; then, in September 2000, Dupuis was summoned to the offices of the CDF, where he was asked to sign a draft of a notification that asserted propositions to be affirmed and errors to be rejected—errors imputed to his book without quotations or page references. The signed notification would have been published simultaneously with the CDF's own statement on the relationship between Christianity and other religions, *Dominus Iesus* (which Burrows includes as Appendix I). The apparent goal was a potent one-two punch intended to warn off theologians, such as Michael Amaladoss, Peter Phan, and Paul Knitter, who went further than Dupuis was willing to go.

Dupuis found himself unable to sign. While he could agree to the positive statements he was required to affirm (noting, however, that they required further interpretation—with the implication that in so doing one could arrive at his theology) he noted that the alleged errors "either misrepresented what I wrote or interpreted it in a way that went against my intention and meaning." The meeting ended in an impasse. A second draft, sent in December, stated its charges somewhat more temperately, downgrading "grave errors and ambiguities" to "grave ambiguities" and "ambiguous formulations or insufficient explanations" that could lead the reader into "erroneous opinions." Reluctantly Dupuis agreed to sign, but included an explanation that his signature indicated

he would later "have to take into account the text of the declaration *Dominus Iesus* and of the notification." The CDF would have none of that, and when the signed notification was published in *L'Osservatore Romano* it included an additional paragraph that Dupuis never saw, specifying that in signing "the author committed himself to assent to the stated theses, and in his future theological activity and publications, to hold the doctrinal contents indicated in the notification." Observing the difference between "take into account" and "assent" and "hold," Dupuis reflected, in typically understated fashion, that this procedure was "of course, questionable."

His private personal reaction belied this surface equanimity. As Burrows and other friends and colleagues attest, Dupuis was deeply disheartened by the way he had been treated, and slipped into a depression that, compounded by ill health, cast a shadow over the remaining four years of his life. On the page, meanwhile, he defended himself. Following his refusal to sign the first version of the notification, he wrote an analysis of the objections lodged by the CDF against his work, and of the perspective laid out in *Dominus Iesus* that formed the theological backdrop for those objections. Following the second notification, he wrote a text responding both to the content of the revised Notification and to the process as a whole. He evidently hoped to publish these two essays as appendices to future work. His superiors did not allow him to do this—understandably, perhaps, given the heightened tensions between the Vatican and the Jesuits. Dupuis did pass these two essays on to Burrows, however, with the expressed desire that they see the light of day at some point.

Burrows, who was a friend, editor, and strong supporter of Dupuis', makes his view of the CDF's conduct clear in his introduction and "personal postscript"—and also by using the former name for the CDF in his title for the book. I suspect that Dupuis himself would not employ the kind of charged language Burrows does. While he thought that the CDF had been "car-

ried away by fear" in its response to his theology, Dupuis concluded his own analysis of the process by promising "once more [to] submit my work to the consideration of my theological peers and the judgment of the church's doctrinal authority." Whatever one makes of this difference of tone between editor and author, what this book documents is that Dupuis acquitted himself with greater nobility, and, indeed, theological acumen, than those who rejected his work.

The complexities of this tragic case are partially shrouded by the confidentiality and secrecy that surround all cases passing through the CDF. This secrecy invites endless speculation (Burrows provides some provocative examples), and can lead one to overlook the substance of the debate—namely, how to think about Christianity and the world's other religions. This would be a mistake, not least because a grasp of this substance sheds light on Dupuis' unwillingness to sign the Notification.

Consider the question of ambiguity. While the CDF backed away from its initial accusation that Dupuis' system manifested "grave errors," it continued to insist on the presence of "grave ambiguities" that might lead the reader into doctrinal error. Yet at what price is disambiguation purchased? Dupuis' reservations about the notification as well as about the text of *Dominus Iesus*—and thus his reasons for demurring when Ratzinger asked if he could not simply concede that his book should be read in the light of that document—sprang from his conviction that the price was too high. To give just one example of the many Dupuis raises in his two essays: Is it important to affirm the unsurpassable and definitive character of the revelation of Jesus Christ? No doubt. If, however, in order to overcome a relativistic mentality alleged to lurk behind any affirmation of religious pluralism, the superiority of Christian revelation has to be safeguarded by asserting that a suggestion of limitation *of any kind* in the language of Christian revelation is "in radical contradiction with the Christian faith," then the price of disambiguation is too high. What is lost is the equally important insistence (and here Dupuis quotes John Paul II from *Fides et ratio*) that any truth attained by the church on the basis of the revelation in Jesus Christ "is but a step toward that fullness of truth that will appear with the final Revelation of God." Also lost is the acknowledgment that the language of Scripture is necessarily limited by the language of the time and culture in which it was framed.

