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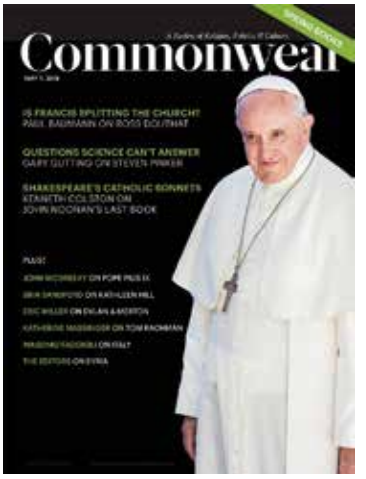
LETTERS

The Bard's religion, the Kingdom of God, etc.

DOES IT MATTER?

Perhaps it's time to cease differentiating what brand of Christianity the Bard practiced ("Was Shakespeare Catholic?" May 4)! If that rose by any other name would smell as sweet, cannot a Christian still be a worthy follower of Christ without the designation Roman?

In her essay "Grace" from *The Givenness of Things*, Marilynne Robinson (an expert on the subject) references several of his plays and concludes that "it is appropriate to see Shakespeare as a theologian in his own right, though the perils that attended religious expression made his theology implicit rather than overt." She writes that his theological seriousness is "quite particular to him among playwrights…simultaneous with his greatness as a dramatist."



She apparently sees no need to assign "her theologian" any particular niche in Christianity, a church where all situate themselves, albeit in different pews, *facing the same altar.*

LYN BAUMSTARK
St. Louis, Mo.

A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY

As an amateur student of history for over half a century, I found the exchange between Massimo Faggioli ("A Wake-Up Call to Liberal Theologians") and Michael Hollerich ("Do Catholic Theology Departments Have a Future?" May 18) quite interesting. I am not a theologian, but I do know that without the ongoing and continuous development and study of theology, we will lose the guideposts that light our way in living a Christian life. I will leave the professionals and the hierarchy to wrestle with this challenge.

I think that an understanding of church history is a pillar in the proper study of theology. Without it Catholics cannot understand the workings of the Spirit on the men and women who struggled these two thousand years to get the message of Jesus right. Knowing of their struggles in learning how to govern themselves and organize their communities provides us with guides to carry on our own struggle. We learn lessons from all of these efforts.

The dumbing down of Catholics in church history and in all study of history for that matter is, in my humble opinion, the reason why we are in a perplexing global situation. History, church history in particular, is not a luxury in a curriculum. It is part of the foundation stone for lives meant to be lived according to the message of Jesus as our foremothers and -fathers tried to figure out.

MARY LOUISE HARTMAN
Princeton, N.J.

PAINFULLY HONEST

I read Jerry Ryan's Last Word ("He Does Not Forget," May 4) a week after visiting my ninety-nine-year-old mother. Ryan admits the elderly "have lost all power of seduction"—a painfully honest definition of old age.

It also provides the most thought-provoking, yet hopeful, explication of "blessed are the poor in spirit" I've ever read. Thank you, Brother Ryan.

CASSIE DILLON
Asheville, N.C.

GOD'S SYMPHONY

Terry Eagleton's article "Cast a Cold Eye" (February 23) profoundly affected me. In college, my theology professor said two things about death: first, that the Christian understanding of death is that

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"the Kingdom of God is at hand," and second, that everything we do on earth is "of eternal significance."

Saying that the Kingdom of God is at hand is an existential claim that we are living God's grace right now and, as such, are called to manifest that grace by how we conduct ourselves in the world, for the good of the world and ourselves. (That speaks to Eagleton's statement about "the value of value.") The notion that everything we do is of eternal significance could suggest a transactional view of death, in which the things we do on this earth while alive will "buy" us the Kingdom of God in death.

One could look at these two statements and see them as contradictory, but I don't think they are. That the Kingdom of God is at hand suggests that we are already a part of it and it is ours to become a full participant in it, if we so choose. It is all around us. It is in everything we do and say, in our every relationship, with every other child of God. What we do while we are here on earth is about the Kingdom of God and our place in it. This helps me avoid treating concepts of God and love and forgiveness and redemption as transactional concepts or dynamics. Jesus, the Great Revealer of God's grace, showed us through his death on the cross and his Resurrection that God loves us, forgives us, redeems us even when we don't deserve it, even when we don't ask for it. It is too easy to fall prey to the prideful notion that somehow we who have not committed dramatic and notorious acts will somehow profit more from some humanly ill-conceived divine transaction at our death. That concept reduces God to a kind of venal bean-counter or lawyer, not the God of freely given love. Death should not be thought of as the fulfillment of a macabre contract, when our virtues and kindnesses are exchanged as legal "consideration" for God's contracted-for heaven.

If the Kingdom of God is an eternal continuum, birth and death and the beats of life's journey in between are all part of a symphony of interaction with God, although admittedly—as Eagleton observes—birth and death are the most dramatic events along the continuum. That birth and death and everything in between are tangents on a continuum of the Kingdom of God seems self-evident to me in the Christian context. We existed on that continuum before we were born. "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5). We exist on that continuum while we toil on earth. "And even the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:30-31). We return to the sight of God upon our death if we choose to gaze in His direction and not avert our eyes. "In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may also be" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

MICHAEL BURNETT
Charlotte, N.C.

From the Editors

Promoting Torture

Gina Haspel, the new CIA director, brings experience and professionalism to the job. That is one thing that differentiates her from most of President Trump's other appointees. She's no Ben Carson, or Betsy DeVos, or Scott Pruitt. A dutiful CIA agent since 1985, she has served in the deepest parts of the "deep state" the president otherwise likes to vilify, and received the backing of dozens of former intelligence officials. By 2002 she was "a superstar," according to former clandestine-services chief Jose Rodriguez, who bragged in his 2012 memoir of "stealing her away to head one of our earliest 'black sites' where terrorists were interrogated."

That site was a secret prison in Thailand, where Abu Zubaydah, a suspected Al Qaeda leader, was in fact being tortured. Zubaydah was waterboarded eighty-three times, had his head repeatedly slammed against walls, and lost his left eye. Thinking their methods might kill him, interrogators had readied cremation plans. When he survived, CIA operatives demanded assurances that he would be imprisoned in isolation for the rest of his life. Zubaydah is still a prisoner, but now at the U.S. detention camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He proved not to be a member of Al Qaeda at all, much less a leader, and he provided no intelligence on future terrorist plots.

Haspel arrived in Thailand shortly after the torture of Zubaydah, but in time to oversee the torture of another detainee, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri. In 2005, she was rewarded with a promotion. She also knew of Rodriguez's order to destroy dozens of videotapes documenting the waterboarding of Zubaydah after sentiment turned against the Bush administration's policy of "enhanced interrogation." Despite the destruction of this evidence, in 2014 the Senate Intelligence Committee was able to document the agency's post-9/11 detention and interrogation tactics. To this nation's everlasting shame, the CIA had indeed tortured numerous people in its custody.

At her Senate confirmation hearings in May, Haspel was asked about the CIA's conduct in this period and her part in it. She maintained that the actions of the agency were legal according to the laws of the time—a dubious claim. Nevertheless, she promised not to restart what she called the "interrogation program" under any circumstances. "I would not allow the CIA to take activity I thought was immoral, even if it was *technically* legal," she promised. Of course, the methods used against Zubaydah, al-Nashiri, and more than one hundred other detainees were technically legal, thanks to an expansive redefinition of "interrogation" crafted by Bush Justice Department lawyers. But did Haspel think they were immoral? That's all that Democratic Senator Kamala Harris of California wanted to know, yet here Haspel's experience and professionalism were of no help. After some obfuscation about the CIA's "extraordinary work to prevent another attack on this country," the best answer she could muster was a wan pledge "to hold ourselves to the moral standard outlined in the Army field manual."

Haspel's refusal to accept responsibility for her role in the Bush administration's use of torture is deeply troubling, especially for someone who will now head a government agency in need of stringent congressional oversight. Of course, for her to admit that "enhanced interrogation" was really torture would have amounted to self-incrimination. It would have put her at odds with the original architects of the disastrous "war on terror"—like former Vice President Dick Cheney, who appeared on Fox News and elsewhere to agitate for Haspel's confirmation while repeating debunked claims that such methods helped prevent further attacks. And it would have made things difficult with the president, who has often expressed his wish "to bring back waterboarding and a whole hell of a lot worse."

In the end, fifty-four senators voted to confirm Haspel, including several red-state Democrats facing re-election this fall. Their choice represents the logical continuation of compromises made in the panicky aftermath of 9/11 and effectively condoned by the Obama administration in its decision not to hold anyone legally accountable. To mention the Geneva Conventions—to which the United States is a signatory—and other international treaties that prohibit torture might seem quaint at this point, as might recalling how John Paul II condemned torture as an intrinsic evil in the 1993 encyclical *Veritatis splendor*. Torture violates the dignity of those subjected to it and saps the humanity of those who use it. To judge from the level of public indifference to Haspel's questionable record, it has also damaged the moral integrity of those whose safety it supposedly safeguarded. ■

Rita Ferrone

Taking on Abuse in Chile

WHAT FRANCIS IS UP AGAINST

On May 18, all the bishops in Chile offered Pope Francis their resignation en masse in response to the clergy sexual-abuse scandal there. It was a highly dramatic gesture and a welcome sign of their willingness to "let go." Yet it doesn't solve the thorny and complex problem that led to the resignations. The roots of the scandal go deep.

A good example of this can been seen in the case of Fernando Karadima, the charismatic priest who preyed upon young men in the El Bosque parish for three decades, and who was sentenced by an ecclesiastical court to a life of "prayer and penance" in 2011. He ran what amounted to a religious cult centered on his own personality—one that was wildly successful, producing no less than fifty priests, four of whom became bishops. They called him the "little saint" while he abused them sexually, controlled them psychologically, separated them from their families, and had them spy on one another so that he could control them further. This wasn't just about sex; it was about power.

Francis gets it. In a statement he made to the Chilean bishops when he met with them in Rome, he said, "We must pay attention to what I allow myself to call 'elite psychology'...elite or elitist psychology ends up generating dynamics of division, separation, 'closed circles' that lead to narcissistic and authoritarian spiritualities.... Messianism, elitism, clericalisms, all are synonymous with perversion in the ecclesial being."

That perversion remains a tough one to cure. Many of those whom Karadima cultivated stayed loyal to him after he was accused. They not only defended him; they also spread false stories to discredit the whistleblowers. The number of people involved in covering up his crimes alone is staggering. When one adds to this all the other cases, such as the abuse at a school run by the Marist order and scandals associated with the Legionaries of Christ in Chile, one begins to understand why the report of Vatican investigator Archbishop Scicluna was 2,300 pages long. The Chilean bishops have totally lost credibility; it's not surprising that Chile has the lowest level of church engagement of any Latin American country.

And it's not over. A new scandal broke as the bishops returned home from their meeting with Pope Francis. Bishop Alejandro Goic, president of Chile's episcopal commission for the prevention of sexual abuse by the clergy, was confronted by a television exposé about a clergy sex ring called "the family" in his own diocese. He had to suspend fourteen priests (20 percent of those in the diocese) for soliciting sex and sharing pornographic material with underage boys. Goic had been told about this network of abusers eighteen months earlier by the former diocesan coordinator of youth ministry, Elisa Fernández, but did nothing. And he was entrusted with overseeing the protection of minors! (He has since resigned from that commission.)

Fortunately, Fernández did not give up. She opened a Facebook account posing as a sixteen-year-old boy named Pedro, and communicated with a fifty-four-year-old priest under that alias. The sting operation worked. The priest sent Pedro erotic messages and a nude photo of himself. Confronted with the evidence, the priest confessed. The case is now in the hands of the public prosecutor, who suspects there may be even more "family" than the fourteen already named. Once again, as in the case of Karadima, this episode reveals a conspiracy of iniquity in the clerical establishment.

How can Francis even begin to take on such pervasive corruption? In his address to the Chilean bishops he taxed them with gross negligence, passing around known abusers to other dioceses, suppressing witnesses, and destroying evidence. Resignations are not enough, he said: "It would be a serious omission on our part not to delve into the roots. It is a great fallacy to believe that the removal of people alone, without more, would generate the health of the body. There is no doubt that it will help and it is necessary to do it, but I repeat, it is not enough."

Father Fernando Karadima leaves after attending a 2015 hearing at the Chilean Supreme Court building in Santiago.

CNS / SEBASTIAN SILVA

Francis plans to meet with five priests who were abused by Karadima, plus four others who have accompanied these survivors. Maybe they will have some suggestions for him. But he is going to need more help if Chile is to extricate itself from the snares of an inbred system that has not proved capable of reforming itself.

I think it's time for Francis to call on the most powerful secret weapon for reform that the Catholic Church possesses: women. They are not part of the clerical elite. They have no promotions to gain or positions to lose, and they have a much better track record on protecting the vulnerable. They are courageous: look at the initiative taken by Elisa Fernández. And they are a rising force in Chilean society. Their visible and leading presence in an effort to clean up this mess would be a sign of the coming Kingdom. ■

Maurice Manning

Keeping the Rhythm

LIFE LIVED TO THE BEAT OF A HYMN

My experience of organized religion and an active spiritual life has often meant accepting ambiguity. I have never doubted the presence and the work of the Creator. Instead, I have doubted my own ability to understand that presence and to live with it, especially when the full meaning of that presence remains evasive. Yet this inherent discord, which seems natural and necessary, is, in my view, a pretty good claim for faith.

Faith is the realm that asks us to think, to work, to be active, to be patient, and to accept our entry into the unknown. We blindly agree something will come of it, even if what comes is wholly inscrutable. What a strange task to grab hold of! And yet, if I look around where I live and reflect on my upbringing, there seems no greater task. We should, after all, be seeking fulfilling lives—understanding the purpose of our lives and making something useful of them. But how many people in our troubled world really enjoy the privilege of leisurely entertaining such thoughts? That cuts me down a notch or two. I could ponder such matters for a long time. At some point, though, you have to get going and see what happens, a predicament not unlike that faced by a poet staring at an empty page.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF ROBERT LEHMAN, 1955

Martin Luther

I was raised in a Disciples of Christ church, a denomination that split from the Presbyterians in the early 1800s during the Second Great Awakening. I like to think the Disciples of Christ is a frontier denomination, parallel in many ways to the founding and design of our country—independent and separate. The Disciples of Christ was also founded in Kentucky, our nation's first frontier state, and a state my ancestors settled, so my affiliation with this denomination is natural and inherited from many generations of my family.

