A Review of Religion, Politics & Culture

Commonweal

JUNE 2, 2017

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LETTERS

Policing the Communion line, security theater, etc.

DRAWING BOUNDARIES

Do I sense an air of self-satisfaction as Fr. Nonomen totes his tomatoes home ("Policing the Communion Line," May 5)? "Thank God I am not like those diocesan administrators, doctors of the law, ever-ready to sniff out some scandal in my advocacy of an open-door Communion policy." There will definitely be "no policing" at Saint What's-Her-Name! Ignore canonical requirements and diocesan directives—willfulness is all.

Fr. Nonomen's article seems to presume that there is no alternative between "policing" and promiscuity. What about the pastoral responsibility to discern and counsel? Or is "accompaniment" reduced to a brief encounter at the head of the Communion line? If pastors are not called to dictate, neither are they called to abdicate. Perhaps a re-reading of Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis* is in order.

In my years teaching at Maryknoll (a remarkably hospitable place), one learned to appreciate the wisdom of one of its founders: "It's also a function of hospitality to draw boundaries."

And is it not past time to do away with quaint anonymous submissions? A little transparency in the age of Trump would be salutary.

REV. ROBERT IMBELLI
New York, N.Y.

YES TO NO POLICING

What an uplifting and inspiring article by Fr. Nonomen. I can't tell you how many times I have been faced with the list of who may not come to the table at liturgy! I have written many letters to the pastors following such experiences—no one ever answered me, I might add. This article is definitely a keeper and so is "Fr. Nonomen." We need more parishes like his. Please, God, surprise me!

ARLINE M. SCHOENBERGER
Philadelphia, Pa.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

As a former arts and sciences dean at a major Catholic university, Loyola University of Chicago, I too have had to deal with the issues raised by John Garvey and Mark Roche in their pair of articles, "Hiring for Mission" (February 10). Their proposals, while helpful, will prove inadequate for most Catholic institutions. Garvey prescribes a majority-Catholic faculty. That falters for two reasons: it raises the question of who is Catholic (e.g. does a baptized but lapsed Catholic meet the criterion?), and it encourages deception. Non-Catholic universities like Baylor and Brigham Young have applied such tests for years, and faculty at both institutions have told me how rampant deception can be, just as much by eager hiring bodies as by applicants. Roche avoids Garvey's pitfalls with his recipe for mission-related application procedures and faculty seminars, but some of his proposals—postponing searches, raising the academic rank of the position you're hiring for, encouraging competitions for hiring slots—may well work at Notre Dame, the nation's wealthiest Catholic university, but are simply impossible at places where budgets are tighter.

FRANK FENNELL
Evanston, Ill.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Nice to see Panjak Mishra's book, *Age of Anger*, recently reviewed ("Destructive Solidarity," May 5). I haven't read it yet and may not, but it's certainly hit a nerve. It has come in for criticism at securely liberal venues (Adam Gopnick's *New Yorker* review, Michael Ignatieff's in the *New York Review of Books*). The anti-globalist revolt, if that's what it is, recalls the fulminations of Dostoevsky's Underground Man against the Crystal Palace in London. My fellow liberals and Democrats have to learn how to respond to this upsurge of

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ressentiment by some other means than condescension and censure.

MICHAEL J. HOLLERICH
University of St. Thomas
St. Paul, Minn.

SECURITY THEATER NIGHTMARES

My heart goes out to Lubana Adi for her ordeal when traveling to and from the United States to see her mother and two brothers in Gaziantep, Turkey ("The Trump Touch," May 19). The ignominy she was subjected to by U.S. agents at LAX airport when leaving the United States and again when she returned was cruel and demeaning. If the agents' "intel" actually existed or was worth its salt it would be clear to them that she was no threat to national or international security, nor a terrorist.

Perhaps I can offer some solace to Lubana. I, too, have been subjected to ignominious treatment several times at U.S. airports—and I was born in America. I, too, have no criminal record and have made it my life's career to work with nonprofits who serve disabled people, crime victims, and the economically disadvantaged. I have also served the communities in which I have lived as a volunteer on various municipal boards. However, having this service under my belt did not deter Newark, New Jersey, airport "officials" from pulling me from my travel group to Ireland and ordering me to spread eagle in front of a glass partition while using the wand in every crevice of my body. It didn't matter that I watched my travel party getting smaller and smaller as they walked to the plane. It also didn't matter that at the time my only child was serving in the Army in Iraq, and was later awarded the Bronze Star for his role in Saddam's capture. It didn't matter that I am a good person and believe in nonviolence.

My encounters with Homeland Security agents didn't stop there. In Philadelphia I've had my travel packets of peanut butter confiscated (I'm diabetic) for being suspicious and my pocketbook containing personal products emptied in front of a cast of onlookers in Oklahoma City. I've been pulled aside in a Hawaii airport to have my chest patted down with latex gloves (I've had two mastectomies and I'm allergic to latex) without any explanation other than "I'm just following orders." Huh? The next time I had a chest x-ray I asked the doctor to let me see it and there I found the "justification" for the pat-down: the staples my surgeon used for my second mastectomy. If airport security were properly trained to interpret what they see on airport x-ray machines, I would have been spared the latex pat-down in plain view of my fellow travelers. What did they think the staples were? Explosives? Radioactive isotopes?

Sadly, I'm sure there are many experiences like Lubana's and mine. Some have even made headlines, but most never appear on the news. Until there is a discernible decline in these negative travel encounters, our claims to be a "democracy" ring hollow. This is no way for a self-governing people to live. Security measures need to be directed at those considered high-risk for terrorism because of their individual history, not fellow Americans with a particular skin color, heritage, or dress.

As Lubana noted, she understands the need for security measures. We all do. However, when those measures are used frivolously and without sound intel, it smacks of misuse of authority, incompetence, and indefensible bullying. And, even worse, the humiliation of innocent Americans. It's unacceptable behavior, to say the least.

MARY H. DONOHUE
Wilmington, Del.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

I am breaking the cardinal rule of letters to the editor: promptness. Yet I must express my admiration for the article by Luke Timothy Johnson on "The Church & Transgender Identity" (March 10, 2017). Though the discussion in David Cloutier's accompanying piece was logical and articulate, Johnson's approach was refreshing because it was based upon different premises and experiences.

While reading his article, I was reminded of a remark made by the Rev. Richard Gula that so much of what passes for Christian ethics seems to be ethics done by Christians: it has an angle of vision shaped by Christian faith, but the facts upon which the discussion is based are shared with non-believers. Johnson, though, calls for a broad-ranging examination of Scripture and for taking seriously the repeated New Testament statements that for baptized believers in Jesus there is "a new creation" in the Spirit.

After encountering too much outdated biology and the selective use of Scripture in the discussion of this and other topics during the past two decades of culture wars, I was heartened by a fresh and energizing perspective.

MICHAEL MARCHAL
Cincinnati, Ohio

From the Editors

The Truth & Trump

It is impossible to believe almost anything the president of the United States says. That is an astonishing and demoralizing sentence to write, and an even more disturbing reality to contemplate.

President Donald J. Trump's removal of James Comey as director of the FBI, while Comey was leading an investigation into the possible collusion by Trump's presidential campaign with Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election, may soon plunge the nation into a constitutional crisis. Given the cynical, implausible, absurd, and finally laughable reasons the White House initially put forth for why Comey was fired, it seems obvious that the FBI director's determination to protect the independence of the investigation from Trump's meddling was the reason he was "terminated." Trump, in his inimitable fashion, confessed as much in an interview with NBC News only days after his spokespeople insisted the firing came about because of the unbidden recommendations of Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. Why Sessions, who supposedly has recused himself from the Russian investigation after misleading the Senate about his own contacts with Russia, was involved in assessing Comey's conduct remains unexplained. Vice President Mike Pence, Press Secretary Sean Spicer, and other hapless Trump mouthpieces have all been compromised and humiliated for failing to recognize the one indisputable truth about this president: it is impossible to believe anything he says. As a consequence, he inevitably destroys the reputations of those who are willing to do his bidding.

Trump is both indifferent to and ignorant of the norms and traditions of democratic governance. That was evident long before he was elected. In a perverse way, he simply doesn't know better, and is incapable of learning. But the congressional Republicans, especially their leadership, *should* know better. What is arguably even more worrying than the chaos and panic engulfing the White House is the pusillanimity of the vast majority of Republicans, especially Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan. Neither man questioned Comey's firing. McConnell, in his smarmy fashion, tried to score partisan points by calling attention to earlier complaints by Democrats about the director's handling of the investigation of Hillary Clinton's emails. Is it really possible that Republican leaders do not understand what's wrong with a president removing the leader of an FBI investigation into his own campaign? It doesn't take much imagination to predict how Republicans would have reacted if President Barack Obama had removed Comey after his actions possibly fatally damaged Clinton's candidacy. "Impeachment!" would have resounded through the halls of the Capitol. As the Trump presidency blunders on, Republicans will increasingly be faced with the choice of putting country before partisan advantage. At the moment, party—and the prospect of "huge" tax cuts for the rich—evidently come first.

A handful of Republicans have voiced concerns about the reasons behind Comey's dismissal. Sen. John McCain has called for an independent prosecutor to take over the Russian investigation. There seems little chance that the Republican majority in Congress will go along with that, nor is an independent prosecutor, whose only job is to look for crimes, without problems of its own. Better—and more politically feasible—would be an independent commission made up of non-partisan experts who could investigate every aspect of Russia's involvement in last year's election—including whatever role, legal or illegal, Trump's campaign team may have played. Who becomes the next FBI director is also crucial, of course, for ensuring the credibility of any investigation.

Ultimately, however, this is a political problem requiring a political solution. It is up to the people's elected representatives, and most important, to the people themselves, to demand the president be held accountable. In the short term, that means a concerted effort at the polls in 2018 to put men and women in Congress who are willing to stand up to Trump. Over the long term, it will require finding a way to ameliorate the nation's deep partisan divide. Perhaps 30 to 35 percent of the electorate will remain in Trump's corner no matter what he does. As he notoriously pointed out, he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and his supporters would still vote for him. Figuratively speaking, that is what he has just done. A significant majority of the electorate, however, disapproves of this presidency and is looking for an alternative. Here the shortcomings of the Democratic Party remain starkly evident. Unless the Democrats move beyond identity politics, open their doors to those who question current abortion laws, start to recapture school boards and state legislatures, and reclaim their heritage of representing the interests of working- and middle-class Americans, the nation's divisions will only grow deeper. Trump is merely a symptom, albeit an acutely dangerous one, of the nation's ills. ■

May 15, 2017

Fr. Nonomen

Six & Six

WHY I DISLIKE THE AUTOMATIC ROTATION OF PASTORS

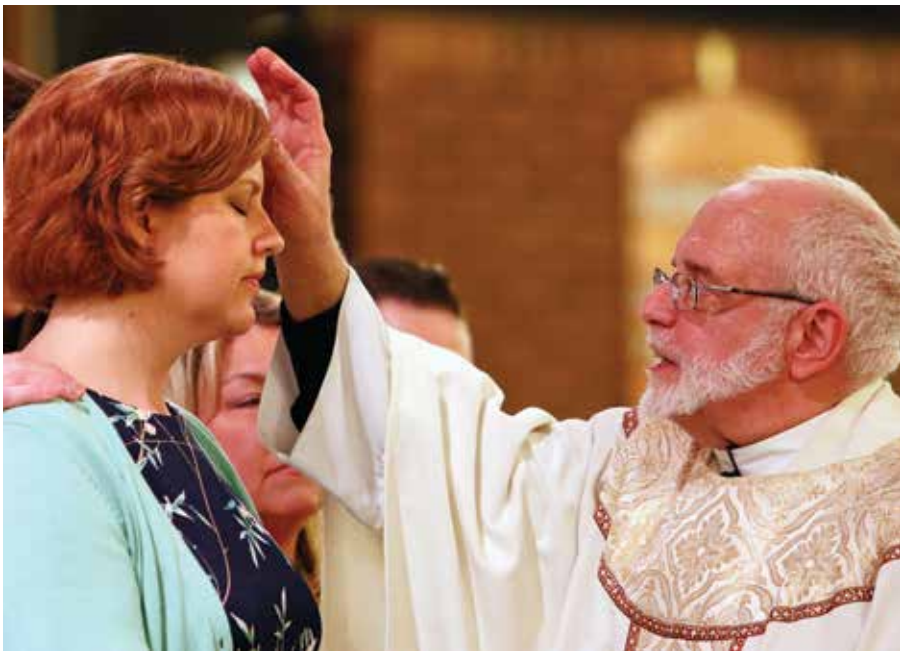
In some parishes, they dread it. In others, it can't come soon enough. It is the year a parish community gets a new pastor.