The underlying truth is that ambiguity cannot be fully removed from theology because of the mystery of Christian faith that it attempts to communicate. Regarding these mysteries the First Vatican Council affirmed that "if reason illumined by faith inquires in an earnest, pious and sober manner, it attains by God's grace, a certain understanding of the mysteries, which is most fruitful.... But it never becomes capable of understanding them in the way it does truths which constitute its proper object." Dupuis would have known this statement well, since he included it in his compilation of doctrine in *The Christian Faith*. He understood that human reason, and the language it uses, cannot exhaustively and unambiguously comprehend the Christian mysteries of Incarnation, grace, and Trinity as it can aspire to do for, say, the phenomena investigated by modern science.

All of these mysteries are intimately at play in thinking about other religions. Yet to acknowledge this limitation is not to abandon Christian faith and its doctrines to arbitrariness. One can in different ways give greater clarity to the mysteries of faith, and so bring them to life in and for Christians living in challenging times. One such way, of venerable scholastic provenance, is to weave a complex fabric of distinctions and mutually correcting affirmations that can only succeed if it is read and understood as a whole, not unraveled into separate statements that are then evaluated in isolation from one another. Of this method Dupuis was a master, and his responses to his critics in the CDF make a potent case that they were not up to the task of following this weave, or even that they refused to try, out of an aversion to ambiguity. If it is true, as Dupuis suspected, that Ratzinger left the writing of the initial notification to others, and did not read the two-hundred or so pages of Dupuis' patient attempt to defend his work, it only deepens the tragedy of the event, since Ratzinger certainly possessed the theological training and the skill to recognize and appreciate what Dupuis was attempting.

One lesson from this sad case is that, without denying the importance of the office of the magisterium in the church (Dupuis certainly never did), we need to find a more open process for its operation, one with greater transparency and a real chance for discussion of a theologian's work. A second lesson can be taken from the way that, as Burrows observes, Dupuis' work was read first and foremost with the problem of secularization in Europe and North America in view. Secularization is surely a serious challenge to the church; but so is religious pluralism, and if theologians are going to respond creatively to it, they must be able to explore it on its own terms and in its own context without fear of being condemned at the outset for not addressing the different challenge of secularity.

It is not easy to imagine these lessons being taken up in the current climate of tension between magisterium and theologians, and I fear that further attempts to deal theologically with the real and pressing challenge of religious pluralism will occasion further such episodes. Yet, as Jacques Dupuis often insisted, fear is a poor counselor, so perhaps the most important lesson to take from this book is gratitude for Dupuis' theological skill, creative fidelity to the church's tradition, and faithful integrity as a Catholic theologian. ■

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Terrence W. Tilley

Family Traits, Family Feuds

Theology Today

Perspectives, Principles, and Criteria
International Theological Commission
Catholic University of America Press, $16.95, 89 pp.

The International Theological Commission (ITC) was established by Pope Paul VI in 1969. Its members (up to thirty) are appointed for renewable five-year terms. They typically meet annually for a week. The ITC's purpose is to advise the magisterium, especially the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).

In 2004, a subcommittee was established to write the current volume. When the committee's term expired before this work was completed, a subsequent committee was appointed in 2009. They completed the work in 2011. Only one layperson belonged to both groups. One American (Sara Butler, MSBT) served on the second group. All the rest of the members of both commissions were ordained or vowed religious. All were teaching or had previously taught in institutions dedicated primarily to the training of ordinands.

The document is clearly the work of ecclesiastical theologians. Cardinal William Levada, then head of the CDF, authorized its publication late in 2011. Although ITC documents are written for the benefit of the whole church, they are not official teaching. Rather, they indicate the thinking being developed in Rome. ITC documents can and often do foreshadow future developments in magisterial teaching. For example, the 1997 ITC document "Christianity and the World Religions" paved the way for the 2000 CDF statement *Dominus Iesus*.

The present document has 163 footnotes. All of the references are to premodern theologians, magisterial documents, and ITC statements—save for one quotation from each of four more modern theologians: Johan Adam Möhler, John Henry Newman, Yves Congar, and Henri de Lubac. The document seeks to break no new ground,

CNS PHOTO / ARTURO MARI, L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

Pope Paul VI, 1977

citing no theological work written after the Second Vatican Council. Although the document nods to the postmodern condition, it stands well away from any contemporary debates in theology.

The document seeks to "identify distinctive family traits of Catholic theology" (the English follows the Italian more closely than it does the French "à identifier les traits communs qui distinguent la théologie catholique"). It develops twelve criteria. Catholic theology recognizes the primacy of the Word of God in creation, Scriptures, and Jesus Christ; takes the faith of the church as its source, context, and norm; has a rational, scientific dimension ("faith seeking understanding"); draws constantly on the canonical witness of Scripture; is faithful to the Apostolic Tradition; attends to the *sensus fidelium*; responsibly adheres to the magisterium in its various gradations; is practiced prayerfully, professionally, and charitably with all the Catholic theologians; is in constant dialogue with the world, helping the church read the signs of the times; should give a rationally argued presentation of the truths of the Christian faith; integrates a plurality of enquiries and methods in a unified project of understanding the faith; and, finally, seeks delight in the wisdom of God that is foolishness to the world.

Depending on how one interprets these criteria, they are quite reasonable, even capacious. But they also remain at a high level of abstraction.