When I was growing up, going to church was simply part of life. I took it seriously and I valued it. As an adult, however, I have strived to maintain an active faith, rather than a specific affiliation. That means I've spent a lot of time searching. I have attended churches of many stripes: various evangelical churches (including Holiness churches), Southern Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, and Catholic. In my early twenties, I was a graduate student and lived in a one-room schoolhouse that had been converted to a humble residence. Living there, I attended what I like to call a country Catholic church, a church in rural Kentucky absent of all formality, one that included congregants who were local farmers and Hispanic immigrants. I truly felt at home at that church. No fanfare, no adornment to be seen.

Since then I've preferred a plain approach in the churches I've attended. Our family currently attends a small Catholic church that was originally founded as an African-American parish. Although my wife and I have not officially converted to Catholicism, our somewhat renegade priest happily baptized our young daughter. It's all a rough fit, I'm afraid, and some of that probably has to do with my temperament; some of it is also connected to my inclinations as a poet.

It shouldn't be surprising, then, that one of my favorite hymns was composed by the great Protestant, Martin Luther. "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" is a hymn that immediately drew me into it when I was a child. I liked the words, translated into a version of English that was more or less Victorian, and must have seemed elevated to my young ears. But I liked much more the strange rhythm of the hymn. There is such a brief pause between the phrases that they nearly fall on top of each other. While

the melody moves forward it also jumps or bumps—it isn't a sweet or smooth movement. I can think this way as an adult, of course; as a youngster I merely noted that there was something strange in the music of this hymn, and I liked it for that. The song's melody is one I've hummed to myself often through the years. I've found that in doing a chore—working in the garden, for instance—or walking in the woods, my body falls into a rhythm, and that puts my thoughts in rhythm, and pretty soon I'm humming a tune in my mind. Often—inexplicably to me other than because of its strange rhythm—the tune I hum is Luther's old Reformation hit.

My experience with this hymn also has a more haunting dimension. In the early summer of 2011, my wife and I were bicycling on the country roads around us. A couple of weeks before we'd had a miscarriage. It was just one of those things. We were newly married, but we were in our forties and we'd agreed that having children was an unlikely prospect. Then, to our great surprise, we learned Amanda was pregnant, and far enough along that we could hear a heartbeat on a visit to the doctor. A couple of weeks later we went back for another visit and an ultrasound. This time the technician ran the wand over Amanda's belly a few times and quietly looked up at us. "I'm sorry," she said, "but there isn't a heartbeat." We were stunned, and walked out into the bright day, not sure what to say or how to feel.

I have spent much of my adult life believing I am not worthy of grace, yet time after time it has managed to find me despite my perverse doubt. And so, a couple of weeks after the miscarriage, we set out on our bikes. We were climbing a steep hill, about to enter the small village of Mackville, Kentucky. As I was pumping my way up the hill, I began humming "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"—I expect simply so the rhythm of the song would drive me on. As we entered Mackville, a church bell began ringing, signaling that it was noon. I looked over in a field and saw a black horse making his way to a spring for a drink. Just as the horse reached the spring, the church bell stopped. The timing of the two events struck me, and I felt a measure of grief pass out of my being, and knew it was the grief from our miscarriage. While the grief was not wholly removed in that moment, I realized I would at least come to understand it in time, or I would learn how to live with it. There was a comfort in that moment—a mysterious, foggy sense of comfort and transformation, which is often the character of my spiritual encounters.

Later that evening, I found myself drafting a poem to reflect on the events of the day. Once I got to a resting place for the poem I wondered what sort of title suited it, and consulted an old hymnal to revisit the English translation of Martin Luther's words. "Amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing" immediately stood out, and that is the title of the poem in its final version. The poem appears in my most recent book, *One Man's Dark*.

Grace found us again, however, in 2015, when our daughter Lillian was born—certainly a miracle. By this time we were even older, yet had the wisdom of loss behind us; though even as I write the word, wisdom doesn't seem quite right. We are simply still learning, both from grief and joy. I am prepared to believe we are called to such a task, and certainly believe music helps to get us there. ■

Maurice Manning'*s most recent book of poetry is* One Man's Dark. *This essay is adapted from his contribution to* Stars Shall Bend Their Voices, *a volume of reflections by contemporary poets on hymns and religious song, to be published in the fall.*

ANNUAL THAW

That kind of weather:
zip up your jacket
but leave your hat at home.

Ice squeaks under boots now
as water squirms below it, over
broken slabs of sidewalk.

Last night filled my eyes
with blankets, deep in pillows
our muffled heartbeats drummed.

Kids at the bus stop, orange light
glancing harshly over lunchboxes,
the crossing guard's beard exposed

a half block from my porch: I nod,
he nods back the distance, presses
the crosswalk button to let the college line turn

and take me off to work. Last night
we lay between a body and a cold place,
but today I see only air

and through it, colored things
like signs and trees, and everyone
awake and surprised in the eight o'clock now—

we step single file onto frozen heaps
like Shackletons going anywhere else,
our shirttails tucked and ready.

—John Linstrom

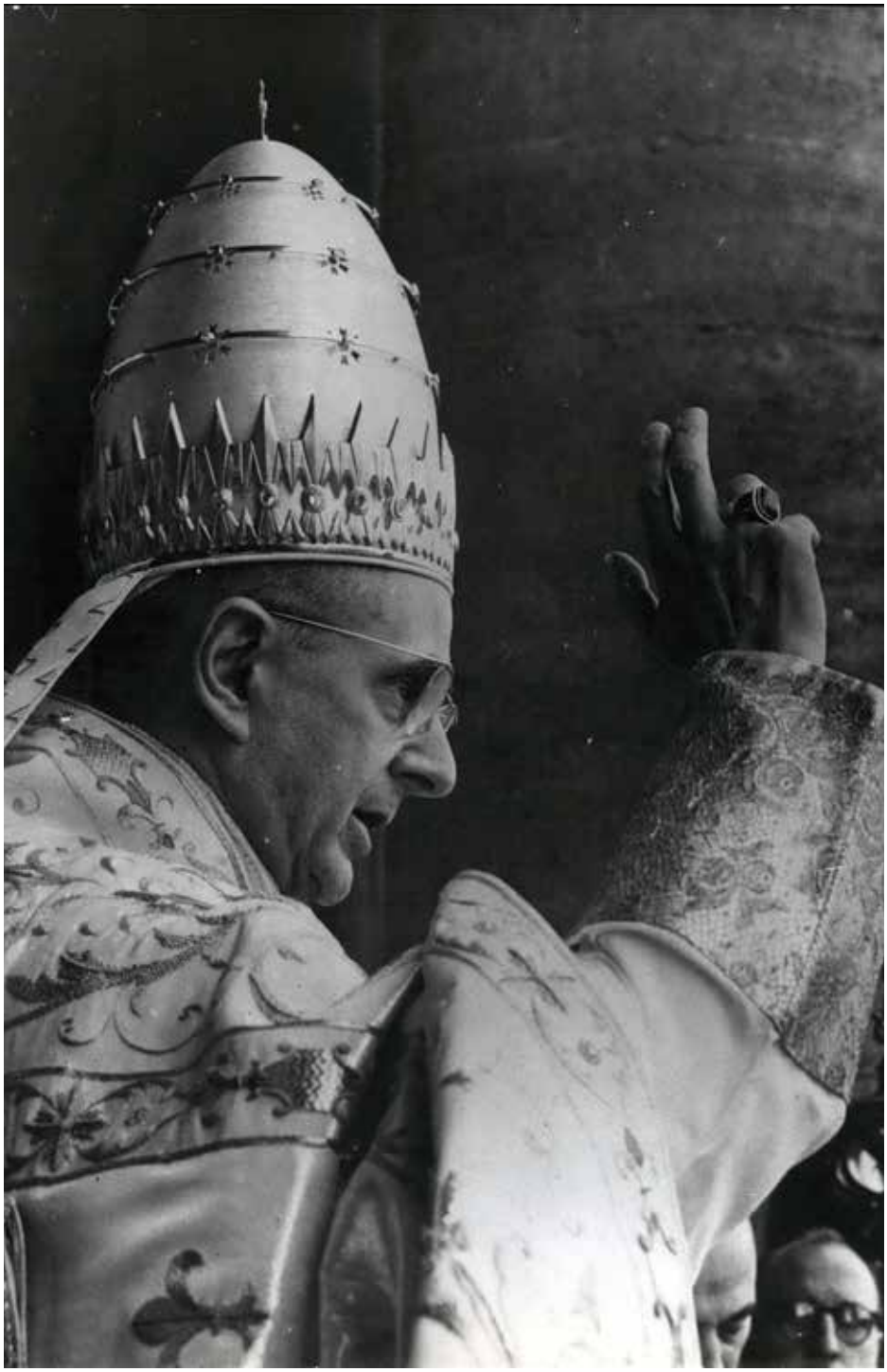
John Linstrom's poems and literary nonfiction have appeared or are forthcoming in Valparaiso Poetry Review, Dunes Review, Broad River Review, This Week in Poetry, *and* Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland.

An Unhealed Wound

Commonweal and *Humanae Vitae*

Millions of words have been written in response to *Humanae vitae*, Pope Paul VI's much contested 1968 encyclical reasserting the church's teaching on the immorality of contraception. *Commonweal* has published more than its fair share of such commentary, most of it questioning the encyclical's reasoning and wisdom while welcoming the pope's inspiring vision of the beauty and meaning of marriage. July marks the fiftieth anniversary of the encyclical's promulgation, and those on both sides of the question are dutifully revisiting the debate. On such an exhaustively vetted dispute, it is doubtful that any new understandings or common ground will be established. A review of the trajectory of the argument might prove useful, however, especially for readers who may have had little exposure to this history. To that end, *Commonweal* has plundered its archives in search of the most piquant examples of the initial and subsequent reactions to a papal decision that is acknowledged, by those on all sides of the conflict, to be one of the church's most damaging ongoing crises.

During the Second Vatican Council Pope John XXIII set up a commission to study questions raised by the widespread use of the birth control pill and alarms about overpopulation. Pope Paul removed the question from the council's agenda, but allowed the commission's work to proceed. In June 1966 a large majority of the commission, including bishops and theologians, recommended that the church relax its prohibitions and allow married



KEYSTONE PICTURES USA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

couples to conscientiously choose the best means to achieve "responsible parenthood." Millions of Catholics expected that the pope would abide by that recommendation. Instead, after waiting two years, Paul VI followed a minority-report warning that for the church to admit it had erred in the past would fatally undermine its authority and credibility. Even before *Humanae vitae* was released, *Commonweal*'s editors made what was at stake emphatically clear. "We want, finally, a conception of the relationship between faith and reason which does justice to the high place of reason in the Catholic tradition.... It was un-reason, on the contrary, which led the conservative minority to uphold a position which even they admitted could not be supported by rational arguments. This kind of irrationality must come to an end in the church."

In 2015, Peter Steinfels echoed this concern. Why was Pope Francis's Synod on the Family unwilling to revisit *Humanae vitae*, the elephant in the room when it comes to the impact of the church's teachings on sexual morality and Catholic family life? Defenders of the encyclical have championed it in terms of a host of other issues—from its warnings about the sexual revolution and the dangers of technological, neocolonial, or selfishly "contraceptive" mentalities to the spiritual and marital superiority of Natural Family Planning. But this avoids *Humanae vitae*'s central moral insistence—namely, that each and every act of marital intercourse must be open to procreation, regardless of consequences; anything else is intrinsically evil and gravely sinful. Noting that Catholics who follow the church's teaching and practice NFP also *intend* to avoid procreation, at least at certain times, the conservative Catholic philosopher Michael Dummett finds the encyclical's teaching indefensible. The church's recognition that the use of the "natural" or rhythm method was morally legitimate, Dummett wrote, "denied it the right to hold the purpose of reducing the frequency or number of pregnancies to be in itself wrong."

How much damage has been done? *Commonweal*'s July 15, 1988, editorial, "Anniversary Waltz," lamented how *Humanae vitae* "hobbled the church for the cultural struggle at hand," especially the challenges presented by the legalization of abortion. Unable to embrace the church's teaching on birth control, many priests, religious, and Catholic parents retreated from answering questions about the church's teachings on sexual morality, both inside and outside the family. "The failure to develop a fuller understanding of marriage and sexual morality has been especially detrimental to young Catholics," the editors wrote. Where once Catholics thought carefully—indeed agonized—about sexual decision-making in ways that shaped the most important relationships in their lives, many younger Catholics, deprived of guidance from adults, found themselves adrift in the popular culture's celebration of casual sex.

Historian Leslie Tentler confirmed this appraisal. "Silence on contraception inevitably led to an even greater silence—this one around sexual morality generally. At a time of almost breathtaking change in sexual values and behavior, church leaders had little to offer beyond what theologian Gerard Sloyan has called 'prohibitions without explanations.'" The consequences have been dire, if predictable. In the fifty years since Pope Paul attempted to shore up the church's authority by the assertion of authority alone, church membership and Mass attendance have plummeted, especially among the young. As Tentler writes, "No religious leadership can afford to be seen by large numbers of its putative flock as irrelevant to their most immediate moral dilemmas."

There is an expectation in some quarters that Pope Francis might yet call on the bishops to revisit *Humanae vitae*. Doubtless in the current polarized atmosphere within the church, where a vocal minority of conservative Catholics contrive to see Francis as a threat to "orthodoxy," that would be a risky thing to do. But as *Commonweal*'s editors wrote in 1967, "What matters is choosing that course which best serves the Christian and human good, not that course which promises to enhance or diminish the church's image, position in the world, or psychological attraction."

—Paul Baumann

From "Religion and Sex" by G. K. Chesterton, November 12, 1924

That love which makes youth beautiful, and is the natural spring of so much song and romance, has for its aim and issue a creative act, the founding of a family. […] The passion of a man in his youth has found its right road and reached its right goal, and though love need not be over, the search for love is over.

By the test of this aim and achievement all the things condemned by the Christian ethics fall into their various degrees of error. To prolong the search in a sentimental fashion, long after it has any relation to the real work of a man, is an error in varying degrees; often it is no more than undignified and ridiculous; *turpe senilis amor*. To allow the search to stray in such a fashion as to destroy other homes healthily established is, by this definition, obviously wrong. To cultivate a perversion in the mind which actually removes the desire for the fruitful act is horribly wrong. To purchase the mere sterile pleasure from a sterile class is wrong. To manoeuver in some scientific fashion, so as to filch the pleasure without taking the responsibilities of the act, is logically and inherently wrong. It is like swaggering about with a medal without going to the war.