Like many others, our diocese sets terms for pastors. A priest is appointed to serve for a six-year term, after which he may elect to stay on for another six. After two terms, he must move on. No choice. No whining. You either throw a teary-eyed party for Father Wonderful, or you tell Father Nightmare to beat it out the back door. I detest this policy.

To be fair, it does keep priests moving around on the shelves, reducing the likelihood of anyone going stale. It's also a chance to spread the wealth of a gifted minister, as well as to be sure that the dead weight of the less-than-talented does not put a stress on any one single community for too long. It might also give personnel boards more to work with as they seasonally shuffle the assignment deck. I do understand the advantages.

To me, however, this kind of policy sometimes seems to reduce the pastoral relationship to a kind of computer chip that is merely moved from one circuit board to another, regardless of measure and fit. Every parish is different. Each has its own culture, which takes time and patience to discover. For me, it takes a couple of years to figure out the dynamics of a community in order to apply a more effective strategic plan for ministry. Often, just as goals are finally being realized, it's time to leave and start all over again. It can be tough to summon the energy and enthusiasm to start all over again.

My biggest gripe with the policy is that it tends to leave out the human factor. When so much around us is automated and systematized, the informal and personal is refreshing. Why not admit several men and women to the personnel board whose sole responsibility is to meet occasionally with pastors over a cup of coffee and discuss how the "pastoring" is going? Granted, these individuals would have to have the personality suited for this kind of work—non-threatening, perceptive, fearless!—but this kind of care and dialogue might well head off a disaster before it begins, or even extend a good thing when it's happening. I realize this sounds too utterly simplistic to be of any real value, and yet, a touch of the pastoral in an otherwise corporate policy is what I believe is needed.



A confirmation during the Easter Vigil at St. Louis de Montfort Church in Sound Beach, New York

"Six and Six" might be an adequate starting point, but aren't there times when circumstances indicate an extension might be called for? Perhaps a parish has endured a Sandy Hook–like tragedy or a Hurricane Sandy–like disaster. Or maybe, on a positive note, there is a new building going up on the parish grounds or new religious education program is being developed. Consistent leadership might well lend stability or a guiding hand when it's needed most.

And what of the other side of things? After six years of Father Nightmare's insults and bullying, should he simply be assigned to wreak havoc a few towns away? I wish I could say that I've never seen this happen, but it does. Too often. The removal of a pastor is a canonically complicated procedure that is used cautiously and as a last resort. Might some other creative ways be developed to promote conversation and encourage rational assessment when trying to remedy dysfunctional pastoral situations?

I know that not everything can be solved over a cup of coffee, but the face-to-face human factor might go a long way toward softening the edges of "Six and Six" policies in general. Or we can just skip the coffee and simply let the parishioners vote on who stays and who goes! ■

Fr. Nonomen *is the pastor of a suburban parish. He has been a priest for more than twenty-five years.*

CNS PHOTO / GREGORY A. SHEMITZ

John Tytell

An Illegal Immigrant

WHEN LIVES MATTER MORE THAN LAWS

Often, in the morning, I walk briskly for an hour on the esplanade on the Hudson River in lower Manhattan. Unless there is ice or fog, I gaze at the Statue of Liberty. While I admire the returning geese, the bumptious ducks, and the stately gulls, I love the statue and what she represents. Even though Lady Liberty may be inanimate, a fusion of bronze and steel, I have always believed that love was reciprocal.

Like most Americans, my family came from some other place. I was born in Antwerp, Belgium in 1939. One week before my first birthday, at 3 a.m. on May 10, 1940, our street was bombed by the Luftwaffe as part of the surprise invasion that launched the Second World War. A few hours earlier, my parents had entertained some friends and the silverware and coffee service was still sprawled on the dining-room table. Approximately a million Belgians tried to escape the detonations and crumbling buildings that night. My parents' flight was complicated by my infancy, but made possible because they owned an American Buick—a rare possession in European cities at that time but one they considered a prudent investment in the threatening political atmosphere of the late 1930s.

My father, a diamond merchant who could secure most of his assets in his pockets, drove his parents, my mother, and me to the south of France, seeking accommodation where they could in the awful chaos of desperate circumstances. For my parents, it was oysters on the run if that was all that was available, or a sleeping space in a brothel on more than one night. For their swaddled child, "ti Jean" as I was called, it was a time of perpetual colic and crying.

My parents were not planning for migration; they intended to return to Antwerp as soon as possible. My father read the newspapers and the news was grim, the future foreboding. So he drove us through Spain where bullets fired by Franco's supporters nicked the car. My father kept driving until we reached Lisbon, where my family spent the next six months uncertain about their future. My mother had been born in London—another accident of war—so we could have gone to England. But the Germans had begun bombing civilian areas in Britain, so that hardly seemed like a sensible option. All of Europe, it seemed then, was about to succumb to the domination of madmen bent on the annihilation of those they saw as racially impure.

As secular European Jews, my parents had great reason to fear. The United States seemed like a possible haven. The problem was "No Jews Allowed!" in the Land of the Free, a policy formed by the fear that America might not have space for millions of impoverished Jews from the shtetls of Poland and Russia. So parts of my family ended up in Rio, Buenos Aires, Havana, Tokyo, and Melbourne. I was one of the fortunate few allowed to grow up in New York City. Later, when I asked my parents why we were allowed to come, despite our Jewish origins, my father explained that he had traded some of his remaining diamonds to an official in the American Embassy in exchange for a visa. Apparently, a number of other diamond people from Antwerp benefited from this corrupt bargain and established a diamond exchange on West Forty-Seventh Street in Manhattan—previously, the fledgling trade had been located on Canal Street near the Manhattan Bridge, where remnants of it still remain. We had bribed our way here, and although we were eventually naturalized, our original entry was as tainted as that of anyone paying a smuggler to cross the Mexican border in the middle of the night.

From my perspective, legality is relative, as fluid as the stream of historical change, and determined by those in power. What is at issue here is not the legal right to live in a particular place, but the human right to live at all, especially when one is driven from home by devastating forces. The law is not sacrosanct or absolute, but as subject to change as anything else. The most cursory examination of our past will reveal our blatant legal inconsistencies: kidnapped Africans could be purchased as property before the Civil War and then forced to live under the apartheid "separate but equal" doctrine for a century after it; Prohibition could suddenly reverse three thousand years of universal custom (and incidentally create a new criminal class).

My small history, I know, was easier than for some of the people seeking sanctuary here now: in my kitchen recently, my carpenter, a stout man with good hands from Uzbekistan, explained to me that when he overstayed his tourist visa he was incarcerated for four months in a federal facility until a judge determined he could be set free. Russlan has a family and has been working here and paying taxes for eleven years. And, equally "illegal" when I arrived in this country, I have been working at the same place for fifty-five years, every two weeks receiving a check in compensation for my efforts from the State of New York. Would the quality of my work have been improved or been more reputable had I been born in Manhattan? ■

John Tytell *is best known as the author of* Naked Angels: the Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation, Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano, *and seven other works of non-fiction. He is a Founding Editor of* American Book Review, *and has taught modern American literature at Queens College (C.U.N.Y.) since 1963.*

Carrie Frederick Frost

Not a Novelty

THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CASE FOR DEACONESSES

I watched with interest in August 2016 when Pope Francis made good on his promise to convene a commission to study the female diaconate. I was especially attentive to this development because I am a supporter of the renewal of the order of deaconesses in my own church—the Orthodox Church. Later last year I was astonished when one of the self-governing churches of the Orthodox world, Alexandria, decided to revive the female diaconate in Africa and proceeded to consecrate five women as deaconesses this past February. These moves by the Synod of Alexandria surprised those of us in the United States working on this issue—we did not know the female diaconate was even under consideration by the African church. Rarely does anything happen this fast in the Orthodox world.

Publia (Poplia) the Confessor and Deaconess of Antioch (Menologion of Basil II)

That we were unaware of support for the female diaconate in Africa is evidence of two Orthodox realities. First, our church is fragmented: we do not yet have established international mechanisms for theologians and historians, or even hierarchs, to communicate with one another. Second, the autocephalous Orthodox churches throughout the world are self-governing, which means that any one of them could decide to revive the female diaconate tomorrow and ordain a deaconess the next day.

As my Catholic sisters and brothers await the report from Pope Francis's commission, we in the Orthodox Church are waiting to learn more about the ministry of the new deaconesses in Africa. The Synod of Alexandria has not yet published an official description of their duties, but it has informally suggested that these women will assist with missionary work, such as catechism and baptism, as well as conducting services in mission parishes that have no regular priest. We are also waiting to see if another Orthodox church will follow in Alexandria's footsteps, and to find out what the female diaconate will look like in other parts of the world.

We know at least one thing already: it will not be a novelty. There is ample evidence of a female diaconate through the twelfth century in the Orthodox Church—a fact of great importance in a tradition that zealously values precedent. From the third century on, there are several extant texts that include or mention ordination rites for deaconesses. From these texts, we know that deaconesses were ordained at the altar during the Divine Liturgy, that they received the Eucharist with the other ordained orders and had an *orarion* (deacon's stole) placed over their necks, and that their bishop laid hands on them.

There are also ample records of women who were deaconesses in the Christian East, starting with Paul's esteemed benefactor Saint Phoebe in the middle of the first century. (Though the term Saint Paul uses to describe her is somewhat ambiguous, the Orthodox Church has long presented Phoebe as a deaconess in its prayers, hymns, and iconography, which often shows her holding a diaconal censor.) We still have detailed records of some of these women: Saint Olympias, the friend and confidant of Saint John Chrysostom; Saint Nonna, the mother of Saint Gregory the Theologian; Saint Irene of Chrysovalantou, an abbess of the ninth century. At the height of the Byzantine Empire, one could find deaconesses in many places, including Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Thessalonica.

The precise historical roles and responsibilities of deaconesses are less clear. The language of a surviving eighth-century ordination rite is broad: "Bestow the grace of your Holy Spirit also upon this your servant who desires to offer herself to you and fill her with the grace of the diaconate just as you gave the grace of your diaconate to Phoebe whom you called to the work of ministry." Deaconesses were said

FIRST ARCHERY LESSON

a February rain
has soaked the grass
and the hay bales
no one shooting but me
as my teacher watches
I fumble with the arrow
and drop it
but when I reset it
and shoot it hits straight
on to the bullseye
and I fumble again
with the second
and again it falls
on the wet grass
but when I try again
it splits the first
right in the center
of the bullseye
my teacher shrugs
doesn't smile
says I do it all the time
but for me
forever after
never again

—Ellen Cooney

Ellen Cooney was born in 1948 and grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, and Montclair, New Jersey. She lives in San Francisco, California, and has written ten volumes of poetry published by Doir Press.

to serve their bishops by being available for "many things," as noted in the third-century Christian treatise, the *Didascalia apostolorum*. Surviving lists of their duties include: assisting with female baptism; administrative work, such as management of church properties; processing and chanting during liturgy; and many ministries to other women, such as catechetical instruction, spiritual advising, charitable care of widows, ministry to the ill, and bearing the Eucharist to the homebound. The job description of deaconesses changed according to time and place, adapting to new needs. But then, so did the job descriptions of deacons, priests, and bishops.