Some points the document makes should be applauded. It recognizes that magisterial pronouncements and definitions do not all possess the same authority. It underlines that there are a variety of methods, fields, and approaches to theological work. While wisely recognizing that the academic study of religion has much to contribute to theology, the ITC rightly notes that theologians must resist a postivistic methodology now all too influential in the academy. *Theology Today* also acknowledges that the findings of theologians may at times be in tension with, and critical of, current magisterial teaching.

Nonetheless, the ITC asserts that "dissent" has no place in theology. "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." This recognition of the variety of magisterial pronouncements and the variety of theological endeavors is welcome.

Yet two assumptions weaken the document. First, it tends to see the church and the theologians who serve it as different from the world with which the church is in dialogue. But the boundary between the church and the world is not an external one. It cuts right through the theologians' minds and hearts. Both professionally and personally, theologians live in the world. In the contemporary academy, we are unavoidably influenced by colleagues outside our discipline. We are also shaped and reshaped by the cultures in which we live.

Second, the ITC sees theology as an exclusively ecclesial discipline. Insofar as theology is done in seminaries devoted exclusively to training people for lay and ordained ministry, such an assumption may apply. Yet in the United States, and in much of the world, this is simply not the case. The vast majority of Catholic theologians in the United States are laypeople, not ordained or vowed religious. Most American theologians work in colleges and universities, teach far more undergraduates than ministry students, and are subject more to the standards of secular academia than to those of seminaries or self-governing theological faculties.

The American theologian David Tracy is rightly revered for reminding us that theologians address three audiences: the church, the academy, and the world. I would go further: Catholic theologians live out their vocations in all three contexts. Moreover, we are judged according to the standards of the academy and the world—by university rank and tenure committees, by business professors, engineers, and physicists—not just in the ecclesial context. And we are not merely people who describe the world; we are also obliged, in many and varied ways, to work to change it.

The main problem with the ITC statement is that it neglects the multiple and various intellectual and personal responsibilities of theologians—not only in the United States, but throughout the academic world. Of course, Catholic theology should be guided by the standards enumerated by the ITC, but the task of theology must be broader still. For example, because the document is so "in house," it neglects the challenges to Christian faith that are the subject of fundamental theology. This important area of theological work deals with challenges to the faith, such as the reasonableness of believing in God, especially in the face of profound religious diversity and the reality of massive evils. These are essential questions for those living in a rather secularized society.

Moreover, the document is too sanguine. What happens when the *sensus fidelium* conflicts with the magisterium?

The classic case is the non-reception of the prohibition of "artificial" contraception articulated in *Humanae vitae* (1968).

In the period before the Second Vatican Council (and after it), Catholics had been taught an act-oriented moral theology. The morality of an act is given by the nature of the act, the actor's intention, and the circumstances in which the act is performed. Catholics had been taught that barrier methods of contraception—such as the use of condoms—were immoral because they interfered with the very nature of the act of intercourse. Imposing a barrier between the male and the female thwarted the true purpose of the act. With the invention of the Pill, a "non-barrier" method of fertility control became available. After careful study, many Catholic spouses became convinced the Pill could be used to limit and space births because it did not entail the use of a barrier. The commission set up by Paul VI to examine the question agreed, yet the pope was influenced to reject the findings of the commission's majority report. He reiterated the church's opposition to any form of "artificial" contraception. Many theologians felt morally compelled to dissent from that finding. The theologians who "dissented" listened to the *sensus fidelium*. They heard the objections of faithful people whose consciences had been formed by the act-oriented moral theology they were taught. There was no "barrier" to the act. To a great extent, theologians followed the lead of the faithful; they did not provoke dissent in the pews. Admittedly, the willingness of some theologians to speak out inevitably legitimated non-reception of *Humanae vitae* for many.

Today there are profound tensions between the *sensus fidelium* and the magisterium on a number of issues. There is growing opposition to the opacity of church government and the privileges and duties claimed by the clerical caste. The ongoing episcopal attack on the contraception mandate in the Affordable Care Act seems wildly uninformed by classic moral theology (the mandate seems to require, at most, remote material cooperation with "evil," cooperation that seems morally licit by traditional Catholic standards). Younger Catholics tend not to oppose legalizing same-sex marriage. Given these realities, what are theologians to do? The ITC document has no recommendations that I can find. The document's theological stance, for all its capaciousness, blithely states fidelity to the "Apostolic Tradition" as a criterion for Catholic theology, when just how to be faithful to the past in the present is precisely what is being disputed.