From "Contraception and the Council" by John T. Noonan, March 11, 1966

That the teaching of Vatican II should be of the greatest relevance to Catholic doctrine on contraception is not surprising when it is remarked that the Second Vatican Council was the first council in the history of the church to speak on the purposes of marital intercourse. This subject, which was unmentioned in the gospels, had been left largely to the speculations of the theologians. It had never been a matter of authoritative teaching by a general council, nor, I believe, by any council. Now, for the first time, as the culmination of a slow evolution that took a decisive turn about 1680, a council gave authoritative teaching on coital purpose.

At various earlier times in the history of the church it had been the common opinion of Catholic theologians that the only lawful purpose for initiating intercourse was procreation; a consciously procreative intent was required. This view, derived from the Stoics, was asserted by Clement of Alexandria, and, adopted by Origen, played a guiding role in the Greek Church. In the West it was affirmed by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, and, above all, by St. Augustine, who riveted it on Western moral thought. From 1100 to 1680 the Alexandrian or Augustinian requirement of procreative purpose was dominant among Catholic moral theologians.

At various earlier times in the history of the church it had been the common opinion of Catholic theologians that the only lawful purpose for initiating intercourse was procreation; a consciously procreative intent was required.

By the end of the fifteenth century, however, a sharp critique had been made of the dominant theory, and Paris theologians had suggested that among the lawful purposes of marital coitus were the avoidance of adultery, the restoration of bodily and psychic health, and even the achievement of pleasure. Between 1480 and 1680 there went on a major theological controversy conducted in these categories. In 1563 the Council of Trent for the first time spoke at a conciliar level about love in marriage, but did not relate it to intercourse. Yet during the next century it became accepted that intercourse in order to avoid incontinence elsewhere was lawful; after all, this view had the implicit support of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 7. In adopting this analysis, the seventeenth-century theologians broke with the Augustinian insistence that sexual acts must be somehow tied to procreative purpose. At the same time they were uneasy about pleasure as a purpose in itself, and the consensus was that to seek pleasure only in intercourse, while excluding other purposes, was to commit venial sin.

Only in the nineteenth century was the idea advanced that the expression and fostering of love could be recognized as a purpose of marital intercourse. This thought was not developed in nineteenth-century theology, although by the end of the century Alois de Smet could add the un-Tridentine thought, apropos of the love which Trent had spoken of in marriage, that "the marriage act itself, by which the partners are made one flesh, cultivates and nourishes this love." Substantial theoretical development of this new, non-Augustinian insight was made in 1925 by the German layman Dietrich Von Hildebrand in his *Reinheit und Jungfraulichkeit*, and above all, in 1935 by the German priest Herbert Doms in his *Vom Sinn* and *Zweck der Ehe*. Doms set out a complete theory of coitus as an ontological act of reciprocal love, "an act which contains the abandonment and enjoyment of the whole person and is not simply an isolated activity of organs."

Doms' theory was received with coldness, the Holy Office issuing a decree on April 1, 1944, that was interpreted as rebuking it. But his emphasis on persons, in contrast to the earlier focus on the biological act, was taken up by Pius XII in 1949 in an allocution condemning artificial insemination. In the 1950s, a position balancing procreation and conjugal love was set out by the leading moral theologians Bernhard Häring and Joseph Fuchs. Marital intercourse, Häring said, was "a fundamental mediation of charity." Apart from procreation, one of its permissible purposes was "the augmentation of love." The loving union of spouses, however, was not directed to their own completion, but to the child, whose "virtual presence" was "inscribed in the ontological act of total union." Similarly, Fuchs taught that expression of love was a purpose of intercourse, although this love "entirely (although not solely or as a mere means) serves and is subordinated to the education of offspring, to whose generation such an act expressive of love is evidently ordered."

There had then already occurred in theological thought a development which, blending procreation and conjugal love, recognized both as purposes of intercourse. Vatican II confirmed and crowned this development by relating the coital expression of conjugal love to procreation, but also giving such expression a substantial value independent of

Bernhard Häring

procreation. Conjugal love, the Council now taught, had its origin from God's invitation to the married to love each other, and the Lord had "cleansed, perfected, and elevated" this love. Such love is "directed from person to person" and "completes the good of the whole person." This was Doms on the ontological significance of coitus. Such "eminently human love," the Council continued, "is able to enrich the expressions of the body and of the spirit with a peculiar dignity and ennoble them as elements and special signs of conjugal friendship."

The Council then went on to teach specifically: "this love is singularly expressed and perfected by the proper work of marriage. The acts, then, by which the spouses intimately and chastely unite with each other are decent and worthy, and exercised in a truly human way, signify and foster a mutual giving by which with joyful and grateful spirit they reciprocally enrich each other" (sec. 49 of Schema XIII, *The Church in the Modern World*).

One Father sought to excise the final clause, running from "by which" to "enrich each other." His amendment was rejected by the Mixed Commission with the comment, "This sentence was expressly and pressingly asked for by the laymen." Four Fathers sought to replace "perfected" in the first clause by "consummated." The amendment was rejected on the ground that "perfected...brings the human aspect better into the light." In short, the Council insisted that the coital act was human and personal, enriching the persons involved, and remarkably expressing the love which the Lord had perfected.

This insistence on the great value of love as an end of intercourse was a far cry from Clement, Augustine, and the dominant theological teaching of pre-seventeenth-century Catholic thought. Not only was love set forth as an excellent purpose. The classification of primary and secondary ends in marriage—a classification often used in debates on contraception—was deliberately rejected. Marriage, the Council said, was endowed by God "with various goods and ends" (sec. 47). Family life was said to be a good of marriage, "not putting second the other ends of marriage" (sec. 50). Two Fathers objected that for these reasons the whole chapter "was still theologically immature, equivocal, and reticent in certain essentials: it insists predominantly and almost uniquely on conjugal love and on personal donation, which they say does not correspond to the way of speaking of the church from earliest times." At least, these Fathers said, the chapter ought to speak of "the hierarchy of ends" and "the intrinsic malice of Onanism." One hundred and ninety Fathers asked that the text be amended "to recall Catholic doctrine up till now handed down and to better indicate the hierarchy of ends." Another Father proposed the amendment, "Conjugal love is ordained to the primary end of marriage, which is offspring."

All of these attempts to insert the hierarchy of ends were defeated. The Mixed Commission said laconically, "It may be noted that the hierarchy of goods can be considered under different aspects." Brusquer treatment was given an arch-conservative attempt to reaffirm Augustine by saying "conjugal love, independent of the intention of procreating offspring, does not justify the conjugal act." This, the Mixed Commission said, "does not square with received doctrine." The rejected amendments here, like the rejected amendments to the conciliar decree on religious liberty, stand as forlorn monuments to a theology which has been passed by. […]

[T]he most striking aspect of the Council on contraception was the way that it put the existing law on contraception as law for "children of the Church." Pius XI had taught very strongly in *Casti connubii* that the contraceptive acts condemned therein were contrary to the good of any man, Christian or pagan. The Council did not repudiate this teaching, because in its general deploring of the illicit practices against generation and in its setting out of objective moral criteria based on the person, it was speaking to all men, too. Indeed, the introductory section of the marriage chapter noted that the Council "intends to illuminate and comfort all men." Yet, when the Council turned to existing discipline in the Church on contraception, it ceased to talk of all men. Rather it said that "for children of the Church" "it is not lawful" to use methods of regulating procreation which "have been reproved by the magisterium when it interprets the divine law." The footnote reference to Paul VI's Allocution to the Cardinals showed that the Council believed that in the process of interpreting divine law a pope

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could give norms which were open to revision but which should be obeyed as authoritative teaching until revised. In short, the casting of the teaching on contraception in terms of what was not lawful, and the application of this teaching only to Catholics, would seem to suggest that the Council viewed existing condemnations as, at least in part, open to revision. In this it was in perfect harmony with Paul VI, who thought it desirable that, until they were revised by him, a single law should bind Catholics.

Finally, the Council gave some guidance as to how conjugal love and the education of children were to be reconciled with the responsibility to regulate the number of offspring. It stated flatly "that there cannot be a true contradiction between the divine laws of transmitting life and those favoring genuine conjugal love." When those were known it would also be known what rules could not be divine law. At least such a procedure seemed recommended by the Council in preference to one of hypothesizing the divine laws and trying to accommodate the laws of conjugal love to them.

The Council, subtly but decisively, indicated by example and precept its preference for the first method. It began the chapter on marriage by the statement that it proceeded not only in the light of the gospels but "in the light of the human experience of all men." The Council itself meant to rely on human testimony as to the requirements of love. Looking specifically "to the necessities and advantages of the family which are appropriate for the new day," the Council declared that a great contribution might be made by "the Christian sense of the faithful." Six Fathers wished to qualify this appeal to the faithful by qualifying the sense of the faithful as "showing filial obedience to the magisterium of the Church." The Mixed Commission responded that enough had been said of the magisterium. What the Council valued was the *consensus fidelium*; as the Council had earlier taught in its Constitution on the Church, "The holy people of God share also in Christ's prophetic office." Beyond this invocation of the witness of the faithful, the Council asked scientists "to try to elucidate more deeply the different conditions favoring the decent regulation of human procreation." Again there was no assumption that all the divine and natural laws on birth regulation were known to the Council or even to the well-read theologian. The appeal was to empirical investigation to discover the conditions.

The Council, then, has not proposed solutions "directly" as to how conjugal love and parental responsibility may be reconciled. It has, however, set up the main pillars of any solution: procreation and education are indissolubly linked goods; conjugal love is in itself a legitimate and laudable purpose of intercourse; embryonic life is to be guarded; the dignity of the person is to provide norms; there is an element of divine law in previous teaching by the Church on contraception, but not all existing law on contraception is immutable. Solutions for the new day are to be found both by discerning what is divine and immutable and by consulting experts and the Christian faithful.

"The Symbol of Birth Control," editorial from April 17, 1967

For better or worse, the debate over birth control in the Church has served as a focal point for all manner of issues far more basic than the morality of contraception. Among these have been the nature of marriage, the man-woman relationship, the role and value of the Church's teaching authority, the place of the free conscience in the Church, the validity of "natural law," the nature of morality and the Church's witness to the world. If one adds to these the relationship of faith and reason, man's biological and social development, the population explosion and the distribution of wealth and resources in the world, there is every reason to see the birth control debate as the great symbol of the Church's attempt to come to terms with its own history and with its attempt to show the contemporary pertinence of Catholicism to human life.

This is of course a terrible burden to place on the resolution of one issue in the Church. But perhaps because it is an issue which so basically touches on the Catholic's relationship to his body, to the rest of the human race and to the Church, it is as good a place as any to look for symbols; and as good a place as any to see what the Christian life entails.

The publication by the *National Catholic Reporter* of the majority and minority reports of the papal birth control commission helps to make clear how deep and far-ranging the issue of contraception is. Neither of the reports contains anything particularly new; anyone who has been following the literature on birth control of the past few years will have heard it all before. But precisely because both the majority and minority felt compelled to explain their positions in the broadest terms possible, the net impact of reading them together is a sense that here, in germ, one is seeing the very future of the Church itself discussed. Or, perhaps more precisely, one is seeing the confrontation of two radically different conceptions of Church authority, human responsibility, and the relationship of faith and reason. The future of the Church, in the sense of its witness, impact and influence rather than its mere physical survival, will depend in great measure on which conception survives and flourishes.

To say this is not to imply, however, that a papal decision toward change in the present magisterial position on birth control would give the Church's credibility a fresh shot in the arm, and thus insure it a fresh hearing from the rest of humanity. Nor does it imply that a reactionary reaffirmation of the present position would spell its doom. Things rarely work out so simply, if only because a major part of Catholicism's fascination for mankind and for many members of the Church is its image of solidity, indeed imperturbability. Many people, in other words, would probably admire in an odd sort of way a Church which resolutely refused to change its position in the face of overwhelming pressure to do so. Even a cursory reading of the convert literature of the '40s

and '50s shows the powerful attraction of a Church which purports to be a rock of certain authority and resistant to the vagaries of secular wisdom.

Similarly—in the same psychological vein—a reforming, changing, open Catholicism may win a better secular press for the Church, and considerably reduce non-Catholic hostility, but (as recent declining convert statistics show in part) it by no means insures that more people will see Catholicism's form of Christianity as a viable, compelling option when they are searching for worldviews.

The point is that all such considerations are beside the point. What matters is not the external impact of one birth control decision or another. What matters is choosing that course which best serves the Christian and human good, not that course which promises to enhance or diminish the Church's image, position in the world, or psychological attraction.

It is on the ground of this Christian and human good that we accept the majority report and reject the thinking of the minority. For we want a papal and episcopal authority governing the Church which is not hesitant to admit its errors, even in the realm of faith and morals. Hence, we reject the position of the conservative minority which would refuse to change a position because it would harm the traditional image of Church authority—an authority which only errs on trivial matters, and then only occasionally, a long time ago. Let that image be harmed; it is about time it died, anyway.

We also want a conception of human responsibility which recognizes that the individual alone is finally responsible for his moral choices. To be sure, the Catholic should be extraordinarily sensitive to Church authority, totally willing to listen in humility to its decisions. But this need for sensitivity and humility should never obscure the obligation, finally, to follow personal conscience. We want, finally, a conception of the relationship between faith and reason which does justice to the high place of reason in the Catholic tradition. It was reason, using the resources of science, theological speculation, and human experience, which led the progressive majority to its conclusions. It was un-reason, on the contrary, which led the conservative minority to uphold a position which even they admitted could not be supported by rational arguments. This kind of irrationality must come to an end in the Church.

From "The Encyclical Crisis" by Bernhard Häring, September 6, 1968

No papal teaching document has ever caused such an earthquake in the Church as the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Reactions around the world in the Italian and American press, for example, are just as sharp as they were at the time of the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX, perhaps even sharper. There is the difference, of course, that this time anti-Catholic feelings have been rarely expressed. The storm has broken over the heads of the curial advisors of the Pope and often of the Pope himself. The document is regarded as a great victory by those groups who opposed the Council from beginning to end. The conservative magazine *Triumph* is a typical example of the mentality of the far right: of priests who do not believe what the encyclical declares, it demands that they be honest and leave the church since they are automatically schismatics if they do not accept the words of the Pope. The day after the encyclical appeared, a doctor in consultation said: "Your Church has lost two members; both of my Catholic colleagues here have declared that they are leaving the Church, since they find this whole mentality of the Pope unbelievable." The same day a priest came with the question whether he should not in honesty to his conscience give up his priestly ministry; he could not act in accordance with the encyclical. This traumatic experience, with the great danger of a mass departure from the Church, drove theologians to emphasize strongly the fallible character of the encyclical and to take a courageous stand.