The big question about the female diaconate in the Christian East is why it diminished so rapidly in the late Byzantine era. Was it monastic influence? During this period, liturgical rites that included rubrics for deaconesses were replaced with rites from male monasteries that lacked such rubrics. Was it geopolitical forces? There was enormous pressure from the Crusades and the Ottoman Turks, and this destabilized the church, perhaps in ways that undermined the female diaconate. Was it a revival of Christian concern with Mosaic law—but only as it applied to women? During this era menstruation and childbirth were linked to impurity for the first time in the Christian East. Whatever the reasons for the decline of the order, no decree or canon law ever prohibited it.

Just as there is ample historical evidence of the female diaconate, so there are also plentiful and authoritative calls for the renewal of the female diaconate in recent Orthodox history. The Russian Church was poised to renew the female diaconate on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution. Multiple pan-Orthodox consultations have formally called for the female diaconate to be revived, including one in Rhodes in 1988 that was convened by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. In 2004, the Church of Greece decided to "bless" (rather than ordain) deaconesses, and has since blessed a few nuns. In the past decade or two, several Orthodox organizations advocating for deaconesses have sprung up: Saint Catherine's Vision, Orthodox Deacons, and Saint Phoebe Center for the Deaconess (of which I am a board member). Prominent historians and theologians continue to urge the Orthodox Church to consider the revival of the female diaconate—including perhaps the most influential living Orthodox theologian, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware.

At the same time, there has been an upsurge in ordinations of male deacons, as the Orthodox Church has discovered more ways to make use of the diaconate. This follows centuries of decline. In the Christian East, the role of the deacon had withered over time till deacons were little more than liturgical assistants. This decline may have been the result of the disentanglement of church and state in many parts of the Orthodox world. When church and state overlapped, deacons often worked as administrators. As soon as the state had its own non-ecclesial administrators, deacons suddenly had less to do. Now, however, the male diaconate is again being remembered as a boon to parish life and a ministry unto itself, rather than just a procedural stage on the path to priesthood. This is why several North American Orthodox seminaries have established diaconal training programs.

Deaconesses would also be a boon to parish life. Even in twenty-first-century America, a woman can often go where men are either not as welcome or not as comfortable. Deaconesses could minister to other women in cases of miscarriage, infertility, sexual and domestic abuse, for example. An order of deaconesses would also help the Orthodox Church recognize and make use of women's gifts. Today, Orthodox

women are lawyers, artists, theologians, chaplains, doctors, real-estate agents, historians, educators, scientists, and so on. It is discouraging to see their gifts embraced and put to use in the world but not in the church. The Orthodox woman who works as a chaplain at my local jail ought to be able to bring Communion to Orthodox inmates. Imagine the inspiration of seeing her ordained at the altar so that she could do just that.

With so many calls for renewal of the female diaconate and so many needs that could be meet, why would anyone oppose it?

First, some claim that there is no longer any need for a female diaconate. In the early church, these opponents say, deaconesses anointed and baptized unclothed female converts, but today this function is all but obsolete since few adults enter the Orthodox Church. This objection simply overlooks the many other duties of the diaconate.

The second claim is that, if the Orthodox Church were to ordain women to the diaconate, this would inevitably lead to the ordination of women to the priesthood, which would in turn lead to a massive decline—just as, in this view, the ordination of women has led to the decline of the Anglican Church. This claim overlooks too many important differences between the culture and theology of the Orthodox Church and those of the Anglican Church. More fundamentally, it disregards Orthodoxy's robust understanding of the diaconate as something more than a way station to the priesthood. Nor is it clear that the Anglicans' difficulties can all be attributed to the ordination of women. That doesn't mean that Orthodox Christians should ignore the experience of other churches, but we must take into account the many relevant differences between our tradition and theirs.

The same critics assert that seeing deaconesses at the altar would have an unconscious effect on the faithful, leading to thoughtless support for female priests. There is no doubt that the effect of seeing women serve would indeed be powerful, but the critics underestimate the sophistication of the faithful. They forget that icons of deaconess saints, the celebration of their feast days, and the remembrance of their lives in hymns already surround the faithful, who have internalized this rich legacy. In fact, there is no movement in the Orthodox Church to ordain women to the priesthood, nor has there been anything like a sustained exploration of the matter; the theological spadework simply has not been done. There is plenty of precedent in the Orthodox Church for a female diaconate, none for a female priesthood. Nor is there any support for a female priesthood from the faithful or clergy. This means we ought to be able to discuss the female diaconate on its own merits without confusing the issue.

Finally, some critics worry that reviving the female diaconate—or even acknowledging its history—would erode the Orthodox Church's understanding of men and women as meaningfully different. Given the many ways in which the Orthodox Church's theology, homiletics, iconography, and hymnography support a vision of man and woman as equal but not equivalent, the ordination of deaconesses seems unlikely to compromise this vision. Not ordaining deaconesses may even undermine the Orthodox claim that men and women each have distinctive charisms. For to make this claim while ordaining only men to holy orders skews the entire church toward the masculine charisms. Ordaining deaconesses would allow the distinctive female charisms to benefit the whole church. Refusing to ordain them, lest this be misunderstood as a capitulation to secular trends, sends the wrong message, a message of fear rather than faithfulness.

What would a female diaconate look like today? It would revive the historical roles of deaconesses that are still relevant while also adapting to the church's current needs, as is happening at this very moment in Africa. My ideal vision of the female diaconate in our own time and place would involve allegiance to a bishop, formal ordination, and commitment to *diakonia*—some type of ministerial service, as a chaplain, parish administrator, spiritual advisor, or pastor to women. Ideally, deaconesses would be paid for their services to the church, both to demonstrate that their work is valued and to prevent overwork. A deaconess ought to be vetted, educated, and trained by her bishop.

Then there are the questions of eligibility: How old do deaconesses need to be? Do they need to be married, or unmarried? Early canons stated that a deaconess must be at least sixty; canons from the fifth century lowered that age to forty. These canons are still on the books, but canon law in Orthodoxy is largely particular to time and place. Today it would make sense to make the minimum age for deaconesses the same as that for deacons: twenty-five. As for marital status, there is historical evidence of both celibate and *married* deaconesses. There were even cases of celibate married deaconesses, who were ordained to the diaconate when their husbands became bishops or monks. Today it would make sense to adopt the same discipline for deaconesses as for deacons: that they remain married if already married, and celibate if not.

A women's diaconate would demonstrate that there is a place in the Orthodox Church for women to serve in roles of leadership. Seeing deaconesses offer their gifts to the church, serve at the altar, preach, and be recompensed for their work would demonstrate that women's gifts really are as important as men's, in practice as well as in theory. Just as importantly, it would show that the Orthodox Church is more concerned with fidelity to its own traditions than with keeping up resistance to secular trends. In short, it would demonstrate confidence, not capitulation. ■

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Signs of the Times

Witnessing to a Consistent Ethic of Solidarity

Blase J. Cupich

This summer will mark the thirty-fifth anniversary of the installation of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin as the twelfth bishop and seventh archbishop of Chicago. He served the archdiocese and the church with singular distinction, and is perhaps most remembered for his consistent-ethic-of-life approach to critical issues of the day. He was guided by three convictions: that there was a need to read the signs of the times; that the church's social teaching had a role not just in deciding issues, but also in shaping and defining them; and that the church was uniquely positioned institutionally to promote the common good in society. In pressing these convictions he was revolutionary—and so it's no surprise that, even to this day, he has his critics.

But, nearly four decades after the 1983 address at Fordham University in which he introduced this framework, Bernardin deserves a fresh hearing. He would want us to build on what he did by reading the signs of our times, which I will propose here, makes it clear that the church's social teaching on solidarity, consistently applied across a full range of issues that impact our human interactions, is required. He understood that the urging of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council to read the signs of the times required the church to be fully engaged in the world by being attentive to what was really happening in the lives of real people, the trends and forces influencing policies and public opinion. Only in this way could the church be viewed as a credible and authentic voice for speaking about human affairs. I suspect he would have liked how Pope Francis has captured that sentiment in his pithy phrase "realities are greater than ideas."

In reading the signs of his times, Bernardin was concerned about the futility of treating issues like abortion, capital punishment, nuclear proliferation, and the use of military force as discrete topics. He understood how these issues were divisive in themselves. But he was convinced that a comprehensive commitment to respecting life as a principle connecting these issues would benefit them all. "The purpose of proposing a consistent ethic of life," he said, "is to argue that success on any one of the issues threatening life requires a concern for the broader attitude in society about respect for human life…. The viability of [this] principle depends upon the consistency of its application."

He knew as well that the integrity of Catholic social teaching made it uniquely suited as a framework for holding these issues together under a common principle. How was it, he asked, that the Catholic bishops, virtually alone among leadership groups in American society, found themselves witnessing ardently against both abortion and the nuclear-war policies of the United States? It was the integrity of its teaching—that is, a consistent ethic of life, that set the church apart. As a result, Catholic social teaching would not and could not be fitted into the partisan political framework that governs American public life, then or now.

Yet this also explains the hostility to the consistent-ethic-of-life approach. It asserts that the integrity of Catholic social teaching cannot be contoured to political divides. It asserts that Catholics are called to allegiance to their faith before allegiance to their partisan worldview. And it asserts that the integrity of Catholic teaching must not be undermined by diminishing the importance of key social teachings in political life, even to advance important political goals.

Cardinal Bernardin was also convinced that the church's social-policy role had to go beyond *deciding* key questions in the public debate, arguing it was just as important for the church to take the lead in *defining* such questions. This is how he put it in observing what was accomplished that same year by the bishops' pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*: "The impact of the pastoral was due in part to its specific positions and conclusions, but it was also due to the way it brought the entire nuclear debate under scrutiny." In other words, it shaped the debate going forward, which was also his intention in proposing a consistent ethic of life. Our Catholic faith, accompanied by our long intellectual tradition, he argued, is uniquely able to assist our society in framing the moral calculi we, as a nation, are called to make, to define the terms and the values that should shape our public-policy discussions and decisions, to

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Cardinal Blase J. Cupich speaks before the start of the tenth annual March for Life in Chicago.

CNS PHOTO / KAREN CALLAWAY, CHICAGO CATHOLIC

offer the moral and human vocabulary that is so often lacking in the technocratic paradigms dominant in our culture.

The final principle that guided him was that the church should recognize that it is well positioned as an institution to implement a reshaping of public policy. Our worship, pastoral life, ministries of health care, and education all provide a platform of lived experience where the integrity of Catholic social teaching is on display. In fact, he readily admitted in his Fordham address that he intentionally chose a Catholic university to introduce his consistent-ethic-of-life approach to church teaching, appreciative of the fact that a Catholic university has a particular role in shaping public dialogue. As a community and institution committed to the examination and testing of ideas, a Catholic university does more than repeat and summarize those ideas. Rather, he noted, universities have the noble vocation of determining the impact of new ideas and reflecting on the possibilities for development latent in them.

In fact, I am convinced that the legacy of the cardinal's contribution has been enhanced over the years as Catholic universities live up to his challenging vision. Consider how his words and example have had a continuing impact:

1. There is more awareness of the role of conscience in public life, and the moral dimensions of issues of life and death, war and peace, and who moves ahead and who is left behind in economic life.

2. The substance and language of the consistent ethic of life are in many ways reflected in Catholic teaching, including the U.S. bishops' statements on faithful citizenship and Pope Francis's powerful metaphor of a "throw-away culture."

3. Decades after the Supreme Court legalized abortion, a broad, vibrant, and increasingly young pro-life movement is challenging the violence of abortion and offering life-giving alternatives to abortion to women and children.

4. The use of the death penalty is diminishing as prosecutors, juries, and Catholic and other Americans make the case that you cannot teach that killing is wrong by killing.

5. The church and other moral voices in public life increasingly reflect Cardinal Bernardin's efforts to engage and persuade, not simply to proclaim and judge on issues of life and death, justice and peace.