The harmonious ideals of *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles, and Criteria* are laudable. But the real world of Catholic theology, and Catholic life, remains far more dissonant. ■

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Thomas F. X. Noble

Behind the Tridentine Myth

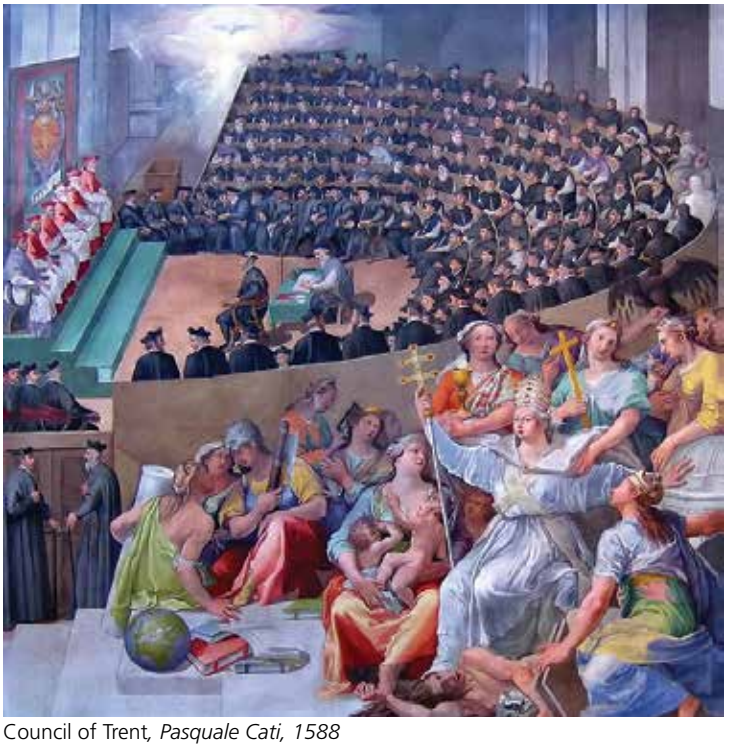
Trent
What Happened at the Council
John W. O'Malley
Harvard University Press, $27.95, 335 pp.

The Council of Trent, ostensibly the response of the Catholic Church to the Protestant Reformation, is poorly known for what occasioned it and what it did, and, ironically, known too well for things it did not do at all. Few readers have either the time or the inclination to read the four volumes of Hubert Jedin's magisterial work on Trent, and only its first two volumes appeared in English translation. Partly because Trent deserves to be more widely known and understood and partly because there is such flourishing talk about Vatican II, John O'Malley's book is especially welcome. Like all O'Malley's books, this one is beautifully written, richly but manageably detailed, and unostentatiously learned.

O'Malley accomplishes three things in this book. He explains why it took so long to call a council at all. He describes what happened at Trent and how factors internal and external to the church influenced the proceedings. Finally, speaking about the decades—even centuries—after the council, O'Malley carefully distinguishes between Trent and *Tridentinismo.*

From the middle of the eleventh century until the outbreak of the Great Western Schism (1378), popes routinely called councils and usually assembled them in Rome (twice in Lyons, once in Vienne) and carefully managed them. The Council of Constance (1414–18) put an end to the schism, gave expression to a "conciliarist" ecclesiology that thwarted the monarchical papalism of the preceding centuries, and passed a decree calling for regular councils. In 1431 a new council gathered at Basel and explicitly proclaimed the superiority of councils to the papacy. The popes spent the second half of the fifteenth century trying to defeat conciliarism. Later popes were extremely reluctant to call councils no matter what issues might have arisen.

Julius II was actually required in the conclave that elected him to call a council, but he worked hard to avoid doing so. Eventually he convened Lateran V (1512–17) but managed to prevent it from taking any steps unwelcome to the papacy. The year 1517 saw the beginnings of Martin Luther's increasingly public and noisy break with Rome. An imperial diet in 1523 called for a council but none met until 1545. There were deliberations from time to time, such as those of 1537 under Paul III, the findings of which were so critical of the church that the report was leaked and then published by Protestants. Paul did want a council to deal with Lutheranism but he could not bring one together until 1545.


Council of Trent, *Pasquale Cati, 1588*

Apart from reluctance in the curia, Paul faced a complex diplomatic and military situation. Valois France was literally surrounded by Habsburg territories and the two dynasties were regularly at war. Within Germany, Habsburg rule, always fragile, had been further weakened by the people and princes who rallied to Luther. There was sentiment for a council all over Europe, but none of the great powers trusted each other.All feared a council dominated by someone else, and there was no consensus on what a council ought to do.

In these tortured circumstances, the Council of Trent finally opened in 1545. The council was peculiar in many ways. It met in three sessions that, in all, extended over eighteen years: 1545–47, 1551–52, and 1562–63. There were about seven hundred bishops in Europe in the mid-sixteenth century. Trent's first session opened with twenty-nine in attendance, its second with fifteen. Perhaps 280 bishops participated in the final session, but the council's numbers were ridiculously small and never representative of Europe as a whole. Italians always dominated. There was negligible French participation until the third session and virtually no German participation in the second and third sessions. Three very different popes, Paul III, Julius III, and Pius IV, led the church while the council was in session. Through their appointment

of legates, always curial cardinals, the popes managed Trent effectively even though it met several days' ride from Rome "in German lands," as the emperor demanded.