If the Pope deserves admiration for the courage to follow his conscience and to do the most unpopular thing, all responsible men and women must show forth similar honesty and courage of conscience. I am convinced that the subjective and conscious motive of the Pope was love for the Church. Those who contradict him must do it also out of love for the whole Church, out of love for those whose faith is endangered. This also can and must be a service of love for the successor of St. Peter.

Monsignor Lambruschini, the Curia official appointed by the Vatican to explain the encyclical to the press, emphasized that it was not an infallible statement, and that the possibility of a revised statement, if new data appeared, could not be excluded. However, the tone of the encyclical seems to leave little hope that this will happen in Pope Paul's lifetime—little hope, that is, unless the reaction of the whole Church immediately makes him realize that he has chosen the wrong advisors and that the arguments which these men have recommended as highly suitable for modern thought are simply unacceptable. Non-infallible but very authoritative statements of popes were in the past officially corrected only after a relatively long delay. Even when they were strongly criticized within the Church, this criticism became known only slowly. […]

In the past things were different. It took centuries before the extraordinarily dangerous "teaching" of the direct power of the pope over all temporal matters was rejected. It demanded courage for Friedrich Spee finally to speak out openly and forcefully against the persecution, torture and burning of witches, a practice which had been recommended and doctrinally justified by a very authoritative encyclical of Innocent IV. For a long time the moralists did not dare to explain that the castration of the Vatican choir boys was immoral, since it had strong papal approval. The Council of Vienna explained in 1311 that theologians who tried in any

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ENCYCLICAL LETTER «HUMANAE VITAE»

ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI

ON THE REGULATION OF BIRTH

To the Venerable Patriarchs Archbishops and Bishops and other Local Ordinaries in peace and communion with the Apostolic See to Priests, the Faithful and to all men of good will

way to justify usury were to be "imprisoned in iron chains" for the rest of their lives. And as late as the eighteenth century, moral theology textbooks published in Italy had to print that warning. Pius IX's *Syllabus* lay undigested in the Church's stomach and in her relationship to the world until the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Religious Liberty* and *The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. The immorality of torture, which was justified for so many centuries by the popes, and practiced in their name, was condemned by a papal statement only after a long period of time. Pius XII declared unequivocally that it was against the natural law. The "Holy Inquisition" and "holy wars" could have been wiped out from the picture of the Church if the prophetic spirit and the courage to speak out openly with Christian freedom had been more highly valued in the Church. When the popes and their curial theologians so frequently and so emphatically defended temporal power and the Vatican States as a divinely commissioned right and a spiritual necessity, this critical Christian frankness should have been more in evidence. […]

[T]he encyclical is quite optimistic about the force of the arguments it proposes and the information provided by the Pope's advisors, so that "The magisterium could give adequate reply to the expectation not only of the faithful, but also of world opinion" (N. 5). Nevertheless, when the Pope speaks to "his own children" and to his "sons, the priests," optimism about the force of the arguments diminishes somewhat. He asks for "loyal internal and external obedience to the teaching authority of the Church" and then adds: "That obedience, as you well know, obliges not only because of the reason adduced, but rather because of the light of the Holy Spirit, which is given in a particular way to the pastors of the Church in order that they may illustrate the truth" (N.28). There can be no doubt that our obedience of faith to the Church rests on the confidence that the Church enjoys the special assistance of the Holy Spirit in the explanation of the Gospel and the guidance of the Church. But it is not possible to make the Holy Spirit responsible for everything which in past centuries was loudly asserted in an authoritative tone by men of the Church. However, in *Humanae Vitae* the central argument is clearly and unambiguously a thesis of the natural moral law, and therefore a truth which is to be proven from human experiences and arguments of reason. […]

The argumentation of *Humanae Vitae* rests mainly on two points. The first is the constant teaching of the Church; the second is the absolute sacredness and inviolability of the biological functions in every use of marriage, so that every act must remain open for procreation, whether or not procreation can at this moment responsibly be undertaken.

[I]f the argument from tradition is to play so important a role, we must call to mind Jesus's struggle against the important role assigned to human traditions. "He also said to them, 'How well you set aside the commandment of God in order to maintain your tradition'" (Mark 7:9). When the legalists asked the Lord, "'Why do your disciples break the old-established tradition?'" Jesus answered, "'Why do you break God's commandment in the interest of your tradition?'" (Matthew 15:24). […]

The second argument is the biological understanding of the inviolable laws of nature. […] I believe that biological functions are one part of man; but these biological functions are often upset; and the art of healing is possible only if man is a responsible steward of these functions and can intervene. It has not been proven that the biological functions connected with the power of procreation are absolutely untouchable and sacred, especially since they are often upset and, even according to the teaching of the Church, measures to restore health may be undertaken. The biological functions must be subordinated to the good of the whole person and marriage itself. This is, if I am not mistaken, by far the most common opinion in the Church. […]

Pope Paul asserts that an intervention in the biological process necessarily destroys married love. This assertion has no more proof to back it up than the assertion of *Casti Connubii* that it is necessarily against the dignity of a woman for her to have some occupation outside the home. […]

The Second Vatican Council, following scientific developments in the field of moral theology, strongly developed the issue of responsible parenthood. There it is clear that birth control is evaluated quite differently in different circumstances. It is one thing if it is practiced as the result of

a conscientious decision that new life cannot responsibly be brought into being here and now; it is quite another if it is a simple rejection of the parental vocation. Since Pope Paul makes the analysis of the act his starting point, this fundamental distinction does not appear. The evil seems to consist exclusively, or at least principally, in the violation of sacred biological functions. The encyclical also fails to see that abortion is a much greater problem than the methods of birth control. In the encyclical, abortion is rejected only in passing; the Council put its principal emphasis on a condemnation of abortion. So the encyclical, from a pedagogical standpoint, is rather confusing. […]

In my opinion it is harder to reconcile *Humanae Vitae* with the Council Constitution on *The Church in the Modern World* than to reconcile the *Declaration on Religious Freedom* with the *Syllabus* of Pius IX, or at least no less difficult. This assertion is based especially on the fact (1) that the question just mentioned from the Council Constitution and the text of 1 Corinthians 7 are simply not taken seriously, (2) that the conception of natural law of the whole pastoral Constitution of the Council has simply not been incorporated into *Humanae Vitae*, and (3) that the criteria worked out in the Constitution for the acceptability of methods of birth control are not even mentioned and simply replaced by biological "laws."

The question has been asked: does the encyclical bind all Catholics in conscience? The Pope seems to answer this question unambiguously. Nevertheless I believe that one must give the Pope credit for not abrogating or denying the general principles for forming a right conscience (*The Church in the Modern World*, n. 16). My answer along these lines is this:

1) those who can accept the encyclical with an honest conscience must do so, with all the consequences;

2) those who doubt whether they can must study it thoroughly and also make use of further information in order to form a clear conscience;

3) those who, with an honest conscience, cannot accept the teaching and requirements of *Humanae Vitae*, must follow their honest conscience. When married couples, then, for good reasons and with a good conscience use methods of birth regulation which in their minds are the most suitable—abortion is obviously excluded—they need not mention it in confession;

4) Priests must instruct the faithful clearly about the Pope's teaching. However, I do not see how they can be denied the right to speak out their own opinion with equal honesty.

On one occasion in the presence of Auxiliary Bishop Colombo the suggestion was made (by him or by someone else who was present) that the Pope should simply forbid under pain of disobedience all methods except periodic or total abstinence, without giving any reasons. I answered vigorously, "That would be the best method to destroy the authority of the pope."

The pope did not follow that advice; he tried, with the help of his close associates, to give reasons. Some questions, of course, he simply did not put to himself, perhaps with the intention of doing it at a later date. But it is really remarkable that in the long time they had, his advisors found no better reasons than those presented in the encyclical. The conclusion was settled. They had to find the premises to back it up. May others be more successful. But it seems that the conclusion doesn't stand very solidly.

From "An Alternative Proposal" by Daniel Callahan, August 23, 1968

It is not, I think, adequate to simply say that everyone should follow his own conscience and thus reject the encyclical if his conscience so directs. If one takes seriously all the good reasons in favor of a use of contraceptives—if one, say, follows the thinking of the majority of the papal commission—then it is not merely a neutral matter. On the contrary, there is an obligation on the part of those Catholics who perceive the morality of contraception to positively foster and propagate their convictions. This means doing everything in their power to educate people in the valid use of contraceptives. It means making money available to the poor for the purchase of contraceptives. It means convincing governments that they should listen to the voice of the Catholic people and not to the voice of the Pope on this issue. It means doing everything possible to negate and repudiate the encyclical, putting in its place a very different teaching.

People should of course be free to follow their conscience. But there is much sense in the traditional corollary that they should have an informed conscience; a lot of mischief is done in the name of conscience. In this instance those opposed to the encyclical would seem to have the positive duty of trying to inform the consciences of those who might feel an obligation to follow it: to inform them that they should know all the good theological arguments in favor of contraception; to inform them that they cannot cast off the obligation of making up their own minds on the shoulders of popes and bishops; to inform them that it is possible that good morality might require that they use contraceptives.

Though much has changed in recent years, the attitude of many Catholics toward the papacy is still one of unthinking subservience and obedience. When they are told these days to "follow their conscience" this will be tantamount to telling them to obey the Pope; for that, and only that, is what following their conscience means to them. Very strenuous efforts will be needed to crack this mold. The people must be given a real choice and this means, in great part, so breaking the hold of the papacy on them that they can rationally and judiciously weigh the alternatives before them. One would not in the face of a people's temptation to resort to genocide, racism, the killing of the old and the weak, just tell them to do as they saw fit. One would

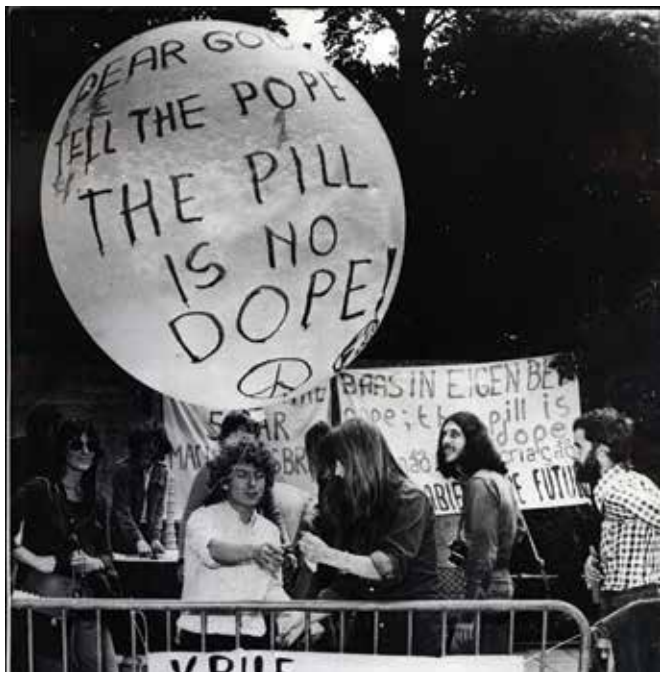
argue against them, try to point out the dangers of their temptation. The same should be done with those tempted to unthinkingly follow the pope's encyclical.

What will this do to the authority of the papacy? Assuming the problematic, that the papacy still has authority, it will force the papacy (and the bishops) to argue back, to refine its own reasons, to take account of its critics. It will force the magisterium to expose itself. As already noted, there remain many millions of Catholics who do take the Pope's words as binding. The Pope has in his encyclical seriously misled them; he has taught them a bad morality. The only way they are likely to see this for themselves is to see the papacy pushed to the wall, forced to argue its position more fully, and thus forced to show the weakness of its moral teaching.

Those Catholics now tempted to leave the Church should remember how many others will stay and feel bound by the encyclical, how many will unnecessarily suffer, how many families and children will feel the consequences. To leave these people, to walk out on them, would not be right. As Christians and as Catholics they will need help and education. Only their fellow Catholics are likely to be in a good position to speak persuasively to them and to offer them the assistance of a sensitive Christian community. In its own utterly wrong way the Pope's encyclical is beautiful: rounded, ringing and resonant. It seems to me now the obligation of the Catholic community to come up with, and publicize, a wiser and more correct teaching, equally rounded, ringing and resonant. The formation of the position will not be difficult; the ingredients are already present, nearly complete. The real work will come in publicizing it: the work of speaking against the present encyclical, the work of withstanding authority, the work of moral education. This is no time to leave the Church, but a time to make it what it should be. Perhaps, just perhaps, the Pope will be caught up in this work as well.

From "The Troubling Spirit" by William Clancy, August 23, 1968

The crisis that now seizes us has, of course, been smoldering for over a century, waiting for its historical moment to erupt. Only those lacking a sense of history could think it was "caused" by the birth control controversy or would disappear were all Catholics docilely to accept the conclusions of *Humanae Vitae*. A hundred years ago, in the great Ultramontane-Liberal Catholic struggles of the mid-nineteenth century, the outline of our unresolved conflict was composed. William George Ward wrote in 1869 that the test of Catholic loyalty was "to live as it were in an atmosphere of authority; to look for direction at every moment towards the Church and towards the Vicar of Christ." But John Henry Newman, who was horrified by such views,



Dolle Mina, the Dutch branch of Women's Liberation, marks the fifth anniversary of Humanae vitae *by holding a demonstration outside the residence of the Papal Nuncio in the Hague, where they deliver a letter asking the pope to review the Roman Catholic Church's opinion, July 7, 1973.*

offered his famous reply in a toast to the Pope after he had been made a Cardinal: "I drink to the Pope—but I drink to Conscience first."

Newman knew that the dichotomy between authority and freedom posed by Ultramontanes was a false one, and that the hope of Catholicism for the future lay in the creation of new relationships between them. Such a creation he knew would be painful—and made even more painful than it need be by "party men." But he looked to theologians who would refuse to join any party and who, aware of historical and theological complexities, seek new understandings of the proper roles and limits of both authority and freedom—gifts that must always coexist in tension within the Church. And such is now clearly the task of all who wish to serve the needs not of a party nor of an immediate moment but who seek the evolution of a new Catholic synthesis of values.

In 1867 the aging Newman wrote to Ward from the Birmingham Oratory: "You are making a Church within a Church, as the Novatians of old did within the Catholic pale, and as, outside the Catholic pale, the Evangelicals of the Establishment. As they talk of 'vital religion' and vital 'doctrines' and will not allow that their brethren 'know the Gospel' or are Gospel preachers, unless they profess the small shibboleths of their own sect, so you are doing your best to make a party in the Catholic Church, and in St. Paul's words are dividing Christ by exalting your opinions into Dogmas."