6. Catholic social teaching, which was often a centerpiece of Cardinal Bernardin's legacy, is increasingly seen as a central part of Catholic life, guiding the church's participation in public life.

7. There is increased understanding of the connections between issues of human life and human dignity (among young people in particular), care for "the least of these" and care for creation, the pursuit of justice and respect for others.

Cardinal Bernardin's call for moral consistency, institutional integrity, and building bridges across political, ideological, and ecclesial lines is reflected in the best of Catholic and interfaith witness and advocacy. In short, many life issues formerly treated in isolation and considered unrelated are now discussed in the same context and within a shared moral framework.

What Cardinal Bernardin did in introducing his consistent ethic of life was nothing short of revolutionary, which is why he had his critics—both within and outside the church. Some unfairly charged that his approach ended up making all life issues morally equivalent. Others suggested that the consistent ethic of life diminishes a commitment to resist abortion. He disagreed, and so do I. A full and consistent commitment to human life and dignity and to solidarity will enhance, not diminish, our defense of children and women victimized by the violence of abortion. As Pope Francis has said, "It is not 'progressive' to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life." And it is not conservative either.

Happily, despite suffering the distortions and misunderstanding of his critics, Bernardin lived long enough to see the impact of his approach. And I suspect he smiled when he heard Saint John Paul II use the phrase a "consistent ethic of life" in an address to a group of U.S. bishops in 1993 on the meaning and purpose of human sexuality. It is also noteworthy that the Holy See used the term in addressing the United Nations on the need to safeguard the human rights of all forcibly displaced people.

But the best way to honor what he did is to apply in our day the three convictions that guided him. What are the signs of the times? What can we retrieve from our Catholic social teaching to present challenges? And how can our institutional resources be used to shape a response going forward?

The world has changed a great deal over the past thirty-five years—or for that matter, the past two. Our time is plagued by global terrorism and threatened by global warming and the exploitation of limited resources. Many people are excluded by unchecked forces of economic exploitation and globalization, and others are left homeless or forced to migrate by wars and privation. As a result, we have become fearful of one another in a world marked by great divisions over race, ethnicity, religion, and place of origin.

Without oversimplifying, the challenge for us today is not only that the issues are in silos, separated one from another; it is also that people, in their social networks and through the media they consult, are in silos, bereft of challenge or debate, isolated by differences of opinion or politics, race or social class, in a way that obscures our shared humanity and the ties that historically have united us as a nation of immigrants. It is not too strong to say that this sense of disconnectedness is being legitimized not only by voices in the streets, but also by those in the halls of governance here and around the world, giving rise to xenophobia, nationalism, populism, and racial intolerance. All of this makes entire populations more vulnerable to disturbing influences that only further divide while pretending to offer as solutions distorted views of the role of the economy and politics, how we relate to other nations, and how to deal with global conflicts.

I am convinced that just as Cardinal Bernardin proposed that an ethic of life be consistently applied to unite all life issues, we need in our day to mine the church's social teaching on solidarity, as a means of uniting humanity through a reawakening of our interdependence as a human family, which Pope John Paul II called for in his groundbreaking encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, and which Pope Francis is advocating in his writings. Solidarity needs to be applied consistently to all our human interactions, John Paul II wrote three decades ago, calling us to "see the 'other'—whether a person, people or nation...as our 'neighbor,' a 'helper'...a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God." "World leaders," he continued, likewise need "to recognize that interdependence in itself demands the abandonment of the politics of blocs, the sacrifice of all forms of economic, military, or political imperialism, and the transformation of mutual distrust into collaboration. This is precisely the act proper to solidarity among individuals and nations."

We should not be naïve about the resistance that an ethic of solidarity, consistently applied, will meet. It will make demands on how we live our personal lives, and how we view our national agenda and our role in the family of nations. But the first demand according to the Compendium of Catholic Social Teaching is that it will require "men and women of our day [to] cultivate a greater awareness that they are debtors of the society of which they have become a part. They are debtors because of those conditions that make human existence livable, and because of the indivisible and indispensable legacy constituted by culture, scientific and technical knowledge, material and immaterial goods, and by all that the human condition has produced." "A similar debt must be recognized in the various forms of social interaction," the compendium continues, "so that humanity's journey will not be interrupted but remain open to present and future generations, all of them called together to share the same gift in solidarity."

Let me now offer some examples of what an ethic of solidarity consistently applied to the range of issues of our day looks like. The principle of solidarity would critique a narrow approach to the economy that uses a one-dimensional measure of the economic growth of a nation, singularly defined by profits, that promotes policies that maximize the freedom of markets and individual choice, and that believes that market forces left to themselves are the best—indeed, the only—arbiters of economic progress. This narrow approach has produced "an economy that kills," as Pope Francis has said. In its place, a consistent ethic of solidarity would argue that inclusion and economic security for all are the measures of economic health and the criteria for economic decision-making. Solidarity produces the kind of social-market economy that John Paul II advocated, which involves, as Pope Francis noted, passing from a liquid economy "directed at revenue profiting from

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich blesses a rosary during a Thanksgiving dinner put on by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

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speculation and lending at interest, to a social economy that invests in persons creating jobs and providing training."

Solidarity also challenges a transactional approach to international relations. I have already quoted from John Paul II's *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, which called world leaders to recognize the interdependence of all members of the human family and to promote a solidarity that serves peace and human development and unites rich and poor in a relationship that lifts up the most vulnerable.

John Paul II also wrote in that encyclical that it would be a desertion of a nation's moral obligation for it to care only for its own well-being: "If a nation were to succumb more or less deliberately to the temptation to close in upon itself and failed to meet the responsibilities following from its superior position in the community of nations, it would fall seriously short of its clear ethical duty."

His words have much to say to us in the present climate, on a number of levels. Today, the lines between nationalism and patriotism seem to be blurred. San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy reminded us in his talk at the *Erroneous Autonomy* symposium this past year that our nation's sense of being exceptional has never been a done deal; it has always been an aspiration, a work in progress, something that we strive to live up to in each generation. Pope Francis said as much in his closing remarks to the joint session of Congress in 2015: "A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty, as Lincoln did; when it fosters a culture that enables people to 'dream' of full rights for all their brothers and sisters, as Martin Luther King sought to do; when it strives for justice and the cause of the oppressed, as Dorothy Day did by her tireless work."

John Paul II's words about a leading nation's moral obligation in building solidarity in the world should force us to examine closely the calls to reignite an arms race, which from all angles will seriously reduce the capacity of our nation to address the root causes of violence in our world: social, political, and economic exclusion.

The question is not whether there should be military spending, but what is the needed proportion so that other ways of making us safe, secure, and whole are not neglected. Our nation already spends more on its military than any other nation on earth. It has been estimated that the world spent about $1.6 trillion on military funding in 2015. U.S. military spending amounted to about 37 percent of this total, equaling the spending of the next seven nations with the largest military budgets—and many of those seven are our allies.

At the same time, dramatic cuts are being proposed in poverty-reducing humanitarian and development assistance that helps address the root causes of conflict. Here is a small sample gleaned by staff at Catholic Relief Services, the official relief and development agency of the U.S. bishops: a 21 percent cut in Title II Food Aid at a time with a record number of famines; a 20 percent cut in development

assistance that funds such priorities as basic education, democracy-building initiatives, human rights, agriculture, and employment; a 17 percent cut in U.S. refugee admissions at a time when the number of displaced people is at its highest since World War II; dramatic reductions in key global health programs, including a 13 percent cut in the fight against polio, a 13 percent cut in nutrition assistance, a 34 percent cut to an account for vulnerable children, a 19 percent cut for addressing tuberculosis, and many others.

Surveys show that if you ask the average American how much of our federal budget is spent on international assistance, they answer between 20 and 25 percent. If you ask them, how much the U.S. *should* spend, they say 10 percent. When they find out that non-military international aid is less than 1 percent, they are incredulous. What would it mean if funding levels actually reflected the values average Americans say they want embodied in our government expenditures?

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These are but a few examples of how an ethic of solidarity, consistently applied to the full range of issues that impact our human living, has the potential of reshaping the debate at a time the nation and the world are deeply divided, and vulnerable to influences that only deepen the fears at the heart of that division. An ethic of solidarity offers a language and a vision, reminding us who we are as a nation—but also what it means to live together in this common home, as the Holy Father calls Earth in *Laudato si'*.

Cardinal Bernardin's consistent ethic of life has led me to once again take up the work of reading the signs of the times and pursuing a path that aspires to define the issues of the day so that the good of humanity will be served by our witness. Just as he did in his day, I now leave it up to all Catholics, and especially Catholic universities, to reflect on and develop ways to apply the church's teaching on solidarity. There is much work to do. We continue to be haunted by the threat of nuclear war and nuclear weapons. Headlines about North Korea and the ongoing debates about Iran's nuclear ambitions highlight the continuing wisdom of the pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons. The number of abortions has gone down significantly in the United States, but the violence of abortion continues to haunt our society, and there are new pressures to require cooperation with what we believe is the taking of innocent human life. Our nation is still divided about whether decent healthcare is a human right or a commodity that depends on personal resources. In some states assisted suicide is advocated, in the knowledge that the pressures to end life will probably be more severe on the poor, the isolated, those with disabilities, and those without access to palliative care. The question of national priorities continues to haunt us as leaders advocate steep increases in military spending, renewed investment in nuclear arms, and cuts in the safety net at home and in diplomacy and development around the world. And so, again, no one should be surprised if voices are raised in opposition to an ethic of solidarity, for when consistently applied, it will make demands on us all.

Cardinal Bernardin was convinced that the church should not shy away from her unique contribution, even if it meant standing apart from the prisms of political decision-making used by other groups, even if the integrity of our social teaching was met with hostility because it could not be made to fit into the partisan political framework that governs American public life. But, as we remain undaunted in our witness to the world, let us also take up the task before us in a way that does not confuse firmness and resolve with a lack of respect for others in the debate. It would be good to once again return to Cardinal Bernardin's talk at Fordham, which he closed with sage advice about carrying on the debate of serious public issues with civility and mutual respect: "I suggest," he offered, "a style governed by the following rule: We should maintain and clearly articulate our religious convictions but also maintain our civil courtesy. We should be vigorous in stating a case and attentive in hearing another's case; we should test everyone's logic but not question his or her motives."

He could offer that advice because he was convinced that the church had so much more to offer the world than what could be gained by the world's approval. Pope Francis calls us to that same sense of pride as he presses forward in building a world marked by solidarity, unafraid of how our witness will be received: "Serving means working beside the neediest of people, establishing with them first and foremost human relationships of closeness and bonds of solidarity. Solidarity, this is a word that frightens the developed world. People try to avoid saying it. Solidarity to them is almost a bad word. But it is our word." ■

Raymond with members of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest at Saint Francis de Sales Oratory. Photo by Phillip B. Roussin.

No One Expects the Inquisition

My Adventures with Cardinal Burke & the ICKSP

Eric Brende

A little-publicized event with not-so-little significance took place recently in St. Louis. At a Catholic church near downtown, Cardinal Raymond Burke said the traditional Latin Mass on a Saturday morning for a youthful contingent rallying around him. Many of these youth are closely tied to a traditional religious order whose older members Burke also travels to St. Louis to shepherd. Burke is one of four cardinals openly contesting the wisdom of new church policies under Pope Francis.

For those who haven't been following the debate, Burke (along with Walter Brandmüller, Carlo Caffarra, and Joachim Meisner) has made public a question first posed privately to the pope in response to his recent revision of church practices regarding Communion and divorced couples. The changes allow more latitude to local bishops in setting policies that take greater account of individual circumstances. If, say, an abandoned spouse without an annulment wants to return to full participation in the church after having remarried, there may now be new pastoral options. Previously, such a person was banished from Communion unless she resolved to live as a celibate. In his apostolic exhortation *Amoris laetitia*, Pope Francis seemed to invite his fellow bishops to allow more wiggle room.