Despite a few attempts by the assembled bishops to take control of the council's agenda, the popes and their legates always controlled it. The council decided to work on parallel tracks. Discussions would emphasize dogma and reform. Where dogma is concerned, the council was well-nigh embalmed in scholasticism and instead of theological reflection contented itself with formulaic affirmation. Essential teachings were reiterated much more than they were studied. Where reform was concerned, the popes were adamant that the council not touch the papacy itself or the curia. The council's working procedure involved hundreds of "congregations," in which issues were discussed at length and theologians had a significant role, and twenty-five general sessions that, when productive, issued decrees.

The episcopal office is an interesting case study in what could and could not be accomplished under the rubric of reform. Members of the council wanted to explore whether the office of bishop pertained to the *jus divinum* (divine law) or merely to papal appointment. In the curia, there was no doubt: papal appointment. If the episcopal office were endowed with divine law then bishops and popes would in effect be equals. The council also asked if bishops should be resident in their dioceses. Many were not resident, never preached, never visited their territories. The issue of residence came up in all three sessions of the council. In a grudging concession, the curia finally permitted a modest statement that diocesan residence was the norm for bishops, but the curia was reluctant to concede any of its privileges and dispensations.

The first period opened with a profession of faith (Nicene), affirmed the (long) canon of Scripture, issued a decree on justification, began the discussion of episcopal residence, and then, fearing plague in Trent, decamped to Bologna where, after just a few unproductive weeks, the council went into suspension. The second period issued decrees on the Eucharist, penance, and extreme unction, along with some minor reforming measures. The third period, after debating whether it was a continuation of Trent or a new council, issued decrees on Communion, on the celebration of the Mass, on holy orders, and on matrimony. Regrettably, in a terribly hurried Session 25, a large number of important issues were treated in cursory fashion: purgatory, saints and their relics, images, indulgences, foods and fasting, the *Index of Forbidden Books*, the Missal, and the breviary.

After the council a flurry of activity yielded the practices that came to be called "Tridentine." Many of these were rooted in but not explicitly called for by the council. Most of them derived from the implementation of the council in Milan by Carlo Borromeo, who had been Pius V's key adviser during the third session. The proliferation of seminaries was perhaps the council's greatest achievement. The catechism and Missal "of Trent" were issued in 1564 and 1570; strictly speaking, there was no "Tridentine" Mass. A new *Index* was less restrictive than the one of 1559 but still limited vernacular scriptures and made the Vulgate normative despite its many known errors (more than three thousand of them!). Trent proposed to limit severely the kinds of music appropriate to the Mass, but some of the cardinals were familiar with Palestrina and an opening was thereby created for the soaring music of the years ahead. Trent's affirmation of sacred art made Catholicism the most "sensuous" of the Christian confessions, in O'Malley's happy formulation.

O'Malley is a sure and companionable guide to a decisive set of developments that shaped the Catholic Church for four centuries. ■

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Edward T. Wheeler

There & Back Again

A Death at the White Camellia Orphanage

Marly Youmans
Mercer University Press, $24, 288 pp.

South Carolina native Marly Youmans has published four novels, two young adult books, and three collections of poetry. In *A Death at the White Camellia Orphanage*, she offers a Southern Gothic coming-of-age novel, featuring the precocious, eleven-year-old Pip, a hobo who travels back and forth across Depression-era America. Driven by a desire to understand life, Pip rides the rails to migrant farming work, sexual awakening, and a notably romantic contact with nature.

The story is bracketed by the murder of Pip's mixed-race half-brother, Otto, in the orphanage that gives the book its title. That racist killing propels Pip, plagued by migraine headaches and a ceaseless inner monologue, on a journey that ends only with the discovery of Otto's murderer. Youmans rather burdens the young traveler with great philosophical ruminations:

> Wasn't his world a landscape like a furnace of burning darkness, without one tendril of the hope that comes to all? Well, then, he would be damned; he would taste pleasures that might be a reason to live. There was nothing but now for him anymore, no goal or dream of the future, and no guide but his own desires.

The allusion to Huck Finn's self-damnation in his refusal to betray Jim offers another prototype of Pip, and he does "light out for the territory," albeit with a result that Huck might find less than acceptable. Yet the resolution

JIM KEVLIN

Marly Youmans

brings Pip home—the wandering Odysseus figure who discovers himself in his return from the journey out and back.

To get a sense of the demands of reading *A Death at the White Camellia Orphanage*, one has to understand that "rampire," a word whose recurrence becomes a motif in the novel, is an archaic variant form of "rampart." "Rampire" occurs in a passage from Clarendon's *History of the English Civil Wars* that Pip has memorized and quotes to himself as encouragement—obscurely, since he does not understand the term. But then, the whole purpose and direction of Pip's journey are obscure, and this obscurity is at the core of this picaresque novel. Youmans nods to eighteenth-century practitioners of the picaresque in the epigraphs she provides for each of the chapters. The conscious allusions are happily at odds with the innocence of her protagonist, and indicate the sophistication of Youmans's narrative.