Sectarianism is a narrow and limited response to immedi-

ate and short-term problems. Lacking any sense of history or of complexity, it may achieve certain quick victories and answer certain felt needs, but it soon is lost and forgotten in the boundless oceans of time. It thus stands as the eternal enemy of any genuine Catholicism which, of its very nature, is universal, long-range, and complex. And the sectarianism of "party men" is what threatens the Church—the Catholic Church—today. Those who see the present crisis in simple terms of either authority or freedom—not realizing that the very nature of the crisis demands new understandings and limits for both authority and freedom within the Church—are sectarians. From them and from their fervors may God deliver us.

"Anniversary Waltz," editorial from July 15, 1988

Paul VI issued *Humanae vitae* twenty years ago: on July 25, 1968. The anniversary is being celebrated, in some quarters, as the great dividing line between those who are faithful to the church, and those who are not. The point is well taken, but, in this case, misapplied. Faithfulness to the church—to the Gospel proclaimed and witnessed by Jesus' disciples, and guided and enlivened by the Spirit—is essential. But faithfulness is not blind assent to assertions of authority.

Who was more faithful a century ago? Those who insisted upon the "doctrine" that the temporal power of the pope and his sovereignty over the papal states was required to assure his independence—or those who questioned it? "Temporal power" was a teaching repeated no less incessantly and vehemently—but with a good deal more bloodletting—than the ban on artificial contraception today. It, too, was invested with papal authority and became a standard of loyalty for advancement to important positions of church leadership. And it was wrong.

Twenty years ago, determination to be faithful to the church led many Catholics to conclude, and to say, that *Humanae vitae* was one of those tragic errors into which the church of Christ has fallen over the centuries, sometimes with the best of intentions but always with long-run damage to its mission.

A careful rereading of the encyclical, twenty years later, suggests that Paul VI, in speaking with a pastoral voice and with close attention to consequentialist arguments, may have foreseen the furor that was to come and tried to ease it; hard sayings are couched in temperate language.

Despite this, the pope's words do not add up to a compelling, or even persuasive, argument. Indeed, in a letter that extolled the values of married love, he recognized the need for responsible parenthood, and accepted "recourse to infertile periods" (the rhythm method) as lawful, we find that the prohibition against artificial contraception, especially the pill, seems more arbitrary and ungrounded today than it did in 1968. Furthermore, for all of the pope's insistence on natural law and the constant teaching of the church, he seems more concerned, at points, with what he saw as the dire consequences of contraception—marital infidelity, a lowering of moral standards, and the lack of incentive for the young to observe the moral law (read: fear of pregnancy).

Paul VI was right to worry, and the terrible human costs of our culture's disarray in sexual matters is "Exhibit A" of those who currently defend the encyclical. They might be reminded of the logical fallacy of *post hoc, ergo, propter hoc*, but their argument is more fundamentally flawed, since the so-called sexual revolution was well under way when *Humanae vitae* appeared.

For all of his justifiable concern, Paul VI's conclusions hobbled the church for the cultural struggle at hand. Responsible human sexuality means drawing lines; the sorry outcome, as we now see, was that he drew one of them in the wrong place. Rather than enhancing the church's teaching on sexuality, the encyclical unwittingly undermined it.

The time had come to listen to mature Christians and to formulate a teaching about the truly sacramental nature of marriage and sexual intimacy, including the radical notion that sexual intercourse within marriage is a good in itself, a source of delight and comfort not only to men, but to women as well. Part and parcel of that good is the ability of married couples, and especially of women, to control the number of children they have and the spacing of births. (The continuing and unhappy consequences of Paul's decision are painfully apparent in John Paul II's recent encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, in which there is, and can be, no serious attention to unchecked population growth as one tragic factor in underdevelopment.)

In 1968, many bishops and theologians understood that the church's teaching had to change, that the press of the demographic revolution in both the developed and developing countries and the availability of the pill represented a turning point in the world and the church. The pope wouldn't turn. But most married couples did, some with the support of their pastors and bishops, and some without; some with a serenity that grew from careful and conscientious thought and reflection; some with bitter and angry hearts. Other couples, far smaller in number, adopted the so-called rhythm method, some from a sense of asceticism, some in obedience to what they saw as a binding teaching. But none of these conscientious decisions resolved the dilemma in which the whole church now finds itself.

Clergy, religious, and lay teachers, caught between bishops obedient to the pope and an incredulous laity, became circumspect or fell silent on the subject of sexual morality in pulpits and classrooms. The failure to develop a fuller understanding of marriage and sexual morality has been especially detrimental to young Catholics. Where previous generations of Catholics agonized over questions of conscience, sex, contraception, and child-bearing, many younger Catholics, along with their non-Catholic peers,

following the culture's lead have adopted a contraceptive mentality and the casual sexual relations that go with it.

Some Catholics, finding the ban on artificial contraception outlandish, proceeded to question the church's whole teaching on sexual and reproductive morality. Perhaps this is clearest in the abortion debate, where so many have succumbed to the notion that abortion is a subset of the contraception debate and judge the church's teaching equally vulnerable. In the face of more recent developments, particularly surrogate motherhood and in vitro fertilization, a perplexed world is genuinely searching for moral yardsticks, and yet the church's loss of credibility once again injures its efforts to speak a sane word to a potentially receptive public.

In 1968 *Commonweal*'s editors predicted that the encyclical "will fail the test of history." Two decades do not make history, but so far it seems that the encyclical has failed the church.

From "Sex: How Odd of God" by Robert G. Hoyt, July 15, 1988

Sexual intercourse, Dorothy Day once wrote, has something funny about it: funny-odd, funny-laughable. She compared the mechanics of human coupling with the act of eating, which on analysis into its parts also looks odd: You push your fork into a substance, insert it into your mouth, gnash it about, swallow. It's bizarre.

Day was using what a friend of mine calls "moon vision," looking at copulation and ingestion from afar, as it were, and as though for the first time, seeing their strangeness. I don't remember the context of her reflection, or where it led her. It may have been only an observation in passing. But it was common-sensical, in a Chestertonian way. […]

These thoughts are occasioned by the confluence of two events, the twentieth anniversary this month of the issuance of *Humanae vitae* and the recent publication by a committee of the American bishops of a draft pastoral on "women's concerns." *Humanae vitae* was a regressive moment in Catholic history and the history of human sexuality. Out of reflections on the "intimate structure" of the sex act, the encyclical says, we must conclude that having sex during the infertile period leaves the act "open to the transmission of life," and is therefore okay, whereas sex with a condom separates lovemaking from babymaking and is not okay. Paul VI then added that "the men of our day are particularly capable of seizing the deeply reasonable and human character of this fundamental principle."

The words are solemn but the argument is not serious. In the event, most men and women of our day have tended to regard the pope's conclusion as a nonprinciple, fundamentally unreasonable and non- or even anti-human. With all respect to Dorothy Day, who would never have accepted use of her "moon vision" in opposition to a papal pronouncement, there's just not that much truth to be derived from contemplating the intimate structure of the sex act. The same grave attention given to the mechanics of eating would lead to a ban on No-Cal soda, which may give pleasure and satisfy an urge but frustrates the nutritive purpose built into our ingestive equipment. […]

There are Catholics who will celebrate the anniversary of *Humanae vitae* as a reaffirmation of the church's unique grasp of moral truth and of its claim to divine guidance. There are ex-Catholics who departed the fold for precisely opposite reasons. Among Catholics who hang in not because of but despite the encyclical, some regard it as a wound that's healed, or as a piece of esoterica that is best kept on a shelf in the closet, or as a useful example, leading to religious maturation, of the limits of the reach of authority. And some think of it as an intellectual scandal in itself and a sign of deeper problems that must be confronted some day, though the day be ever so distant. These subgroups of hangers-in aren't all that distinct; on a given day, I can agree with any or all of them.

From "A Disembodied 'Theology of the Body'" by Luke Timothy Johnson, January 26, 2001

[I]t is important at least to note five major deficiencies [in *Humanae vitae*] that require a genuinely theological response rather than enthusiastic or reluctant apology. […]

First, the encyclical represents a reversion to an act-centered morality, ignoring the important maturation of moral theology in the period leading up to and following Vatican II, which emphasized a person's fundamental dispositions as more defining of moral character than isolated acts. I am far from suggesting that specific acts are not morally significant. But specific acts must also be placed within the context of a person's character as revealed in consistent patterns of response. The difference is critical when the encyclical and John Paul II insist that it is not enough for married couples to be open to new life; rather, every act of intercourse must also be open, so that the use of a contraceptive in any single act in effect cancels the entire disposition of openness. But this is simply nonsense. I do not cancel my commitment to breathing when I hold my breath for a moment or when I go under anesthesia. Likewise, there is an important distinction to be maintained between basic moral dispositions and single actions. The woman who kills in self-defense (or in defense of her children) does not become a murderer. The focus on each act of intercourse rather than on the overall dispositions of married couples is morally distorting.

Second, the arguments of Paul VI and John Paul II sacrifice logic to moral brinkmanship. When Paul VI equated artificial birth control and abortion, he not only defied science but also provoked the opposite result of the one

Archbishop Karol Wojtyła receives the cardinal's red biretta from Pope Paul VI in 1967.

he intended. He wanted to elevate the moral seriousness of birth control but ended by trivializing the moral horror of abortion. Similarly, from one side of the mouth, John Paul II recognizes [in his *Theology of the Body*] two ends of sexual love, unitive intimacy and procreation. But from the other side of his mouth he declares that if procreation is blocked, not only that end has been canceled but the unitive end as well. He has thereby, despite his protestations to the contrary, simply reduced the two ends to one. This can be shown clearly by applying the logic in reverse, by insisting that sexual intercourse that is not a manifestation of intimacy or unity also cancels the procreative end of the act.

Third, the position of the popes and their apologists continues to reveal the pervasive sexism [of] official Catholicism. […] This becomes glaringly obvious in the argument that artificial birth control is wrong because it tends to "instrumentalize" women for men's pleasure by making the woman a passive object of passion rather than a partner in mutuality. Yet the argument makes more experiential sense in reverse. Few things sound more objectifying than the arguments of the natural family planners, whose focus remains tightly fixed on biological processes rather than on emotional and spiritual communication through the body. The view that "openness to life" is served with moral integrity by avoiding intercourse during fertile periods (arguably times of greatest female pleasure in making love) and is not served (and becomes morally reprehensible) by the mutual agreement to use a condom or diaphragm, would be laughable if it did not have such tragic consequences. And what could be more objectifying of women than speaking as though birth control were something that only served male concupiscence? How about women's moral agency in the realm of sexual relations? Don't all of us living in the real world of bodies know that women have plenty of reasons of their own to be relieved of worries about pregnancy for a time and to be freed for sexual enjoyment purely for the sake of intimacy and even celebration?

Fourth, the absolute prohibition of artificial birth control becomes increasingly scandalous in the face of massive medical realities. One might want to make an argument that distributing condoms to teenagers as a part of sex education is mistaken, but that argument, I think, has to do with misgivings concerning sex education—and a general culture of permissiveness—as a whole. But what about couples who can no longer have sexual relations because one of them has innocently been infected by HIV, and not to use a condom means also to infect the other with a potentially lethal virus? When does "openness to life" in every act become a cover for "death-dealing"? Given the fact that in Africa AIDS affects tens of millions of men, women, and children (very many of them Christian), is the refusal to allow the use of condoms (leaving aside other medical interventions and the changing of sexual mores) coming dangerously close to assisting in genocide? These are matters demanding the most careful consideration by the church, and the deepest compassion. It is difficult to avoid the sense that the failed logic supposedly marshaled in the defense of life is having just the opposite result. If the political enslavement of millions of Asians and Europeans led the papacy to combat the Soviet system in the name of compassion, and if the enslavement and murder of millions of Jews led the papacy to renounce the anti-Semitism of the Christian tradition in the name of compassion, should not compassion also lead at the very least to an examination of logic, when millions of Africans are enslaved and killed by a sexual pandemic?

Fifth, and finally, shouldn't *Humanae vitae* be revisited rather than simply defended for the same reasons that it was [in George Weigel's words] a "pastoral and catechetical failure" the first time around? It failed to convince most of its readers not least because its readers knew that Paul VI spoke in the face of the recommendations of his own birth-control commission. The encyclical was, as Weigel calls it, a "new Galileo crisis," not simply because it pitted papal authority against science, but also because the papacy was wrong both substantively and formally. It generated an unprecedented crisis for papal authority precisely because it was authority exercised not only apart from but also in opposition to the process of discernment. Sad to say, John Paul's theology of the body, for all its attention to Scripture, reveals the same deep disinterest in the ways the experience of married people, and especially women (guided by the Holy Spirit, as we devoutly pray) might inform theology and the decision-making process of the church. If papal teaching showed signs of attentiveness to such experience, and a willingness to learn from God's work in the world as well as God's word in the tradition, its pronouncements would be received with greater enthusiasm. A theology of the body ought at least to have feet that touch the ground.

CNS FILE PHOTO

From "A Bitter Pill" by Leslie Woodcock Tentler, April 23, 2004

In the end, most Catholic laypeople solved the birth-control problem on their own. On the eve of *Humanae vitae*, promulgated in July 1968, a majority of Catholic couples in their childbearing years were already using forbidden means to limit the size of their families. Paul VI's encyclical prompted every such couple, and also those who were teetering on the brink of disobedience, to some hard thinking about church authority. Most concluded, and in remarkably short order, that at least on this intimate matter individual conscience reigned supreme. In that limited sense, the birth-control crisis was over—resolved, for all practical purposes, by the laity who had forced it in the first place. Lay rejection of the teaching on contraception actually accelerated in the wake of *Humanae vitae*, especially among the young. Fully 78 percent of Catholic married women aged twenty to twenty-four, according to a study done in 1970, were limiting their families by a means other than abstinence or rhythm. It would not be long before Catholic contraceptive practice differed hardly at all from that of other Americans.

But as every thoughtful Catholic knows, the birth-control crisis had tremendous fallout. If the laity were emancipated by *Humanae vitae*, as certain radical commentators had it, some were also embittered by its seeming rejection of the laity's public witness. Only a relative handful, in all likelihood, left the church as a direct result of the encyclical. Much larger numbers seem to have distanced themselves from the institutional church in a psychic sense. Even hitherto "core" Catholics became less regular in their attendance at Mass. Growing numbers went infrequently to confession, or even gave up on the sacrament entirely. (The decline in confession preceded the encyclical, but still had a great deal to do with contraception.) The collapse of confession meant that fewer and fewer Catholics had one-on-one contact with their priests, a problem exacerbated by a growing shortage of clergy.