Burke and the other three cardinals asked whether or not this change, besides contradicting past church teaching, would make the faith too subjective and open to the vagaries of conscience. The pope refrained from answering directly, although other cardinals have criticized the questioners for undermining Francis. Pundits on the other side criticize the pope for his silence and for failing to rein in what they view as attempts to stifle discussion among church prelates.

But the real question goes beyond these ecclesial skirmishes: What is the nature of the institution we call the Catholic Church? And what is the proper relationship between the hierarchy and the laity? Are uniformity and top-down authority all-or-nothing propositions? Should the pope and

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PHILLIP B. ROUSSIN

bishops consider themselves engineers of a kind of machine built of interchangeable human parts? Or might it be better to think of the church as a living organism, whose human members exercise a certain latitude befitting their free will and personal circumstance? Which model does the clergy follow: Henry Ford or Jesus?

Until the Second Vatican Council of the early 1960s, the church tilted decidedly in the former direction, functioning much like a spiritual vending machine that dispensed everything from vouchers to heaven in return for reciting a specified number of Hail Marys, to writs of excommunication for overdue books at the Vatican library. Since that time, the church has sometimes lurched to the other extreme. In the era of Pope Francis, the question is all about balance. I do believe the post–Vatican II lurch went too far—many in the church would identify me as a "conservative"—but at this moment, I side with Francis and against Burke. In fact, as a parishioner of the church where Burke recently came to say Mass, I recently walked out in protest over his appearance. I know, alas too well, how he operates. I have an inkling of the sort of church he envisions, and it is even more depressing than the old spiritual vending machine.

To understand Burke's world, one must understand the religious order whose youthful sympathizers attended his recent Mass in St. Louis: the Institute for Christ the King, Sovereign Priest (ICKSP). Their ties could not be closer. While bishop of St. Louis, Burke invited this same organization to take over the second-largest church sanctuary in the diocese. Burke not only returns to say Masses for the institute and perform its ordinations, but also accompanies members on pilgrimages in Europe. ICKSP boasts that its Masses in St. Louis draw more attendants than any other traditional Latin rituals in North America.

As its name suggests, ICKSP, like Burke, tilts toward the top-down vision of Catholicism. Only the model it emulates isn't a Ford factory. It is the French aristocracy. The apex of Catholic culture, in the eyes of Monsignor Gilles Wach, ICKSP's founder, was pre-Revolutionary France, when clergy ranked above the nobility in the social echelons. A priest belonged to the First Estate; and you'd bow in his presence as with the highborn. Among ICKSP priests, French is the official language, even in Missouri.

Before we had any inkling of what ICKSP was all about, my family and I ventured into its St. Louis citadel—the massive edifice of St. Francis de Sales. It was only a few blocks from our house. Enthralled by the beauty of the music and the setting, and willing to overlook almost anything to avoid tacky Masses, we got more involved. True, we never quite felt part of the group. Was it the exaggerated servility of many of the lay people? The high-handedness of the priests? The frilly frocks and regalia? (Burke, among high prelates, is also known for his luxuriant ermine cape).

Outwardly, ICKSP (unlike the Society of Pius X) maintains unity with the larger, postconciliar Church. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been granted space in a building that used to serve as the cathedral of an archdiocese. It wouldn't be able to gain entry in parishes across America's major metropolitan areas, like Chicago, greater New York, and the Bay Area. It wouldn't now be growing by leaps and bounds and inspiring dynamic para-organizations for young people. But when I privately asked one of the resident priests, Canon Karl Lenhardt, what he thought of the Second Vatican Council, he was dismissive. Privately and unofficially, ICKSP stalwarts scorn the postconciliar church, deny that the Vatican II carries doctrinal authority, and are, in essence, following through on these convictions by setting down the infrastructure for a sort of parallel or shadow church within the church.

Uneasy about such intimations, I murmured my misgivings to a couple of other parishioners after one of them had first shared misgivings of her own. But having joined the choir, I still attended Mass at St. Francis de Sales twice a month to take part in the music. I also helped put together a homeschooling cooperative that met on Fridays in an adjoining building. It was not overseen by ICKSP but by parents who went to Mass at St. Francis de Sales, and it was the only option available to my home-schooled children for an organized social outlet anywhere near us in greater St. Louis. Although I wasn't on board with the larger ICKSP agenda, I reasoned that we are all part of the same church, the same Christian family. I'd never been in perfect agreement with the policies of any parish I'd belonged to. Life is a trade-off. Aren't Christians, in particular, called to bear with one another? What I still didn't know was that ICKSP had (and may still have) an interesting way of handing out rewards and punishments. You rise in the organization by reporting on the disloyal. And if you are accused of disloyalty, well…

On a beautiful September evening, my wife and I were led into a lavishly adorned courtly chamber where a panel of accusers, a stenographer, and the presiding judge, Canon Lenhardt, sat in wait. The list of charges against us was long, bizarre, and highly debatable. But the deeper, unstated accusation was no doubt true: I was not one of them. The main two informants were the two people with whom I'd privately shared my misgivings. They'd done some embellishing.

I will admit to a few lapses on my part. When a bishop attends an ICKSP Mass, there is an additional preparatory rite, a kind of ritual dressing in which the altar boys lovingly drape His Excellency with lacy vestments. The first time it happened, I couldn't contain myself. It went on for so long, it looked so fetishistic, that at last I choked back a guffaw. I sensed a ripple of disapproval spreading around me.

Another time I made a lame attempt at humor when conversing with the choir director. I forget now just how it came up, but I said that once I became elevated to the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences, I would redefine driving a car as

a mortal sin. It was supposed to be a joke. The choir director knew I'm a bicycling fanatic. But somehow in that jokey moment, I had failed to factor in the obvious: the vast majority of ICKSP participants drive to church from great distances, typically in large vans. So does the choir director. She was not amused.

Under the home-schooling arrangements I had helped set up, every parent had a voice in policies and a role to play in its weekly sessions. Nothing could have been less consonant with the openly authoritarian governing policies of ICKSP, but somehow the plan had been allowed to go through. Yet all too predictably, after a semester of smoothly running classes and activities, Canon Lenhardt began simply telling us what to do, sometimes by direct fiat, sometimes in league with a parent who became his maidservant-in-waiting.

A family acquaintance who was a fixture of the surroundings when we arrived at St. Francis de Sales, broke down and bemoaned his intervention (the moment of murmured misgiving already mentioned). This acquaintance—let's call her "Doris"—gave notice that, if Canon Lenhardt kept meddling, she would withdraw her family from the co-op. I admitted that I, too, was struggling with what to make of him. Then came a final, fateful lapse. Having learned from a well-placed source that Canon Lenhardt was about to be transferred, I tried to put Doris's mind to rest. "The matter is already being handled," I told her.

"What?" she cried. "Is Father Lenhardt being transferred?" She had read my mind just like that. I was mortified. I wasn't supposed to say anything about the transfer. It was possible that Lenhardt himself did not yet know about it. I didn't confirm anything, and Doris became angry. I asked her why she was upset. "You won't tell me if Father Lenhardt is going to be transferred!" she wailed, and hung up the phone. I had dangled juicy information in front without letting her in on the secret. The offense would not go unpunished.

At the hearing, Doris put her own complaint about Lenhardt in my mouth. She accused me of leaking news of the transfer. (Lenhardt didn't find out for sure until weeks later, and since Doris shared her guess with others in the meantime, the wait was most awkward for him.) And the weekly co-op I'd helped organize and in which Doris had taken part was now described as an attempt on my part to subvert ICKSP. The commiseration I'd shared privately was transmuted into calumny. Some other charges were patently untrue or distorted the truth beyond recognition. As my accusers summarized their case, I was guilty of "undermining a priest in his own domain."

When the recital of villainies was finished, I could barely breathe. I felt the wheels of doom inexorably turning. I tried to wheeze out a sentence or two in my defense but the words seemed strangely inane and, in any event, were overridden or shouted down. Whatever I said was a "lie." My parting memory, as Doris's husband lunged to evict us from the room, is of Canon Lenhardt, in the midst of the uproar, smirking as he solemnly declared, "I think this is just."

Saint Francis de Sales Oratory

PHILLIP B. ROUSSIN

We had been expelled from the home-schooling cooperative and, in effect, from the community. Soon thereafter, my accusers became the co-op's co-leaders.

If ICKSP borrows its manners and language from France, it takes its judicial cues from old Spain. But at least the Inquisition allowed time for the accused to prepare a defense and an adequate opportunity to answer the charges. We weren't even allowed to have a copy of the accusations when we asked for one shortly after the event. It was as if they had been written in disappearing ink.

In view of these procedural irregularities and Burke's special relationship to this group, I made an attempt to bring the "trial" to his attention. It seemed an appropriate step. By then he was head of the church's highest court in Rome, the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura. (He would later be transferred by Pope Francis to the purely ceremonial position of head of the Knights of Malta). I knew Burke a little. When Pope Benedict assigned him to St. Louis, I heard he was interested in promoting the family farm. As a fan of the Amish myself—I've lived with and written extensively about them—I arranged to meet with Burke and present him with a book I'd written about their way of life and work. He seemed impressed. From time to time, while he was still bishop here, we kept up contact.

After an exchange of letters, Burke first assured me he hoped to achieve reconciliation. But later he let it be known through the new priest at ICKSP, Canon Michael Wiener, that he would let the ruling stand. Our heads could indeed

roll. Curiously, Burke made a side note that he thought our accusers had "exaggerated" and that our punishment had been "disproportionate." But in response to a second appeal on my part, he sent a message through the papal nuncio in Washington commanding us to "forgive" and move on. I needed to get the whole thing out of my mind.

And Burke had probably wanted to get it out of his. It was he who had told me about Lenhardt's transfer. I had made the mistake of meeting with him about the difficulties I was having with ICKSP. Sympathetic though he had been to my plight at the time, he couldn't very well let it get out that he had shared sensitive information with a lay person about a priest's transfer before the priest himself knew about it. Burke had his own reputation to think about.

And so a prince of the church, a man willing to face off publicly with the pope, was not willing to confer privately with his own followers to undo a misfortune that arose, in part, as the consequences of his own indiscretion. He cited technical reasons in canon law for not intervening. I now can state my inkling of Burke's vision of ecclesial governance: the clergy are right even when they're wrong. The machinery of the church must go on, and if its gears chew up a few unfortunates, too bad.

I'm afraid to report that what happened to me was hardly unique. I learned that shortly before my ordeal another active volunteer, who had donated even more of his time and talent to ICKSP, was removed from his position by means of a similar ambush with similarly questionable motives (those who angled for his demotion stood to gain from it). Of course, any community of any size will in time be beset by personality conflicts, misunderstandings, gossip, and estrangement. But ICKSP's ad hoc inquisitions underscore my reservations about its agenda for the church and raise a few new ones. Authoritarian organizations are not known for their attention to procedural niceties—the right to defend oneself, the presumption of innocence, etc.—much less the willingness of a good shepherd to risk his and his flock's comfort for the sake of a single lost lamb. Rather, it seems as though a lamb must be abandoned from time to time in order to shore up the community's sense of identity.

Given the rapidly expanding, surprisingly youthful entourage under the mantel of ICKSP, I fear that the machinery has taken on a life of its own, that a past we all thought had been laid to rest is now mindlessly replicating itself. Worse, as this shadow church grows, the unity implied in the very word "catholic" is jeopardized. It is even now giving way to an open breach that faintly corresponds to the present stand-off in American politics, each side staring down the other, unable even to speak to the other, constantly studying to thwart the other's every move. The Catholic charism is being replaced by a chasm.