There is much to delight a reader in this novel, an abundance of riches: a four-page bravura description of an arrival of a train as seen through Pip's eyes; his creation of a new mythology based on the anagrams that can be formed from the word "Earth"; and an extraordinary scene in which a grieving child gropes to find an opening in the air in hopes of accompanying the soul of her dead brother. We have the requisite Gothic characters, those pure, crazed products of America—like Till, Pip's adoptive grandfather, and his tenant "Princess Casimiria," self-proclaimed descendant of the Revolutionary War hero Count Pulaski, whose presence with Pip at a parent-teacher conference provokes a hilarious clash of misunderstandings. The novel's scenes of hobo travel, replete with the casual brutality of rail-yard "bulls" and the violence in the boxcars, are set against the generosity and simple goodness of so many caught westering in the Great Depression. Youmans's prose is highly metaphoric, rich in evocations that reverberate profoundly, like Pip's evening wonder in a eucalyptus forest, where "He touched a tree like mottled silver marble. The wind fell away, and the mosaic of leaves above him grew still: blue, light green, gray-green, and jade."

That rich prose fashions a journey of substantial self-discovery. In one campfire scene, a fellow farm laborer jumps suddenly for Pip's seat near the fire and lashes out with his knife, lacerating Pip's hands. What results, for Pip, is something approaching a revolutionary understanding of violence and what it means in the pitiless life of the underdog. "Maybe it made him feel free," he reflects later. "Maybe he had to tear his way out.... Maybe he was breaking his fetters." Functioning as a kind of stylistic beacon is Pip's discovery of metaphor, the linking of unlike things in revealing likenesses.

> For the first time he had really understood the knife he had seen in the sky on the morning of Otto's death as the union of two things, *cloud* and *blade*. One frail and one steel, the two had met and fused in a forge of dawn. That was a kind of magic.

This death—whose effect seemed to coalesce in the blue eyes "burning in the faces of men," leaving Pip certain "he would never be able to look away from their eyes or from their secret knowledge"—is a vast synecdoche for all that threatens him. His immediate remedy, besides that bulwark of "rampire," is the small conch shell from atop Otto's grave that contains the spirit of what was. Unlike his namesake from Dickens, Pip never falls prey to inflated self-esteem. He is all too aware of the dangers issuing from the blue-eyed men, even as he confronts the family of Otto's murderer. The particular mechanism by which the murder is solved is perhaps the weakest of the plot turns, but the solution ushers in resolution, at Otto's very gravesite.

As a form, the picaresque novel is dependent on great storytelling, and Youmans spins a captivating yarn. Her voice is expressive and cajoling, her tendency to rhapsody chastened by the gritty detail with which she furnishes her young hero's adventures. Even as it displays its traditional stylistic elements, *A Death at the White Camellia Orphanage* offers something distinct and modern, transcending the Southern Gothic form. The traveler completes his journey; he has not only come home but found out what home is. As is so often the case in a tale driven by myth, the end rests squarely on the beginning, death and birth inevitably conjoined, conveying to us a sense of experience that is both rampire and release. ■

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Religion Booknotes

Lawrence S. Cunningham

The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism
1350–1550
Bernard McGinn
Crossroad, $70, 721 pp.

Bernard McGinn's *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism* is the fifth volume of a projected seven-volume history of Western Christian mysticism. This encyclopedic undertaking is one of the most impressive works of scholarship by an American Catholic theologian in the past few decades. In the opening volume of the series, *The Foundations of Mysticism* (1991), McGinn argued at length that mysticism (a modern word) should be construed as a deepening sense of the presence of God in a person's life and could be studied by careful analysis of texts that are not always patently autobiographical. As he notes about Jan van Ruusbroec in this volume, a sense of God's presence is open to every Christian through the "life of prayer and the sacraments, the practices of the virtues, and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit."

The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism examines late medieval mysticism in the Low Countries, Italy, and England. The key word in the title is "vernacular" because it is precisely in this period that we find spiritual writers—both lay and religious, both men and women—addressing a readership that lacks either the taste or the education for the works of theology then being read at universities. Indeed, as McGinn points out more than once, it is in this period that a separation between "spirituality" and "theology" becomes more detectable, a separation lamented in our time by scholars such as Hans Urs von Balthasar.

There are substantial chapters on three paradigmatic figures (Ruusbroec, Catherine of Siena, and Richard Rolle), but McGinn is too sophisticated to think that any one of them sums up the period as a whole. He carefully shows what these various writers inherited from the past, how they reflected the exigencies of their own period, and, finally, which of their insights have reached through the centuries to our own day. Introducing the English mystics, McGinn summarizes the issues of interest throughout the Christian world during the late-medieval period: relationship between the active and the contemplative life; the emphasis on the humanity of Christ and on his Passion; the tension between "unknowing" (*apophasis*) and "knowing" (*kataphasis*) in prayer; the connection between knowing and loving God; the increased emphasis on affectivity; and the increasing importance of discernment, especially at a time when an extraordinary number of religious visions were being reported. Among the writers McGinn considers, the proposed solutions were often very different, but many of the concerns were the same.