Perhaps most troubling, increasing numbers of Catholics came to assume that forming one's conscience on sexual matters was an essentially private endeavor. The celibate clergy were inevitably, if unfairly, discredited as authorities on sexual morality by the advent of *Humanae vitae*. And since most retreated into silence in the wake of the encyclical, many priests inadvertently compounded their marginal status as moral arbiters. The same might be said of their bishops. Shortly after the promulgation of *Humanae vitae*, almost no Catholic leaders were talking publicly about contraception—not bishops, not parish priests, not even moral theologians. The married laity were on their own, or so the silence seemed to say.

Silence on contraception inevitably led to an even greater silence—this one around the subject of sexual morality generally. At a time of almost breathtaking change in sexual values and behavior, church leaders had little to offer beyond what theologian Gerard Sloyan has called "prohibitions without explanations." Among the laity, the paralysis of leadership further eroded an already weakened sense of connectedness to the institutional church. Numerous factors were at play, of course. With Catholics no longer a "ghettoized" population, they were vulnerable as never before to America's individualist ethos and its growing climate of suspicion toward institutional authority. But nothing was as devastating to the church's credibility as *Humanae vitae* and the paralysis it generated. No religious leadership can afford to be seen by large numbers of its putative flock as irrelevant to their most immediate moral dilemmas.

From "Indefensible: Moral Teaching after 'Humanae Vitae'" by Michael Dummett, February 11, 2011

Though the church contrived to slide out of its condemnation of usury, it has difficulty discarding a teaching that declares some type of action immoral. Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae vitae* reiterating the prohibition on contraception illustrates this. This encyclical greatly damaged the respect of the faithful for the Catholic Church's moral teaching in general, since many of them do not accept the ban on contraceptives, and in the confessional many priests surreptitiously collude with their rejection of it. But it has also damaged the integrity of Catholic moral theology.

The encyclical did not merely reaffirm a long-standing tradition: it also dealt with something quite new—the Pill. The condemnation of its use for a contraceptive purpose accorded with the manner in which it had been usual to say why it was wrong to use other devices for that purpose, namely precisely because of the purpose. But the church's recognition that the use by a husband and wife of the "natural" or rhythm method, whereby they confine sexual intercourse to infertile periods, is morally legitimate, denied it the right to hold the purpose of reducing the frequency or number of pregnancies to be in itself wrong. A condemnation of the use of contraceptive devices such as condoms could not therefore be consistently based upon their intended purpose, only on a claim that an act involving such a device was intrinsically wrong, regardless of the purpose—for instance, on the ground that it violated the integrity of the marriage act. Such a claim would assimilate such an act to other deviations from normal intercourse condemned by Christian tradition, such as those now generally referred to as oral and anal sex. But, if the prohibition of contraceptives were based on such a ground, the Pill really did pose a new question, since its use could not be described as violating the integrity of the marriage act. Instead, the encyclical

condemned its use when the purpose was contraceptive, that is, to reduce the frequency or number of pregnancies, and for that purpose alone. Moral philosophy cannot accommodate such a prohibition.

A certain type of act, defined by a given form of description, may be intrinsically wrong. If so, it can never be morally justified by an ulterior purpose, however commendable; this is what is meant by saying that the end does not justify the means. For instance, to give someone a fatal dose of poison must in all circumstances be wrong: even if the purpose is to frustrate the known plan of the victim to massacre an entire family, it will still be wrong. It would be a misuse of the principle of double effect to appeal to it in justification of such a murder. The poisoner could not legitimately argue, "What I was doing was to save that family from slaughter; I had no interest in the death of my victim in itself." Nor can the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki be justified on the score that what was being done was to end the war and the deaths of the inhabitants were side effects. Double effect can be invoked only when the act is in itself morally legitimate, even though in the particular circumstances it will have foreseeable evil side effects. Nothing can be a side effect if it is the means by which the objective of the act is realized. The poisoner cannot claim the death of his victim as a side effect: it is only through the death of the victim that he saves the family from massacre. Conversely, an act that is not intrinsically morally illegitimate may be wicked if it is done for an evil purpose. Thus to give someone a piece of information that it is not in itself wrong to impart in order to humiliate him or to prompt him to do something shameful is rendered an immoral act by the intention with which it was done.

The use of the Pill by a married woman with contraceptive intent does not fall into either of these categories. No one supposes that it is intrinsically wrong for a woman to take the Pill, for example, for its original purpose of regularizing irregular periods. It has been persuasively argued that the Pill may be legitimately taken with contraceptive intent, for instance, by a nun who knows herself in danger of rape. Equally, the intention, on the part of a married couple, of reducing the frequency or number of the wife's pregnancies is, as already noted, recognized by the church as legitimate and, in appropriate circumstances, praiseworthy. In the ruling of *Humanae vitae*, we have therefore a condemnation as morally wrong of an act not intrinsically wrong but held to become wrong when it is done for a particular end, even though that end is likewise not in itself wrong. It is incomprehensible how this could be so; it is impossible to think of a parallel—at least, I have not been able to think of one. Whatever may be thought about the maintenance in the encyclical of the traditional teaching on other methods of contraception, the prohibition on the use of the Pill is indefensible on the basis of moral theology as it has always been previously understood, and throws the moral teaching of the church into confusion.

Pope Paul VI did many good things, yet his most important action, the issuing of *Humanae vitae*, has engendered unresolved moral chaos. This chaos is most sharply seen in the confusion about condoms in countries where AIDS has tragically become pandemic. Some church authorities oppose the use of condoms in an absolute and doctrinaire spirit: they proclaim that the only allowable course for a married couple who know one of them to be HIV-positive, or do not know that both are not, is complete sexual abstinence. No doubt, if to use a condom is in all circumstances morally wrong, that is correct advice. But it is irresponsible to give it without adding emphatically that to risk infecting one's marriage partner—or, indeed, anyone else—with a terrible and fatal disease is immeasurably more wicked than to use a condom or consent to its use.

Some church authorities with a more balanced sense of moral priorities have sought to justify the use of condoms by appeal to the principle of double effect. If the use of a condom is wrong only when it is done to prevent conception, like the use of the Pill according to Paul VI, then no justification is needed when it is done for a different purpose, such as to protect against infection. If, on the other hand, the use of a condom is intrinsically wrong, as violating the integrity of the marriage act, it follows from what was said above about double effect that to try to justify it by appeal to that principle is an abuse of the principle. But the existence of the horrifying disease of AIDS should surely prompt some rethinking about the blanket condemnation of contraceptives, including condoms. Perhaps it was a mistake to class all use of them as intrinsically wrong. There are actions that ought not to be performed in ordinary circumstances but are not wrong in exceptional cases. An assertion not actually false as stated but bound to mislead is an example. Might it not be right to classify the use of contraceptives, other than those that produce abortions, under this head? May not large external circumstances provide a genuine clue to the will of God?

From Lisa Fullam's contribution to "Does Method Matter? Contraception and Catholic Identity," March 20, 2015

[Sex] should never be reduced to its physiological features. While the vast majority of human sex acts do not result in procreation, they are naturally ordered to the forging of ties between partners. To understand human sex is to focus first on its effects on whole persons, not on its biological outcome. This is the second way the vision of sex in *Humanae vitae* is unnatural: the criteria for acceptable methods of spacing children were described in terms not of the people involved, but of the physical act only. The whole person's development as a sexual being in relationship with others was counted as less important than where and when a man ejaculates.

And in a move away from Catholic moral tradition since Aquinas, the intention of the couple's act was subjugated to a consideration of its physical structure.

The corrosiveness to marriage of an NFP-only approach was reported to Paul VI's birth-control commission. Commission members Pat and Patty Crowley surveyed thousands of Catholics: most said that the rhythm method—an earlier, less effective version of today's NFP—had harmed their marriages. Then as now, there have been those who find NFP a joyous and fulfilling way to space their children. Most Catholics, however, ignore the church's prohibition of artificial contraception as irrelevant. As theologian Lisa Sowle Cahill said: "I am confident that most Catholic couples would be incredulous at the proposition that the use of artificial birth control necessarily makes their sexual intimacy selfish, dishonest, and unfaithful. Nor is their valuing of parenthood based on their experience of isolated sex acts as having a certain procreative structure."

Humanae vitae also presumes a degree of self-determination that many women do not enjoy, especially (but not exclusively) in the developing world. Paul VI warned that contraception would leave women vulnerable to sexual exploitation by men. Sadly, such abuse long predated the Pill. What reliable contraception does—especially contraception that women control—is give women greater determination over their reproductive lives, even if their partners are indifferent to their well-being and that of their children. What *Humanae vitae* described as self-indulgence sounds to many women like self-defense, or at least self-care and more responsible parenting.

From Christopher C. Roberts's contribution to "Does Method Matter? Contraception and Catholic Identity," March 20, 2015

If, for most healthy married Catholics, NFP requires no more than about ten days of abstinence per month, and if NFP actually works, then what substantive objections remain? No party in the present discussion is saying women must be pregnant all the time or give up on careers. *Humanae vitae*'s proposal is that a married couple pray, discern whether God is calling them to have a child, and, if not, use NFP according to good instruction. So why aren't more American Catholics trying to follow this teaching? [...]

I believe that most twenty-first-century Catholics dismiss NFP for three reasons: because they haven't heard a good explanation of the church's moral teaching against contraception; because they aren't aware of the method's technical effectiveness; and, finally, because contemporary American culture can accept self-denial only when the aim is physical health, not spiritual health. The church has become too reticent about the benefits of even the gentlest ascetic practice. Consider how relatively rarely we talk about fasting for an hour before Mass, or how minimal our Lenten fasts are compared with those of the Eastern Orthodox. And consider how easy NFP is compared with certain diets and exercise regimens.

Could it be that we have become too insistent on our personal autonomy and the urgency of our appetites? NFP gets us where it hurts. It requires us to abstain from pleasure on somebody else's terms. In that sense, it is profoundly un-American and unmodern. That's a large part of why it would be good for at least some of us. Catholics are called to fasting and almsgiving for many reasons, but chief among them is the need to soften our own hearts, to yield our autonomy to God and heighten our sense of his lordship over every aspect of our lives. A devotional approach to NFP works the same way, teaching those who practice it that sex is a gift, not an entitlement.

From "Contraception and Honesty" by Peter Steinfels, June 1, 2015

Even if the condemnation of contraception is no longer a live issue for many Catholics, it is carved in granite for many bishops. No matter the testimony of Catholics, no matter the destructive consequences for the life of the church, no matter remaining questions for third-world poverty or combatting AIDS. There are simply too many in the ranks of the hierarchy, it is felt, including perhaps Pope Francis himself, who just cannot contemplate any return to the question. At least some accommodation can be made on Communion for the divorced and remarried or on pastoral attitudes toward cohabiting or same-sex couples. About contraception, biting one's tongue is the better part of valor. If this is the situation, it is a very strange one indeed. All the former issues raise considerations much more radical than those raised by contraception: the indissolubility of marriage and the morality of sexual relationships outside of it. Is it the case that so many bishops have been appointed precisely because of their support for *Humanae vitae* that they are capable of flexibility on any other matter but that one? For them, is it thinkable to entertain questions about applying Jesus' words on divorce and remarriage in Scripture itself but not about Paul VI's words on contraception in a 1968 encyclical?

At this point, it is essential to recall exactly what this debate is—and is not—about.

It is not about the "contraceptive mentality," not about "openness to life," not about hostility to children or a refusal to have any. "Contraceptive mentality," so roundly denounced by everyone, is an ill-defined term. It has been used to cover everything from acceptance of marital infidelity, degradation of women, a selfish refusal of the sacrifices incumbent upon having and raising children, and even resort to abortion. If [the Synod on Marriage and the Family] wants to condemn

such conduct, fine. But that is not what caused the rejection of the church's teaching by millions of Catholics who were palpably open to life, who were already parents doing their loving, sacrificial best to raise children, or who were young people looking forward to doing so.

Nor is the debate about Humanae vitae *in its entirety, with its many insights and warnings.* When I taught courses at Georgetown University on "Change and Conflict in Twentieth-Century Catholicism," *Humanae vitae* was required reading. Inevitably, a good number of students were impressed by the encyclical's sentiments about love, marriage, and sex. (I hope that the growth of the so-called hook-up culture in the past fifteen years would not make their successors more cynical.) They were also impressed with the encyclical's warnings about potential misuses of humanity's new powers over sexuality, although I personally believe that the document was far less "prophetic" than its advocates like to stress: it came, after all, when the Sexual Revolution was well on its way, and plenty of others, not necessarily opposed to contraception, had earlier voiced concerns about the morally disruptive consequences of separating sexuality from reproduction. But none of this triggered the massive turmoil surrounding the encyclical. That turmoil centered on several passages that condemned as "intrinsically evil" any act or means "specifically intended to prevent procreation" in any instance whatsoever of sexual intercourse ("each and every marital act")—even "to protect or promote the welfare of an individual, of a family, or of society," even "when the reasons...appear to be upright and serious."

The debate is not about Natural Family Planning. (I use the capital letters to circumvent the argument that for human beings the use of pharmaceuticals or mechanical devices is just as "natural" as the use of thermometers and calendars.) *Humanae vitae* and *Familiaris consortio* go to great lengths (critics would say contortions) to distinguish forbidden contraception from Natural Family Planning and to praise the latter. In some circles, Natural Family Planning has been proselytized as an eighth wonder of the world, if not a kind of eighth sacrament. NFP is celebrated as highly reliable not only in spacing births but also in fostering marital communication and sexual sensitivity. The enthusiasm, frequently bordering on exaltation, is easy to parody, but I don't doubt that NFP works for many couples and that its regimen and periodic abstinence can be spiritually meaningful and maritally enriching. This may also be true for Orthodox Jewish couples who observe the complicated restrictions of sexual conduct surrounding menstruation and other circumstances. It may be true of many couples whose occupations impose regular rhythms or extended periods of abstinence. […]

Assume the best about NFP. Commend and encourage all who find it valuable and beneficial. It remains the case that the reasoning underlying *Humanae vitae*'s exceptionless condemnation of contraception does not rest on the effectiveness of NFP or its potential for spiritual growth and moral harmony. The key argument made in *Humanae vitae* about each and every act of sexual intimacy would be just as true—or just as false—if the only alternatives to constant or dangerous pregnancies were separate bedrooms or old-fashioned "Vatican roulette" or not even that.