On ICKSP's side, I know, the gears will be hard to stop. Many like myself will continue to wander in, drawn by the desire for beauty and solemnity. It's easy enough to take a step in the door. But not necessarily as pleasant to leave. ■

THREE POEMS
By Jack Lindeman

BEFORE ME

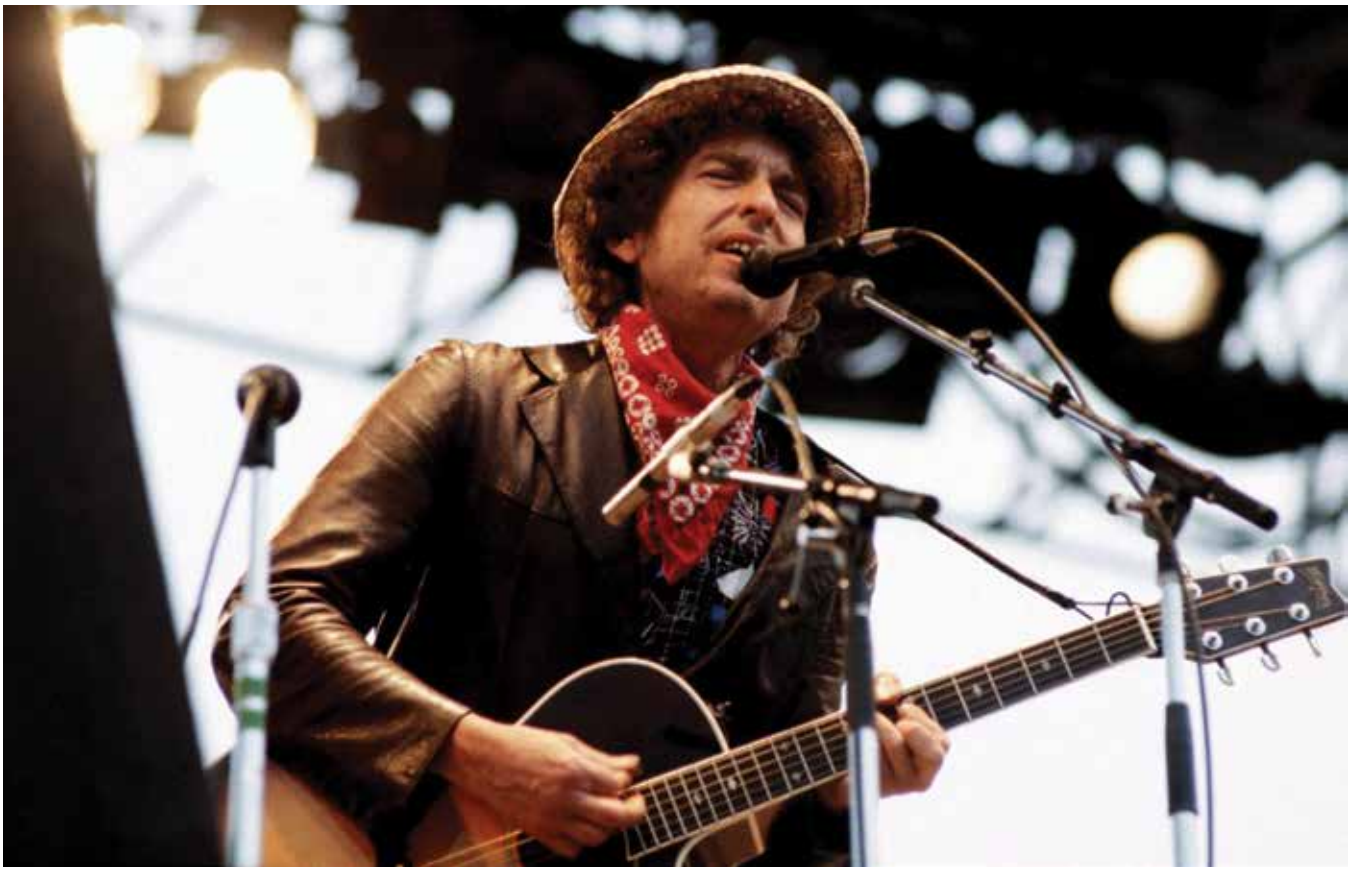
It was there
always and ever
and I had not seen it
sitting in the same chair
staring but not seeing
anything before me
while wanting
to be in some other place
I had never been
though imagining always
where it must be

PERHAPS

When you sat down
I thought you would stay
as if being here
was always
where you wanted to be
with someone sitting beside you
resembling who you would always need

THERE

I am there
where I always wanted to be
in that place with sunlight
and the rock
and the man
perhaps myself
with a stick in his hand
and the ocean so far
he can't wet
even his smallest finger



Bob Dylan in 1984

AF ARCHIVE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Pete Candler

Tangled Up in Bob

DYLAN'S UNIQUELY AMERICAN VOICE

I remember the first time I heard that voice. A suitemate in college, a Pennsylvanian, was blaring "Who Killed Davey Moore" from the back room, the nasally wail filling the air like paint fumes. From the front room, Ernie, from Perquimans County, North Carolina, couldn't take it any more. "Turn that crap off!" he hollered, to no avail.

I didn't know who killed Davey Moore, but I felt as though the question was being directed at me. My reaction to hearing Bob Dylan for the first time was more intrigue than annoyance, a sort of surprise that anyone with a voice like that could get a recording contract, much less become famous. I was a latecomer to Dylan's music, and despite a college friend's proselytizing, it did not take at first. I assumed it was—like coolness—something for other people.

I don't know when exactly it did begin to take, but within a few years I had *Oh Mercy* (1989) in heavy rotation. I turned to it first not because of Dylan himself but because of the record's producer, Daniel Lanois. The album is moody, atmospheric, dark—haunted, one might say, by "The Man in the Long Black Coat," who seems to stalk the borders of *Oh Mercy* with brooding menace.

> Somebody seen him hanging around
> At the old dance hall on the outskirts of town
> He looked into her eyes when she stopped him to ask
> If he wanted to dance, he had a face like a mask
> Somebody said from the Bible he'd quote
> There was dust on the man
> In the long black coat

He seems to have walked right out of a Flannery O'Connor story and into a Bob Dylan song, bearing on his bent back all "the pulse and vibration and the rumbling force" of a world seething with dark mystery. He presages the apocalyptic melancholy of the album's final song, "Shooting Star":

> It's the last temptation, the last account
> The last time you might hear the sermon on the mount
> The last radio is playing

By the time of *Oh Mercy*, Dylan had cruised into a winsome world-weariness, and his voice was starting to show cracks. That album marks Dylan's transition into a new vocal signature—the gargling sage. Since then, his voice has become so dis-

tinct that it is no longer possible to imitate it.

No other American singer has tried on as many voices as Dylan has. His early albums owed a lot to Woody Guthrie, both in terms of material and vocal style. Within a few years, Dylan changed tack, to the smoke-free country voice of *John Wesley Harding* and especially *Nashville Skyline*. There he sang from a different part of the throat, farther back, as if reaching deeper into the confused tangle of the American musical psyche. A decade later, there was the Budokan voice, then the albums from the 1980s, such as *Infidels*, in which the old folk twang from Greenwich Village is still just barely audible. But by then the cracks in the larynx were beginning to appear. By the 1990s the old voice was almost entirely gone.

In 1997, Dylan released *Time Out of Mind*, his first collection of original music since *Oh Mercy* and also produced by Daniel Lanois. When *Time Out of Mind* opens with "Love Sick," the voice is a haunting whisper-echo of what it once was. More and more, it is a steel rake dragged behind a V-8 Ford truck on a loose gravel road. But it also sounds controlled: every crack and gurgle precisely placed, the alternating timbre of tenderness and harshness, darkness and light, intentional. At the end of each line of "Not Dark Yet," Dylan's voice trails off:

Well, I've been to London and I've been to gay Paree
I've followed the river and I got to the sea
I've been down on the bottom of a world full of lies
I ain't looking for nothing in anyone's eyes
Sometimes my burden seems more than I can bear
It's not dark yet, but it's getting there

In his two most recent albums of Sinatra covers, *Shadows in the Night* (2015) and *Fallen Angels* (2016), the familiar scratch in the throat emerges only rarely from underneath the gliding, wee-hour cadence of the vocals, like a sudden crackling ember from the steady fire that seems to burn warm but not hot throughout both of these albums. The voice—self-possessed, unhurried, settled-in—is that of a lover who neither needs nor desires to go anywhere.

One of Dylan's more remarkable but less recognized achievements is the now-defunct *Theme Time Radio Hour*, an old-school variety show that ran on new-school satellite radio from 2006 to 2009. For each one-hour episode, Dylan curated a repertoire of songs organized around a single motif. He adopted a special, hitherto untried voice: the radio DJ. Listening to the program, one became aware just how much control over his voice Dylan really has. The uninitiated listener who stumbles upon *Love and Theft* or *Modern Times* might have the impression of a singer who has lost mastery over his own wild instrument—a singer who, despite his efforts to corral his voice into something intelligible and vaguely melodic, has yielded to the inevitable depredations of age. But *Theme Time* shows Dylan in utter control, and the voice has accrued a sort of sonic patina of hard-earned wisdom, the timbre of worn truth. *Theme Time*, probably the best thing that satellite radio ever gave us, offers Dylan a chance to strut his archivist-scholar persona. His knowledge of the American Songbook is encyclopedic: in the first episode, on the theme of weather, he summons the voices of Muddy Waters, Jimmie Davis, Jimi Hendrix, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Stevie Wonder, Frank Sinatra, the Staple Singers, and the Carter Family. It's a thematic snapshot of American music in all its bright and vast array.

Dylan seems to bear these other voices within his own. They rattle together in his protean growl. He has given almost as much attention to the American tradition in popular music as he has to his own original songwriting, whose roots burrow deep into the soil of that tradition. All the borrowing from other artists has, paradoxically, made Dylan's voice unique. It has only improved with age—that nasally snarl, that gravelly croak, that rock grinder in his larynx. It is an American river: stony, deep, muddy.

His influences are as vast as the Mississippi, and he has openly acknowledged his debt to them, frequently recording (as in his last two albums) collections of covers made famous by other artists before him. Dylan's corpus is ecumenical in its ambition to leave nothing out. Much of its uniqueness consists in a refusal to stay put, a relentless quest for surprise. Even a finished song is never really complete: what you hear on the album recording may be nothing like what you hear in concert. In a live performance now, it may be a few bars before you realize that what you're hearing is "Tangled Up in Blue," as strange and alive as it ever was. Dylan is a particularly nomadic sort of minstrel, wandering the American musical landscape without ever getting lost, and the forward thrust of his songwriting has always been proportional to the depth of his musical memory. He is always one step ahead of his audience, and one step behind.

When he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, there was no shortage of understandable grumbling from poets and writers who questioned whether Dylan's body of work counts as literature. Even if it does, they wondered aloud, was it worthy of the award? It may be true that, read on the page, without the music, Dylan's lyrics do not compare favorably with the work of other great contemporary writers. But those lyrics cannot be separated from the organism of song. Taking them on their own is like taking the heart out of a body and laying it on the examining table. Even if it could still beat on its own, what good would it be? It is easy to understand why Dylan's lyrics have been so celebrated—for one thing, it gives those who don't like his voice something else to admire. But Dylan is not just a writer or a singer. And his voice is not only unique. It is a tradition. ■

Pete Candler *studied theology and literature at Wake Forest University and the University of Cambridge, and taught at Baylor University until 2013. He now writes fiction and essays in Asheville, North Carolina.*

Two Poems by Michael Cadnum

THE BEE

A ricochet,
she races, lingers,
hurries to be forgotten,
the single vowel of a teeming alphabet,
too small to carry meaning.
Privation and bright colors,

these are what stir the amber full-stop,
this fragment made of hunger.
Dawn too cool,
noon too hot, where is peace
for this searcher? The chapter is the same,
beginning and beginning,

another blossom with a secret nearly as sweet
as its promise.
Almost followed by almost,

she survives beyond knowledge.
Even her dance of distance and direction
is the gavotte of decimals learning a new
place among the zeroes, notes finding a new
high-point within the octave as she

zig-zags, color to color,
clover to fuchsia to sage
in the only daylight.