Educated readers will meet some familiar friends in this study: Thomas à Kempis, Catherine of Siena, the *Cloud* author, Julian of Norwich, and of course Dante. McGinn, not content with standard authors, also writes in detail about authors and texts that will be new to most nonspecialists. He gives full attention to the large number of women writers who were at work during this period but have been largely overlooked until recently.

When McGinn cites a text, he provides the untranslated original in the notes. The book also includes an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. As a consequence of this editorial care, interested readers get not only a comprehensive overview of the authors in question but also a valuable resource for further study. Thus, one can read both this volume and the one that came before it either as a continuous narrative or as an authoritative reference work. One hopes McGinn's energy will not flag as he finishes last two volumes of this magnum opus.

Francis of Assisi
The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint
André Vauchez
Yale University Press, $35, 416 pp.

Every biographer of St. Francis of Assisi faces the dual challenge of avoiding the sentimental picture of the Poor Man of Assisi as a sort of medieval Dr. Doolittle and untangling the many sources of information about the

PAGES 28–29, ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHARLOT

saint's life, which are often laced with hidden polemics and unacknowledged theological agendas. The distinguished French medievalist André Vauchez meets the challenge with great success in *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*. Not only is he judicious with respect to sources, but he is also conversant enough with the medieval world to resist the temptation to see Francis as a solitary flower blooming in a desert of medieval credulity and corruption.

Vauchez divides his book into four large parts. The first is a biography of Brother Francis; the second explains how Brother Francis became St. Francis only two years after his death. In part three Vauchez tells how Francis was received in the turbulent centuries after his death, as the Franciscan movement attempted to interpret the "true" mind of its founder. We also learn how Francis and what he represented was rejected, first by the Reformers and later by Enlightenment thinkers, only to be rediscovered and rehabilitated by the nineteenth-century Romantics. Vauchez has some fine pages on how Paul Sabatier's late-nineteenth-century biography of the saint, which argued that the Roman Curia hijacked Francis's evangelical impulses by turning his movement into a religious order, first raised the so-called Franciscan Question, which is still being discussed in current scholarship.

The final section of this estimable work ponders the originality of Francis's thought and the character of his charism, with perceptive reflections on his pertinence in our own day. The best thing about this section is the nuanced way Vauchez addresses the inevitable tension between charism and institution. His reflections help us understand how it's possible to see Francis both as a figure whose appeal seems to transcend Catholicism and as a saint who was completely faithful to the church.

In my opinion, this is the single best book about Francis now available in English, distinguished by both its scholarly fairness and its comprehensiveness. Yale University Press wisely chose Michael Cusato, himself a Franciscan friar and a fine scholar, to translate the book from the French original, and he demonstrates a mature feel for its historical and theological vocabulary. This past year also saw the publication of Augustine Thompson's *Francis of Assisi* (Cornell University Press), which I have praised elsewhere. Thompson's book is much more narrowly focused, presenting a straightforward life of the saint that draws on a strict reading of the sources. It is a good book, but Vauchez must be given the crown. Both books remind us that a person like Francis provides us with an excess of meaning. And they come just in time for the first Pope Francis, whose choice of names has already inspired much interpretation.

Tasting Heaven on Earth

Worship in Sixth-Century Constantinople

Walter D. Ray

Eerdmans, $28, 138 pp.

Walter D. Ray's book about the Hagia Sophia—once a great church, now a mosque—is part of a series of studies on the context of Christian worship, under the general editorship of John Witvliet. If the other projected volumes are as ample and pedagogically sound as this one, the series will be a great boon not only to students in a classroom setting but to anyone who wants to experience the flesh and bones of the theology of worship.

The opening section of this handsome volume sets Byzantine liturgy in its proper landscape. The next section describes the materials used in worship at the Hagia Sophia, from vessels to sacred art. It then presents the actual architecture of Hagia Sophia, with the help of detailed drawings. The section ends with a description of the order of worship, sample sermons, and the eucharistic prayer(s) used in the liturgy. The selection of primary sources is generous, the commentary succinct. The reader has everything he needs to make sense of the mountain of information Ray offers. The book concludes with suggestions for discussion, a glossary of terms, and suggestions for further reading. Eerdmans is to be congratulated for producing such a user-friendly volume at such a reasonable price. The only thing that might improve this series would be the inclusion of a CD, so that readers could hear samples of the music that accompanied worship in places such as the Hagia Sophia.

An ancient text from around 1000 AD claims that Russia became Orthodox when emissaries to Byzantium returned to describe the splendor of worship in Constantinople, where they claimed to have seen angels ascending and descending under the great dome of the Hagia Sophia. This fine study helps us get a glimmer of the beauty these ancient travelers found there.

The Life of the Virgin

Maximus the Confessor

Translated by Stephen J. Shoemaker

Yale University Press, $35, 215 pp.

The seventh-century Greek *The Life of the Virgin*, sometimes attributed to Maximus the Confessor, was, until this English edition published by Yale University Press, available only in French and Old Georgian. Stephen J. Shoemaker has provided us not only with the translation but also with a thorough introduction to the whole work. *The Life of the Virgin* must once have been popular in Byzantine circles since Shoemaker is able to provide a matching schedule of liturgical read-

ings used in the eleventh century by the monks of Mar Saba in the Holy Land.