The debate is not about birthrates, aging populations, exploding populations, Malthusianism, or neo-colonialism. These are all legitimate concerns with moral significance. But again the argument of *Humanae vitae* either stands or falls quite independently of them. The church may very well want to encourage larger families or discourage "breeding like rabbits"; the church may call for material, educational, familial, or communal resources allowing mothers and fathers to raise more children or plan for fewer. Those are different matters than the judgment that all resort to contraception is intrinsically evil. They should not be pretexts or rhetorical distractions for not examining that judgment.

Two ways of deflecting that responsibility are very much in the air breathed by the synod fathers. One stems from the fact that part of the context for Pope John XXIII's establishment of a Pontifical Commission for the Study of Population, Family, and Births in March 1963 was a wave of alarm over global population growth. Some of the more dire predictions, like the original Malthus's, proved wildly off the mark, a development seized upon by outspoken defenders of *Humanae vitae* as vindication of the encyclical's wisdom. This triumphalism verges on hypocrisy. If population growth now appears more manageable (not that associated problems have disappeared), it is hardly because the world has observed *Humanae vitae* or adopted Natural Family Planning. What has succeeded is not the encyclical but its disregard: the steady acceptance of contraception in many cultures plus the draconian and morally disgraceful one-child population in China.

The second, more understandable diversion from the difficult issue of contraception is the resentment by many church leaders in the developing world of Western (especially U.S.-led) efforts, in conjunction with local family-planning advocates, to make contraceptives legally and practically available. This is easily viewed as a form of neocolonialism, lumped together with a host of other economic and cultural pressures disrupting vulnerable societies.

Humanae vitae is seen less in terms of its specific contested argument than as part of a defensive barrier to protect vulnerable societies against intrusions by the powerful and destructive West. Unfortunately, this kind of opposition is indiscriminate and too often allied with oppressive values (e.g., patriarchy) and myopic about who pays the price of the local status quo (e.g., women). It is also probably fated to go the way of Pius IX's indiscriminate denunciation of "progress, liberalism, and modern civilization"—and with similar cost to the faith. ■

Worthy of His Name

WIM WENDERS DISCUSSES 'POPE FRANCIS: A MAN OF HIS WORD'

In May *Commonweal* hosted an advance screening of Wim Wenders's new documentary, *Pope Francis: A Man of His Word*. Wenders had just arrived in New York for the film's U.S. opening and kindly agreed to answer a few questions from *Commonweal*'s senior editor, Matthew Boudway, at the end of the screening. The following transcript of their conversation has been edited for clarity and length.

Matthew Boudway: *I'd like to start by asking how this film came to be in the first place. Whose idea was it? What interested you in the project? I know you're not a practicing Catholic but this seems to have had a personal importance for you.*

Wim Wenders: Let's start with the last question: I'm a practicing *Christian*, with a Catholic upbringing. I was a Presbyterian while I lived in America, and now I am an ecumenical Christian. I try to live the best of everything—a combined Protestant and Catholic in one person, and I tell you it's possible.

The film started in quite an unbelievable way, because it never crossed my mind that I could make a film with the pope. I had watched, like probably most of you, that night when he was elected. Nine years of Latin allowed me to understand the message saying he had chosen the name of Francis. "Wow," I thought. "That takes guts. That is a loaded name." And no pope before him dared to take on that name. So I was interested from the beginning. And I laughed when he addressed the crowd, the whole square, saying the cardinals had gone almost to the end of the world to find a new pope.

He had my attention. But I didn't think I could make a film with him. We just don't think of the pope as being available for a movie. Until one day—it was still in the first year of his papacy, the end of 2013—I got this letter with a fancy letterhead. It was from the Vatican. Would I consider talking with them about the possibility of a film involving Pope Francis? *Whoa*. I took a deep breath and I answered, "Yes, I would consider it. I'd like to talk with him about it"—because I needed to find out what was behind this. I couldn't make a commissioned film produced by the Vatican. That isn't what I do. Then I talked with them, and it turned out that was not at all what they had in mind. They just wanted to initiate the idea, probably because they realized nobody would ever think of it. They said, "If you are inclined to do this, and if you have the time in your life and a desire to do it, then we'll make everything possible.

You'll have access to the pope and to our archives. But you're going to have to put together an independent film. We are not going to produce this—that is not at all our intention. It has to be an independent production, and you'll have to deal with it just like any of your other documentaries. You'll have to write it, finance it, produce it, distribute it. We keep out of everything. We just wanted to plant the idea, the seed." Well, that sounded good, and that's what I did. It took a while. Even sort of writing it all, writing a concept for it. I realized this carte blanche they had given me was wonderful, but the downside was there were no parameters whatsoever. The possibilities were too wide and it was scary, and I realized there was a lot of responsibility attached to that. But they kept their word. They didn't interfere, not even with the concept. I showed it to them eventually, and they said, "Good, we like it." But from the beginning they said, "You do the film you want to do." So I was left to my own devices.

I had the opportunity to meet Pope Francis four times. Each time I'd devote a good solid two hours and after that we'd pause. We were both exhausted because it was intense. Quite spontaneous and courageous on his part. There was no question he refused to answer. He was fully present. There were no mobile phones or other agendas, there was no assistant who wanted anything else. He was there alone and faced our camera.

And I also shot a little bit in Assisi. We made some re-

FOCUS FEATURES

enactments from the life of St. Francis because, when I first saw Pope Francis and realized he was living up to his name, I felt I had to share that with the audience—what that name meant. And looking at all the films that have been done about St. Francis, I realized I couldn't really quote any of them. I mean there were quite a lot—ten or so, including silent movies. The last one had Mickey Rourke as St. Francis—it was strange to see St. Francis with all these tattoos. So I realized I had to do it myself, and that was part of the concept: we filmed these little moments to represent the life of St. Francis.

MB: *As I was watching this film the first time, something struck me very forcefully. Like everyone probably, I thought I already knew what Pope Francis looks like because I've seen so many photographs of him. And yet, watching your film, I felt as if I were seeing him for the first time, because all those images I'd seen before were still images. When you see him in the film, you see his eyes and you see his face in movement, and how expressive that face is. Later I heard you say in an interview that you decided it was the pope's eyes that held the film together. Is that something you discovered while you were making the film, something that became part of your method, or is that something you discovered only afterwards?*

WW: Well, there is what you can imagine and there is what you can realize only when it's there. When I imagined having the privilege to be face to face with the pope, I did think, "I don't want to have that only for myself. I want to shoot that in a way that he's not just looking at me. I want to share that privilege [with the audience]." So I decided to shoot it in a way that allows all of you to be face to face with the pope. We shot this with a sort of reversed teleprompter thingy [an interrotron]. It didn't show him his answers like a newscaster's would. He saw the living question—me asking the question on a screen—and spoke to me directly. Only, I was little ways off. He saw my face on that screen and teleprompter and the camera was shooting through it, so he was answering through my eyes directly to all of you. When I explained this all to him, his only worry was "What do *you* see?" And I showed him my place, a little behind the camera, and he realized I was in the same situation he was in. So he liked the idea. And he was totally committed then to this situation. It was very intense. He didn't see anyone else but me. All the crew had disappeared. But with this device I could actually share his eyes with the audience.

To answer your question, you can imagine something ahead of time but then it's actually there, and I hadn't imagined his eyes to be so kind and so alive and so awake and so powerful. He has this amazingly powerful look when he talks—not just to me but to anybody. My entire team was struck by that look, because he greeted everybody, not just director and producer but everybody, including the electrician, and he spent the same time with everybody, and also when he said goodbye he said goodbye to everyone and had a few words with each of us. And we all felt that there was something very special in his eyes. He met every person and there was nothing fake about it: he was completely there, and as truthful as a man can be and as involved with everyone.

MB: *You've made many documentaries over the years. You made a great documentary about a choreographer Pina Bausch. You made one about the Buena Vista Social Club, a group of Cuban musicians. Was the experience of making this film much like the experience of making those others? Was it a radically different experience because, as you say, nobody thinks about making this kind of movie about the pope?*

WW: It was of course unique, and no film will be similar to this experience. I spent two years on a daily basis with Pope Francis, not in person—in person it was only four days—but I mean in the editing room. I saw him everyday, and listened, and subtitled myself everything he said and all the [video] documents we found, all the appearances all over the world—I knew them all by heart in the end and saw them all hundreds of times. So I felt I was getting very close to knowing him.

And then again this was, as filmmaking goes, not so different, at least in the impulse behind it, from some of my other films, because my documentaries don't come out of a critical distance. Other filmmakers make films about something they want to expose or something they want to explore, or something that's wrong with the world. My documentaries are all about things that I love and they show my affection, my desire to share this with as many people as possible, and that was definitely the case with *Pope Francis*. I loved this man and what he stood for, so anybody who expects a film that's critical of the church or its policies is looking for the wrong movie. Already when I was a young film critic (I started as a film critic when I was a student and I earned money for my studies by writing criticism about movies) I refused to write about films I didn't like. I thought it was not worth my time, or *anybody's* time. I really only wrote about films I liked. And in a way that continued in my filmmaking career. I can't even work with actors I don't like. I don't know what to do with them. I don't know how to film them.

MB: *What, if anything, surprised you about the pope?*

WW: His sense of humor was amazing. And that was a drawback for me because we did all this in Spanish. My Spanish isn't that bad, and I tried to refresh it, but the painful thing is, if you're not really perfect at another language, the first thing that you don't get is humor. You'll always have that delayed laugh, you know? Somebody says something funny to you, then you stand there and say, "Wait a minute, let me understand that." So sometimes I had to turn to the guy next to me and say, "Did I get this right?" And *then* I'd laugh, with a thirty-second delay. ■

Ingrid Rowland

From Eternity to Here

The Rome We Have Lost

John Pemble
Oxford University Press, $24.95, 192 pp.

Rome may be the Eternal City, but even eternal cities change. John Pemble counts the ways in his beautiful, elegiac book *The Rome We Have Lost*, its title foreshadowing a prevailing sense of irrevocable loss. As he charts the drastic physical transformations that have permanently altered Rome and its surrounding countryside since Italy became a unified state in 1870, he traces an equal, if not greater, transformation in the city's significance to the world at large.

Tourists still flock to Rome today, of course, but an early nineteenth-century visitor entered what was in many ways an entirely different city, and, despite its evident decline from the glory days of its ancient empire, a far more important one. The ring of red brick walls raised by the emperor Aurelian in the late third century AD still separated Romans from their countryside, and the countryside, with its scattered farmsteads, aqueducts, and medieval towers, stretched undisturbed to the neighboring volcanic hills, with their aristocratic villas perched dramatically on the slopes. Ordinary people lived in the Roman Forum. So did farm animals; Romans referred to the Forum's neighborhood as the "Cow Pasture" (*Campo Vaccino*) and to the Capitol, where the colossal temple of Jupiter once rose to dizzying heights, as "Goat Hill" (*Monte Caprino*). Country girls, fresh from the Appian Way, bathed in a swimming hole by the ruins of the Circus Maximus before driving their flocks into town. The pope moved freely

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF DENMARK.

Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, A View through Three of the North-Western Arches of the Third Storey of the Colosseum, *1815*

about his capital, for he ruled over a substantial region of central Italy, the Papal States, as well as the Roman Catholic Church. He maintained apartments in the Vatican, but also in a grand palace on the Quirinal Hill (today it houses the President of Italy) and the Lateran Palace on the city's southern edge, not to mention his villa in Castel Gandolfo. Pemble summarizes the peculiarity of what he calls Old Rome in the title of his first chapter: "Paradise, Grave, City, Wilderness."

Old Rome may have been a more contained city, and a more rustic city than New Rome, the capital of a minor European state, but its supremacy in the world's imagination rested securely on its incomparable treasury of art and architecture. A visit to the Vatican in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century meant beholding what most contemporaries would have pronounced one of the most beautiful works of art ever made by human hands—not a creation by Michelangelo, but something infinitely more precious: an ancient marble statue of Apollo striding forth with bow in hand, stark naked but for his fluttering cloak and divinely ornate pair of sandals. To stand in the presence of this image, the *Apollo Belvedere*, was to stand in the presence of civilization itself, which is why Italians in 1760 were so eager to see how a young Philadelphia painter, Benjamin West, would react to seeing its sublime perfection for the first time. West's response is legendary: "My God, how like it is to a young Mohawk warrior!" No wonder this quick-witted Pennsylvanian eventually headed the Royal Academy of Painters in London; like his contemporary Benjamin Franklin, he knew how to turn his exotic origin entirely to his advantage (and how to pass for a Quaker in spirit if not absolutely to the letter). In the eyes of its enraptured viewers, the *Apollo*'s slender figure, as Pemble shows by eloquent example, had captured the spirit of Greece and transferred it to Rome. For several centuries, the early modern city had already prided itself on having rescued the legacies of both Egypt and Greece from the clutches of the expanding Ottoman empire. The great Raphael captured that salvific spirit in two frescoes for the papal palace, *The School of Athens* (1509–1511) and *Parnassus* (1512): to demonstrate Rome's absorption of Greece, he painted a Roman concrete vault arching over the conclave of Greek philosophers ostensibly debating in Athens. But they are, of course, in Italy, painted on an Italian wall, with their books safely stored away within the Vatican Library. Mount Parnassus was the proverbial Greek home of the Muses, but Raphael shows Apollo, the Muses, and a pride of poets gathered on what must be the gentler slopes of the Vatican, not only Greeks, but also Italians, from Dante to Raphael's own contemporaries. For generations of pilgrims and Grand Tourists, early modern Rome, Pemble's Old Rome, had become Europe's Egypt and Europe's Greece. And then, abruptly, the load of marbles that Lord Elgin prised from the Parthenon and shipped to London transformed the way Europeans looked at Greek art. The *Apollo Belvedere*, that sovereign embodiment of pure Beauty, toppled from its throne. Today, the hordes tramping through the Vatican Museums are primed, indeed driven, to worship Michelangelo, while the *Apollo Belvedere*, like Raphael's frescoes, all of them once admired as pinnacles of artistic achievement in their own right, have been reduced to minor stops on the relentless cattle drive toward the Sistine Chapel.

With poignant sensitivity, Pemble draws out the parallel between the shifting fortunes of the *Apollo Belvedere* and the shifting status of Rome itself. Ironically, this former capital of a worldwide empire, this nerve center of the Renaissance, was surprisingly ill equipped to become the capital of a modern European state in 1870.