BEE SWARM

Diving into its own intensity,
getting all the time greater
in noise and force. A frantic, powerful
entity not connected with the dawn or the night,
an inflamed person risen up furiously
primed, and not nearly finished, getting
greater in girth and sound

with a timbre like a gregorian single-note, a swell of voices
enthralled by its own harmonics.
A slowly lifting gordian knot
of riot that sparks
flint-chips, amber arrowpoints, a fighting host
hovering and casting a boiling shadow
above the sidewalk where the frail ivy
has just the day before been
tucked into the erosion-wrinkled land,

the wan green flags of the novice ground-cover nothing,
not even living, compared with this
muscled rage that by an hour's
tumult is absent, gone, two or three
spent winged splinters of the once-great
concord left behind on the ground,
while everything else has swept onward
to the places where day hides its power.

Michael Cadnum's thirty-sixth book is The Early Dark: Micro-poetry and Ultra-flash fiction *(Horse Eagle Press).*

Kate Massinger

Nose to the Glass

'SMALL WONDERS: GOTHIC BOXWOOD MINIATURES AT THE MET CLOISTERS'

In one room of the museum, every visitor bent at the knees. Many of us squinted. The Met Cloisters is a place of grand gestures—magnificent tapestries, airy stone hallways, carpets of flowers, a view from a hill. But at this particular exhibit, we observers took time to see the small. The woman next to me accidentally bumped her nose against the glass case she was crouching to inspect. She giggled with embarrassment, but her eager curiosity wasn't out of place. She, like all of us, just wanted a closer look.

Small Wonders: Gothic Boxwood Miniatures, which was on view at the Cloisters through late May, featured a collection of early sixteenth-century Netherlandish carvings: all fashioned from boxwood, and all impossibly tiny. There were prayer beads, altarpieces, triptychs, and sarcophagi, some just two inches in diameter. One rosary belonged to King Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Indeed, all the exhibited pieces were originally intended to aid the royal or wealthy in their devotions. All were simply displayed in low glass cases in a quiet, brick-floored room of the Cloisters.

Boxwood is good for carving: smooth, fine-grained, dense, a lovely shade that ranges from butterscotch to chocolate. According to an old book displayed at the front of the exhibit, boxwood soaked in lye was an old beauty treatment, believed to cause blond hair. More to the point, boxwood has biblical associations. Some say the cross was made of boxwood; some churches wave boxwood clippings on Palm Sunday. The wood is a fitting material for religious artifacts, which is what these small wonders are. They set biblical scenes: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion (see cover), Jonah and the whale, Abraham and Isaac. They show off saints and angels. Little coffins remind us of death; Latin inscriptions remind us of truth.

What's most miraculous about the miniatures—what compelled us all to bend and squint and refocus our eyes—is that they are *so very small*. The carver has rendered tendrils of beard (the size of dandelion wisps), tree leaves (no larger than pencil shavings), thread-thick lines of mortar between bricks, couscous-small horses and sheep. He has detailed robes, sandals, and facial expressions on figures smaller than an infant's fingernail. One bead, depicting the Gospel scene in which Jesus overturns the moneychangers' tables at the Temple, includes a tiny cage full of doves. When the bead moves, the doves flit. The miniatures also feature lines of hymns and prayers, etched with toothpick precision. They would be completely adorable, if they weren't also undeniably masterful.

What's even more impressive is that these creations are panoramas with perspective. Each piece has two parts: an outer shell, and an interior with inset reliefs, revealed when a bead is cracked open or little altar doors are swung wide. Tiny objects populate both foreground and background. Planes were carved separately like theatrical flats, then layered and joined with miniscule pegs. Increasingly smaller disks create depth. The overall effect is that of a complete world suspended and shrunk. One feels the characters will leap back into motion as soon as the object is fastened shut.

Nobody knows whether these miniatures were the output of a single artist or of a team. Experts note tiny differences in carving style, technique, and quality. Are these signs of more than one craftsman, or a single artist with developing taste? What's certain is that the work was painstaking. A set of contemporaneous miniature tools is on display: chisels the thickness of almond slivers, a pair of cracked, delicate pince-nez. In 1530, output halted, perhaps because of the artist's death, perhaps because of the Reformation.

The miniatures represent a tactile spirituality, an artisan's skill meant to awe queens into closeness with God. Some of the beads were designed to hold perfume or to be worn from belts. Some come with cases of silver or cloth. These miniatures were meant to be carried, touched, used.

Don't touch the art. The refrain has been drilled into us since childhood. Our oily, clumsy hands will only make a mess. But looking at these miniatures, one desperately wishes the glass were gone—that we, like kings, could once again hold these worlds in our palms. ■

Kate Massinger *is an MFA candidate in Nonfiction at Columbia University, and a former intern at* Commonweal. *Follow her on Twitter @kmassinger.*

Rosary of Floris van Egmond and Margaretha van Glymes, Netherlandish, 1500–1539, Musée du Louvre

IMAGE: © MUSÉE DU LOUVRE, PHOTO: CRAIG BOYKO / IAN LEFEBVRE, PARIS (OA 5610)

William H. Pritchard

The Laureate of Loneliness

Housman Country
Into the Heart of England
Peter Parker
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $30, 544 pp.

In his great essay "Inside the Whale," George Orwell set out to make a case for the freshness of a writer named Henry Miller, in whom Orwell found a "friendly American voice, with no humbug about it, nor moral purpose, merely an implicit assumption that we are all alike." The essay is in three parts, the first and last devoted to praising Miller; the middle (and most interesting) section consists of nineteen closely packed pages about English writers and their political and social attitudes in the 1930s. Though W. H. Auden looms large among them, Orwell begins with a poet very unlike the "committed" 1930s poets, and a long way indeed from Henry Miller: A. E. Housman.

In the years prior to and following World War I, Orwell writes, Housman had an influence, especially on adolescents like himself, that was as enormous as it was difficult to understand. In his own early manhood Orwell knew most of *A Shropshire Lad* by heart, as did many of his friends, and he cites, by way of explanation, the appeal of its "country" setting (those "blue remembered hills"), its pessimism, its cynicism about God, and its message that life is short and mainly not sweet.

Orwell seems uncomfortable about his romance with the poet, citing one of Housman's most available poems—

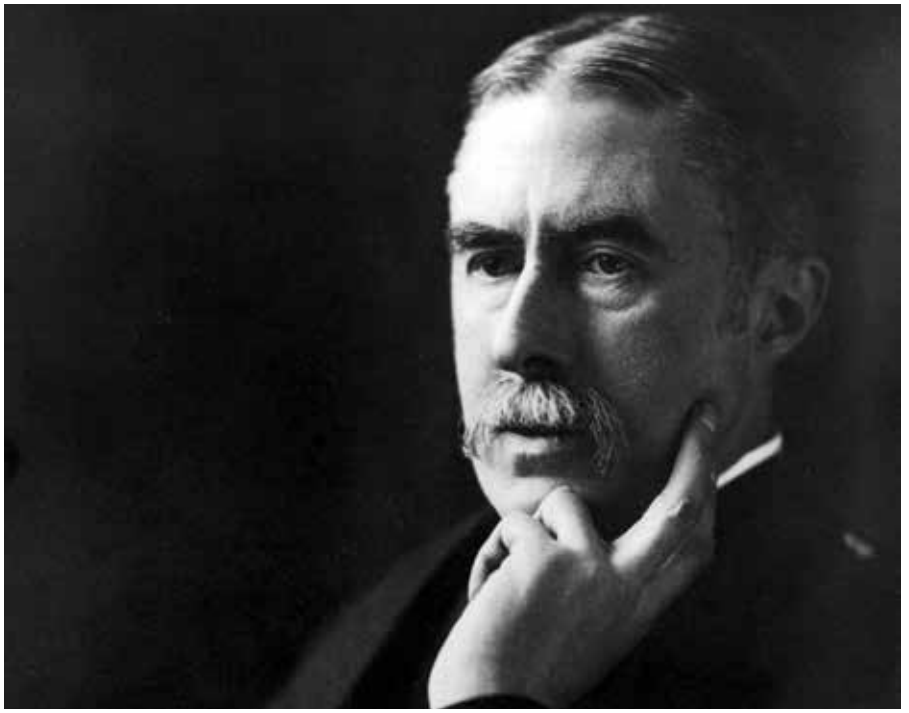
With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a roselipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The roselipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade

—then commenting that "It just tinkles. But it did not seem to tinkle in 1920." Later he quotes a quatrain from another poem, notes its "exquisite self-pity," then exclaims, in the most slangy English way, "Hard cheese, old chap!"

Evidently my own instructors in college and graduate school heard little more in Housman than that pleasant tinkle, and the modern poets I was introduced to—Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Stevens—manifested a subtler, deeper range of feeling and music. It was thus rather late in the game when I began to value the author of *A Shropshire Lad*, both as poet and as trenchant, mischievous essayist and letter writer.

These thoughts about Orwell's placing of Housman and my own slow awakening to him were prompted by an excellent, wholly attractive presentation of his life and work by Peter Parker, a veteran literary man (biographies of Christopher Isherwood and J. R. Ackerley) who writes about his subject in such a way that suggests he is a good candidate for Housman's ideal reader. In its combination of biographical and literary criticism, historical acuity, and finely tuned response to the "landscape" of Housman's achievement, Parker provides an introduction to the poet that goes deep "into the heart of England," as his subtitle has it. Seven chapters that constitute a first-rate short biography are followed by ones on English landscape, English music, and English soldiers, all part of Parker's effort to explore the historical and cultural impact of the small but startlingly original body of poems—just three small collections—



A. E. Housman in 1910

Housman gave us. (Parker includes the *Shropshire Lad* poems as a bonus.)

The salient facts of Housman' s early adult life were Oxford-related. There he met and fell hopelessly in love with Moses Jackson, a straight man who went on to marry and have children. And there he suffered a surprising failure in his final examinations—surprising, because earlier at Oxford Housman's academic achievement had been solid. These two defeats behind him, Housman went to live in London, where he worked in the patent office and wrote a number of scholarly articles that eventually won him a classics professorship at University College. In 1895, in an extraordinary burst of creative energy, he wrote two-thirds of the sixty-three poems that would be published in *A Shropshire Lad* the following year. After a slow start, the book took off and by 1911 was selling an average of eleven-thousand copies yearly. Parker puts it succinctly: "The world had gone awry for him as a young man and this was the starting point of his poetry."

A mere two slim volumes would follow, the second only after his death in 1936. Asked in 1910, when only *A Shropshire Lad* had appeared, whether a further book of poems was on the way, Housman responded—in typical sardonic mode—by comparing himself with the poet Thomas Gray, whose overall output was not large ("In barrenness at any rate, I hold a high place among English poets, excelling even Gray.") It's not always easy to parse Housman's irony. Who knows, he may have been proud that a little book of sixty-three poems should have made such a stir; perhaps only a journeyman poet would need to follow it with a second.

I suspect that, like me, most readers of *Housman Country* will find themselves less than fully in command of the patiently detailed chapters Parker devotes to the landscape behind the poetry; nor will they be familiar with many, if any, of the great number of later musical uses composers made of the poems. (Housman himself had no ear for music, and paid little attention.) The chapter on English soldiers explores the homoerotic implications of the word "lad," which crops up so often in Housman. In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, critic Paul Fussell defined "lad" as "a beautiful brave doomed boy," and the doom that those boys experienced extends to shocking dimensions in the poems and memoirs of the Great War. Parker's final chapter, "Aftermaths," surveys instances of Housman's continuing presence eighty years after his death.

Housman Country spurred me to think about how continuing a presence Housman is in my own reading life, going back at least to 1988 and Kingsley Amis's assertion, in *The Amis Anthology*, that he was a great English poet. Amis included more poems by Housman than by any other poet, and placed his friend Philip Larkin's exquisite brief poem "Cut Grass" squarely in the Housman tradition of stoic lamentation on the beauty and transience of nature.