I will leave it to the experts to argue about whether this book should still be ascribed to Maximus (von Balthasar evidently thought so). Whatever its authorship, this is a valuable work for anyone concerned with the development of the Marian cult in Christianity. As Shoemaker points out, this text is the first to put Mary in a prominent role in the public life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. Most earlier accounts simply "bookended" his life with hers rather than weaving them together. In this text Mary is "portrayed as having a uniquely authoritative knowledge" of her son's teaching, as well as having a leadership role, along with James, in the church in Jerusalem after the Ascension. Perhaps this portrayal is to be attributed to the author's fecund imagination, but it also invites further study in order to discover what it owes to other apocryphal sources and ancient traditions.

The Life of the Virgin is a specialist work but hardly inaccessible to a theologically literate person with an interest in history. I congratulate both Yale and the author for this important addition to the literature on the woman this text calls "all holy, incorruptible, and most blessed queen, the Theotokos and ever virgin Mary."

This is the last installment of Religion Booknotes, a column I've been writing for more than twenty-five years. The task has hardly been onerous. On the contrary, it's provided a hospitable outlet for my serious addiction to reading. Every valedictory worthy of its name should end in gratitude, and so: Thanks to the editors for reining in my errant prose; to the supporters of this excellent journal who take pride in being "Commonweal Catholics"; and to the community of writers who keep producing works worthy of attention. May all three tribes flourish! ■

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Bending the Lens

Michael E. DeSanctis

For years I've been introducing students in my college-level fine-arts courses to the photographs of Diane Arbus (1923–71). Old friends of mine by now, the images created by this "photographer of freaks" have intrigued me since I was an undergraduate myself. There's the frustrated little boy in Central Park clutching a toy grenade and looking as if someone's pulled the pin on his own explosive core; the circus giant folded origami-style into his terrified parents' tiny living room for fear he'll scrape the ceiling; the tattooed carny with x-ray eyes who could be a real-life double for Ray Bradbury's Illustrated Man. There are, as well, the assorted prostitutes, strippers, and drag queens whose lives Arbus described as having the "quality of legend," the men with shaved bodies and tucked-away genitals pretending to be women and the women with plastic bodies and tucked-away souls pretending to be young. Together they form a communion of beings as ethereal as saints, whose lovely, silver-tone relics seem at home under glass.

Projected onto a lecture-room wall, their dearness vanishes. No longer objects to be held and studied like jewelry, the photos assume the scale of billboard graphics, which one might think would heighten their power. Lately, however, my students seem less responsive to Arbus's pictures than they once were, even if I try nudging them in the direction of honest emotion with a few lines from Grace Bauer's tribute poem "The Eye of the Beholder." "Run your hands / across your average face, / your normal body," Bauer dares my classes in her evocation of Arbus, "And tell me / how you differ from these / miracles that always make you / want to look away. / And see."

More and more, however, my students *don't* turn reflexively from Arbus's anomalies of nature and culture, or show much interest in "seeing" in a way that doesn't entail keeping at least one eye on the screens of their iPhones. Instead, an icy stupor possesses them, something partly induced by the bullet-point approach to learning they've endured since grade school—all prepackaged "data" with little affective content. Sitting beside classmates with Popsicle-colored hair and more angles on filigreeing one's body parts than even Arbus's subjects knew of, they balk at the chance to examine art that asks, "Who among you is without blemish?" and only half buy my claim we're not doing religion.

None of this is to suggest I'm not often gifted with the epiphanies my students draw from the air like lightning rods—as when one deep-thinking young woman neatly distinguished the difference between art and pornography by the degree to which their fleshiest subjects "point beyond themselves," or when an astrophysics whiz kid declared the universe aglow with the "radioactivity of grace." Too young, perhaps, to grasp fully the meaning of the crucifix that hangs prominently in our classroom, they nevertheless recognize in their better moments the vast canopy formed by Christ's outstretched arms, beneath which all earthly experience discloses the celestial.

I regard the classroom as a hallowed place and require male students to remove their baseball caps upon entering. Something miraculous happens there daily. In the art of Diane Arbus—or Giotto or Brueghel or van Gogh—in the street-smart plays of Shakespeare, in Mozart's comic operas and an assigned zinger of a poem by Carolyn Forché or Mary Karr, my students touch something divine, whose utter familiarity begs to be reverenced. If they miss it at first, too cool to find it relevant, or distracted by the text messages on the screens in their laps, I don't immediately lose heart. Experience tells me that five or ten years down the road they'll write to say they'd stumbled on the boy with the grenade in the pages of some magazine, no older or less terrifying than they remembered him. They'll recall the hours we shared letting great images and ideas wash over us like baptismal water, a trick to keep our hearts and minds supple against life's hard edges, our eyes fine-tuned to behold the world as it points beyond itself. ■

PEASANT WEDDING, PIETER BRUEGHEL THE ELDER, CIRCA 1567

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