Pemble devotes a bracingly original discussion to the Renaissance, which he introduces as a phenomenon of the nineteenth century rather than the fifteenth:

> Reacting against histories that, by conflicting with each other, perpetuated the conflicts they described, modern historians invested heavily in a consensual counter-history. They changed the model of historiography by adopting a language that was resonant with ideas of continuity, healing renewal, and light.... Evolutionary rather than revolutionary in their way of thinking, modern historians adapted their ideas less and less to the closed circle of life, and more to the open spiral of progress. Discarding the four traditional ages of man—of gold, silver, bronze, and iron—they invented three syncretic concepts, each defining a momentous and therapeutic reshaping of Western experience, and each featuring Rome as essential to the transformation. These three inventions were Civilization, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment.

Unified Italy added another element to that heady triad: progress, an altar on which the new Italian government willingly sacrificed much of Old Rome's physical body, followed in turn by Mussolini and a rogue's gallery of corrupt postwar real-estate developers. Fifty years ago, the drive from Rome to Tivoli barely differed from the country outing Grand Tourists and Romans had enjoyed forever. Now the trip is a nightmare crawl through almost unrelenting industrial blight. A rubber factory rises within a few hundred yards of the emperor Hadrian's incomparable villa, and a recent city administration hoped to use a nearby plot of land for a landfill. Pemble clocks the magnitude of this destruction by reminding us how many people passed along this same road when it was beautiful rather than squalid, their lives immeasurably enriched by the journey. The people in his vignettes range over five centuries, from 1500 to the present, and for the most part he treats them gently: in his hands, even an exuberant Franz Liszt will strike readers more as a sensitive observer than an inveterate, constant performer.

Archaeology, invented in the Renaissance, fine tuned in the Enlightenment, and pressed into national service after 1870 in the name of Progress, has cut its own swath of destruction across the face of Old Rome. The old Cow Pasture of the Forum, rather than a living neighborhood, has become a fenced-off monument. For a brief time around

2010, Rome's city government opened the lower reaches of the Forum to the public, and at last Romans could walk across their city the way people had done since the time of Romulus. Sadly, thieves and vandals, taking advantage of their free access to tourists and monuments, made short work of the experiment. In the early twentieth century, Athens also gutted part of its vibrant Plaka district to uncover the ancient Agorà, and it is only with hindsight that we can see how much better it is for a long-lived city to inhabit the ruins of antiquity than to embalm them as Monuments. The Colosseum, a building once devoted to the gruesome destruction of wildlife (its cruel beast hunts decimated the animal populations of North Africa), became a botanical garden when it fell to ruin and the exotic seeds that had traveled on the fur of the arena's victims dropped and germinated. Napoleon, as Pemble notes, was the first villain to pull those irreplaceable weeds.

Archaeology also squelched the taste for restoring broken statues and broken buildings, creating a still-active cult of fragmentary antiquities from the nineteenth century onward. The *Apollo Belvedere* lost his sixteenth-century hands (though Pemble's photograph still shows him with his eighteenth-century fig leaf), and the equally famous Vatican statue of the Trojan priest Laocoön lost the substitute arm that Michelangelo had given him—fortunately, the real missing arm had been discovered in the meantime. The Vatican Museums' fig leaves have all been retired by now, replaced by the original stone genitalia, all carefully preserved in a storeroom after their removal.

The ruling classes of modern Rome settled in the hilly areas to the north of the city. Stringent taxes prompted old aristocratic families in those areas to liquidate their assets, from works of art to tracts of land. At the end of the nineteenth century, the most beautiful of all Rome's gardens, the Villa Ludovisi, fell at last to the developer's axe and became the neighborhood of the new Via Veneto. An outraged Augustus Hare attributed the destruction to "the Italians' hatred of trees," but the real motive was, naturally, money, touted as Progress. There was also a sharp political point to be made by turning over these immense private properties to the public: Old Rome was still very much a feudal society, and modern Italy tried its best to eradicate some of the old inequalities. The private *plaisances* of the Borghese and Doria Pamphilj clans have become two of Rome's favorite public parks, and life in present-day Rome is inconceivable without them—as it is without the urbanized remnants of the Villa Ludovisi.

The city's southern reaches, on the other hand, came to house the manual laborers who physically built the expanding capital, many of them natives of southern Italy. Pemble rightly mourns the invasion of Rome's countryside, the Campagna, by cheap, ugly postwar housing, but these undistinguished buildings also represent positive changes: as visible records of individual hopes for a better life, they also signal Italy's entry into the leading economies of the world. Thatched shepherd's huts no longer dot the fields as they did in the early twentieth century, which means that at last people are not living in the same conditions Romulus experienced in the Iron Age. As Pemble chronicles the changes that this exceptionally durable community has undergone in the past several centuries, he recognizes that those transformations have been complicated, often two-edged, and that the Rome we have lost has given way irrevocably to the Rome we have, a healthier, cleaner, more equitable city, still struggling to reconcile its urgent present with the specter of the past. For anyone who loves Rome, old or new, *The Rome We Have Lost*, with its store of erudition, its originality, and its refusal to accept easy solutions to complex dilemmas, is a book to treasure. ■

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What Were We Waiting For?

Marc Barnes

As a poor undergraduate, I once had to borrow a tie for Easter. It was an ecumenical exchange. My dorm-mate was a newly minted member of the Eastern Orthodox body. I was Catholic, Latin Rite, and late for Mass. "Don't lose this," he said, handing it over. "It's one of my favorites."

"How would I lose it? I'll be attached to it."

"You lose everything."

"I do not."

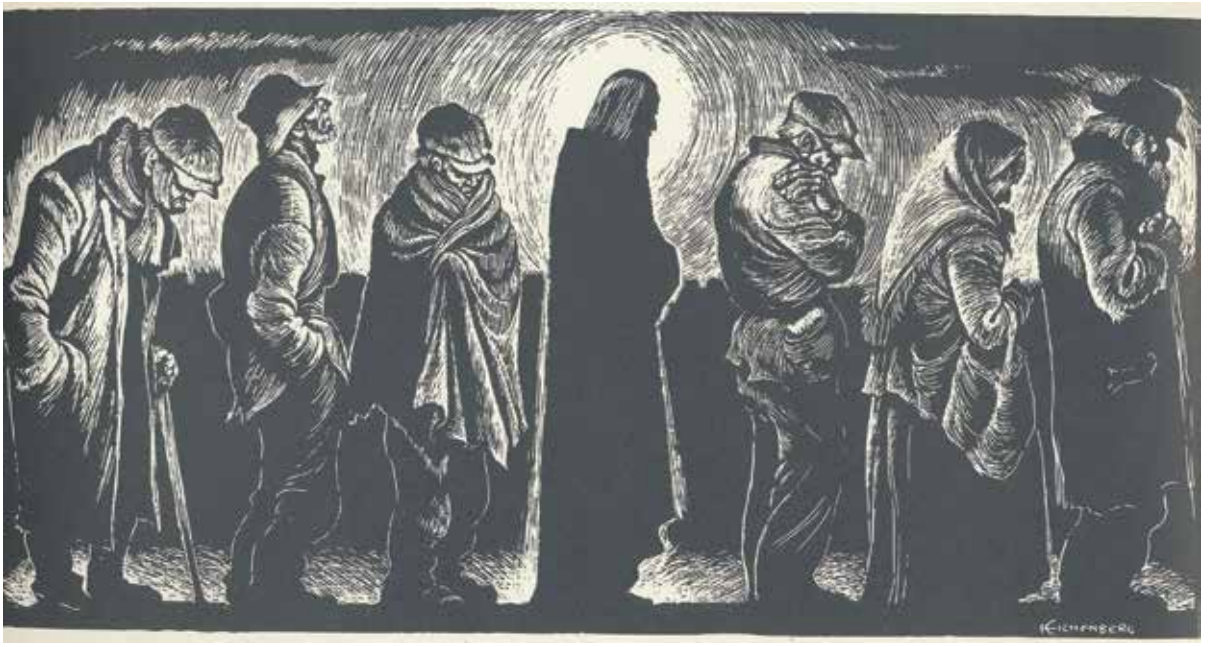
I do. Wallets, phones, and keys, anything that can be lost. Off I went to celebrate the Resurrection. Off came the tie after Mass, looped around some obscure hanger in the back of my closet, where its existence was forgotten by all parties except God, who had other plans for it.

In fairness, these were busy days. My college friends and I had become convinced that it was time to start living our faith. We were all Christians; we were also all talk. We had all been waiting to do something for the Lord. If you had asked me what, precisely, I was waiting for, I couldn't have told you. Now I know: I was waiting for money. Not a briefcase of cash, but some paid job, some position in ministry. I'd wager this sly heresy—that it takes money to be Christian—snuggles in the hearts of many Christians trying to practice the works of mercy under the bright sun of capitalism. Who hasn't been filled with the desire to perform some act of love for their fellow man, only to sink back, as if slapped by an invisible hand, at the thought of the money it would take? How many ministries, charities, and projects are proposed as a brilliant means to build the kingdom of God on this aching earth—if only they could find a little funding, a few grants, and IRS approval.

The alternative to waiting is to just show up penniless and find out what, if anything, can be done. So that's what we did. In Rust Belt Ohio, if you start looking for people to help, right away you'll find a fair number of people addicted to painkillers and heroin. Roy—I'll call him Roy—was one of these.

Dorothy Day famously said that "there are two things you should know about the poor: they tend to smell, and they are ungrateful." The additional thing you should know about the poor caught in the opioid crisis is that they'll steal your drum kit, break into your house, and get high on your couch while you're at the library. With Roy, we made every mistake in the book. He taught us, through a breathtaking series of interactive lessons, the whole array of schemes and scams that can convert Christian kindness into dope money. To the addict, the entire universe becomes a loose assortment of saleable commodities. My friends and I were incorporated into Roy's strange, mercantile hell. But through the haze of his addiction, we got to meet the scared, shivering image of God. Roy went to Mass with us (which freaked him out a little, because he used to skate with the priest in high school) and, while he was in prison, he had people to correspond with.

Sometime during this saga Roy's father overdosed on pain pills. Because my friends and I were there, and had some personal stake in the matter, the drama fell to our limited powers of organization. We brought the skateboarding priest to the hospital so that he could administer the Anointing of the Sick but, as Roy's father was unbaptized, we had to content ourselves with petitionary prayer. He died, and we began to arrange his funeral, booking a priest, calling funeral homes, securing obituary pages, and contacting



Christ of the Breadlines, *Fritz Eichenberg, 1953*

his friends and relatives. We procured a suit for the dead man and a suit for Roy; both, Roy assured me, had never worn one.

We became, to my annoyance, "all things to all people": chauffeurs, event-planners, and small-change fundraisers. If we had had the money, we could have paid for other people to handle Roy's rehab and his father's funeral. As it was, we had to get our hands dirty, asking for help with every part of the process. Cash-poor projects rely on the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, or they crumble. The desire to change the world with some practical Christian action, coupled with an objective lack of capital, forces you to gather your friends, to learn the skills you lack, to beg for the materials you cannot afford.

When I arrived at the funeral home, our priest was nowhere to be found. I was the only one besides the corpse wearing a suit. (Roy, it seemed, had managed to sell his.) I was given a wide, reverent berth. Mothers hushed their babies when I walked by. A fellow in a Steelers jersey apologized for cursing in front of the casket. I realized, with increasing horror, that for most of the attendees, the presence of a suit at a funeral indicated the presence of a preacher. The funeral-home director thanked me for being there; an interested old man asked me which seminary I attended. I started sweating, and called the priest. "You gave me the wrong address, man. I'm on the other side of town. I've got to say Mass in half an hour."

"They sort of expect something."

"So say something."

"Okay, like what?"

"Say a psalm."

So I approached the casket and read a psalm. Then, feeling inspired, I read the story of Lazarus and said a few words about our hope for the Resurrection of the dead in Christ Jesus. Looking up, I saw the tears in Roy's eyes, and I knew that my words, mostly borrowed from Scripture, had proven somewhat effective. Looking down at Roy's father, I saw—well, I saw my friend's necktie. We had cobbled together a suit from whatever we had. I must have pulled the tie from the back of my closet without recognizing it. I briefly considered the scandal that would ensue if I untied it from the poor fellow and stuffed it into my pocket. No, that would ruin the good name of fake preachers everywhere. So I consigned my dear friend's favorite tie to the fires of cremation, and gave the floor to the funeral director, who pointed the mourners in the direction of the snacks. Back in the dorm, I told my Eastern Orthodox friend what had happened. He gave me a long stare and then said, "I can't think of a better way for it to go."

I met Roy outside a gas station a few months ago. He was happy, out of prison, married, and huge. Heroin had robbed his body of substance—it took getting clean to reveal that he is, in fact, a linebacker. I asked him what he was doing. He said he was doing a lot of fishing. In words too colorful for print, he apologized for stealing our stuff and taking advantage of us. I told him I was just glad that he was better.

I often think of that semi-stolen tie, rising with the body of his poor, addicted father. It has become an odd symbol of the value of not having. Poverty forces you toward others even when you're unequipped, and this communion is the real wealth of Christians. I need this reminder now, because I've gotten back into old habits. Our penniless project has become a non-profit with tax returns and grant applications, and I've started waiting again—waiting for donations in order to love my neighbor. The poor in spirit know better than me. Love your neighbor now, I hear them say, and your poverty will gather a community to itself, and whatever else you build, you'll build the kingdom of heaven. ■

Marc Barnes *is a co-founder of the Harmonium Project, a non-profit working to help revitalize downtown Steubenville, Ohio. He is currently studying philosophy with the Benedict XVI Centre at St. Mary's University in Twickenham, London.*

FOUND IN THE CITY

—for Mo

With the feel of your lip balm I walk through the light,
sharp distance of skyline, sun setting behind—

did we notice the foam from the Con Edison plant,
the waves licking salty East River riprap,
exertions of earthworms in cold sidewalk cracks
or chill hook lifted from the homeless man's catch?

We walked through the sunlight, gloved hand in gloved hand,
our uneven gaits catching patterns sometimes,
our voices unraveling unbalanced lines
that blended or clashed as they waved through the air

impressioning softly the far skyline walls:
the water, the worms, the city become
a room resonant with confusion and us.
We love this world so; we pour into it.

The concrete below me sounds heavy with pounding—
the light of your light in the air lifts it all.

—John Linstrom

John Linstrom's poems and literary nonfiction have appeared or are forthcoming in Valparaiso Poetry Review, Dunes Review, Broad River Review, This Week in Poetry, *and* Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland.

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"Thank you again for making this group possible. Based on the solid foundation of a shared affection for Commonweal, it will flourish and enrich us all, I'm sure."
—Frauke Regan, Philadelphia, PA

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