In my one visit to Housman country, I stood beside the English writer Julian Symons who, as we looked out at the landscape (was it the Wrekin, that hill of "On Wenlock Edge"?), quoted a stanza or two from Housman's finest poem, "Tell Me Not Here, It Needs Not Saying." The same year as Amis's anthology, Christopher Ricks brought out an indispensable volume of the poet's poems and selected prose, and introduced me to Housman' s genius as a writer of light verse ("It is a fearful thing to be / The Pope. / That cross will not be laid on me, / I hope.") Meanwhile, the scholarly labors of Ricks's colleague Archie Burnett resulted in Oxford editions of the poems and of two enormous volumes of letters, many of them short indeed ("All right," for example).

All these forces conspired to wake me up to Housman's music. But my discovery of him most likely has a lot to do with growing old and finding myself now and then taking the long look back. Parker's book is filled with testimony from and about young men who identified with the sentiments of Housman's poems, indeed went off to war carrying a volume of them in their uniform's pocket. In one of his poems he seems to speak for this youthful audience in a way young men could not speak for themselves.

Here dead lie we
Because we did not choose
To live and shame the land
From which we sprung.

Life to be sure,
Is nothing much to lose,
But young men think it is,
and we were young.

This poem was brought to my attention by a contemporary poet, Brad Leithauser; it was published only posthumously, as if Housman thought it not quite good enough for an earlier book. Did he not recognize it for the perfect thing it is? ■

William H. Pritchard, *a frequent contributor, is the Henry Clay Folger Professor of English, Emeritus, at Amherst College.*

Francis Oakley

Infallible Saintmakers?

Certain Sainthood

Canonization and the Origins of Papal Infallibility in the Medieval Church

Donald S. Prudlo

Cornell University Press, $49.95, 215 pp.

In this well-researched and intricately argued scholarly book Donald S. Prudlo focuses on two complexly related concerns. First, that of reconstructing the development whereby, from the mid-twelfth to the late-thirteenth centuries, the popes came to play an increasingly pivotal role in the process of recognizing individual members of the faithful as exemplars of Christian living and of formally canonizing them, therefore, as saints. And what papal "canonization" meant, he tells us, was "an enrolling into the list of men and women recognized in public liturgical worship [throughout the universal church] as exemplars of Christ and intercessors in heaven." His second (somewhat more fraught) concern, is to chart the growth in the thirteenth century of resistance by orthodox critics and heretical groups alike to the exercise of that papal role in canonization, as well as the way in which, in response, members of the Franciscan and Dominican mendicant orders, anxious to vindicate the authenticity of their saints, began to place great emphasis on the quality of "certitude" attaching to papal canonization. In so doing, they came increasingly to pose the question as to whether such papal canonization decisions were not indeed infallible in nature. To that question, by the early fourteenth century the affirmative answer had come among them to carry the day, and eventually, Prudlo claims, that view of the matter was to become "the common...opinion" among theologians and "Catholic thinkers of stature."

As far as the former of these concerns goes, the narrative the author proposes is comparatively straightforward and clear. During much of the first millennium of Christian history, when it came to the recognition of sanctity, spontaneity seems to have been the order of the day. That is to say, the initiative was usually taken at the popular local level in Christian communities where cults of martyrs, confessors, and other saintly individuals had welled up and found expression in rituals and offerings at the tombs of the deceased or pilgrimages to reputedly holy sites. Official ecclesiastical sanction for such cultic practices was at first no more than sporadic. In the latter part of that era, however, local ordinaries increasingly undertook to exercise at least a supervisory role in relation to such saintly cults. And in a third phase, the one on which Prudlo focuses in this book, the high medieval quickening of papal centralization led to the growing papal domination of the process of saintly canonization, culminating in the fourteenth century with what almost amounted to papal monopolization of the whole business. "Almost" because, as Prudlo prudently concedes, that development may not have been "fully completed" until Urban VIII in 1634 definitively reserved to the papacy the prerogative of canonization.

So far, so good. But the plot thickens a bit when the author comes to address his more challenging second area of concern—namely, the process whereby in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries the mendicant champions of their orders' papally canonized saints came to attribute infallibility to the pope's canonization decisions. For it is his claim that the accumulating discourse pertaining to infallibility in canonization provided a new vocabulary and a new lexicon with which to carry on development of the infallibility discussion into the Counter-Reformation and beyond. It is true that when the First Vatican Council came finally to define the dogma of papal infallibility

Tapestries of seven new saints hang from the façade of St. Peter's Basilica before a canonization Mass.

CNS PHOTO / PAUL HARING

it made no mention of infallibility in canonization and focused exclusively on the broader issue of *ex cathedra* papal doctrinal definitions on matters of faith and morals. But recondite though the canonization-infallibility nexus may be, Prudlo's findings are directly and significantly pertinent to the ongoing debate about the historical origins of the infallibility dogma and any historians working henceforth in that conflicted field will certainly have to take those findings into account.

In that connection—and although Prudlo is at pains to emphasize that his own specific claims are limited to the matter of infallibility in canonization and do not extend to the issue of infallibility at large—the development of his argument almost inevitably leads him to intersect with debates pertaining to that larger issue. Thus he is led to call into question some of the more general claims about the roots of the infallibility dogma advanced in 1972 by the distinguished medievalist Brian Tierney in his book *The Origins of Papal Infallibility: 1150–1350*. In that powerfully argued if admittedly controversial work, Tierney made no mention of infallibility in canonization but limited himself to trying to identify the precise historical origins of the dogmatic claim attaching infallibility to *ex cathedra* papal definitions pertaining to matters of faith and morals. And in that, presumably, he was taking his cue from Vatican I's own definition of the infallibility dogma, which is equally silent on the canonization issue. But in the teeth of Vatican I's insistence that in defining the infallibility dogma it was "faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith," Tierney, basing himself on the historical evidence, concluded that the doctrine was in fact a late-medieval novelty, originating in the late-thirteenth century among dissident Franciscans and explicitly formulated for the first time by Pietro Olivi (1248–98). He argued, moreover, that the doctrine had been advanced with the goal not of enhancing papal power but of limiting it via the insistence that popes were bound by the inerrant, irreformable teachings of their predecessors. It is not surprising, then, that Pope John XXII (1316–34), no theologian but a canonist of distinction, seeing the insistence on papal infallibility as an infringement upon the pope's sovereignty, described it as a "pestiferous doctrine" and treated it accordingly as some sort of dangerous novelty.

Having stressed the salience "for decades" of the claim for infallibility in papal canonization and, accordingly, "the long maturation of the infallibility question" across the years from the mid- to late-thirteenth century, Prudlo quite understandably takes exception to Tierney's argument. In so doing, however, he betrays an unfortunate edge of condescension toward the work of a fine scholar to whom we are all indebted—Prudlo himself, I would wager, not excluded. He rejects Tierney's interpretation of what Bonaventure and Aquinas had to say on the matter of papal infallibility, and takes particular exception to the remark that "Aqui-

nas's usual clarity deserted him" when he addressed such matters as the papal teaching authority. But about all of this, given the tangled nature of some of the arguments involved and the ambiguities present in some of the pertinent writings, I am really not so sure. The less so, indeed, since Prudlo somehow manages to accuse Tierney (incorrectly it turns out) of "entirely omitting" discussion of Aquinas's *Quodlibet IX*, qu. 8 (a *locus classicus* on the topic that I must confess doesn't strike me as notably clear) on one page, while on the next page denouncing Tierney's interpretation of that very text as "especially tendentious." The upshot? I would advise any reader intent upon pursuing this intricate issue to acquaint himself directly with Tierney's argument rather than relying on what Prudlo claims Tierney said.

One final observation. It concerns the assertion that over the centuries it was to become "the common theological opinion that the pope is infallible when solemnly canonizing saints." In fairness, it should be noted that Prudlo may have been intent on hedging or qualifying that claim when he also noted that *as of 1965*, "no Catholic thinker of stature had denied infallibility to the pope in canonization since the 1600s." But if that is indeed "the common theological opinion," our theologians seem of late to have been even more circumspect about mentioning it than the popes themselves have been about exercising their prerogative of infallibility in the century and a half since it was officially defined. And perhaps wisely so, given the micropolitics surrounding the choice of some of the candidates for canonization and given, too, the tricky evidentiary issues that have dogged some of those candidacies. After all, as recently as 2002, Pope John Paul II, in choosing solemnly to canonize Juan Diego of Guadalupe was inserting into the calendar of saints a figure of myth and legend about whose actual existence historians continue to harbor grave doubts. ■

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Michael Peppard

Negotiating Surrender

The End of White Christian America

Robert P. Jones
Simon & Schuster, $28, 320 pp.

White Christianity is dying in America, leaving its members caught up in various stages of the grieving process. The slow death reflects a profound demographic change over two generations. While nearly seven in ten American seniors describe themselves as white Christians, fewer than three in ten young adults—29 percent—fall under this designation; and so for the first time in our nation's history, white Christians are a minority, constituting just 46 percent of our overall population, according to the Pew Research Center.

In *The End of White Christian America*, Robert P. Jones captures people moving from denial to acceptance of the passing of the nation's long-dominant religious group. How to mourn—and how to go on? The book opens with an obituary for the deceased and an accounting of their remaining assets—including a collection of monumental buildings. The United Methodist Building in Washington, D.C., reflects the death of White Mainline Protestant optimism. For decades its prominent location represented "vested and powerful faith traditions within white Protestant Christianity," but occupants now represent "a wide array" of religious organizations. The Methodists have rebranded the building as "an inclusive religious voice for justice." In Southern California, the Crystal Cathedral—bankrupt in 2010, sold two years later—embodies the recent struggles of White Evangelical Protestantism. And the imposing Interchurch Center on Riverside Drive in New York City, dedicated by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1959, and a place where many major Christian organizations once shared tenancy, represents the lost fervor of mid-twentieth-century Christian ecumenism. Jones takes the 2013 departure of the National Council of Churches from its spacious offices in the building as symbolic of his narrative of decline. (He neglects to mention the somewhat less spacious offices *Commonweal* has occupied there since 1997.)

Jones's narrative of decline, principally of white mainline Protestants and white Evangelicals, is capably told and bolstered by plentiful sociological data, especially from the Public Religion Research Institute (of which he is the CEO). The book's most original and compelling contribution comes in its final analysis, "A Eulogy for White Christian America," which serves as a timely reflection on the classic "stages of grief" popularized by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, and constitutes an artful and accessible psychoanalysis of contemporary American Christianity. Jones uses the tenures of two successive leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, the hard-liner Richard Land (1988–2013) and the more accommodating Russell Moore (2013–present), to frame the stages of grief. There are others he could have picked for the role of "denier-in-chief" concerning the state of American Christianity—Ralph Reed and Mike Huckabee come to mind—but Land practiced "a particularly extreme form of denial," countering the statistical reality of decline with deflection and nostalgia.

As Kübler-Ross noted, denial in the face of death often leads to anger—a mode that "comes naturally to white evangelicals," Jones asserts, who "have developed a rich lexicon of apocalyptic anger...and nostalgic 're-' words like 'reclaim,' 'restore,' 'renew,' 'repent,' and 'revive.'" But Jones may have written his book a few months too soon to catch the apotheosis of White Protestant anger. The campaign of President

President Kennedy meeting with a World Council of Churches delegation in 1962

Donald Trump whipped up new levels of rage among some white Christians, who grieved their loss of power in ritual displays of group bellicosity at Trump rallies around the country. About those in grief, Kübler-Ross described "anger displaced in all directions and projected onto the environment at times almost at random." Whether about the raucous cries of "Lock her up!" or the assaults on hecklers, that could be an apt description of many a Trump rally.

On Election Day many channeled that anger into action, as white Christians—both Protestants and Catholics—made Trump's election possible. Low voter turnout overall enabled this shrinking but still large demographic, backed into the corner of a culture war, to voice one more shout of denial. As the votes rolled in on election night, Jones tweeted out a map of white Protestant demographics that was eerily similar to Trump's emerging path to victory. Then white Catholic voters in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin pushed the white Protestant plurality states over the electoral edge. Perhaps ecumenism is not over, after all.

Bargaining is the third stage of grief, and it, too, helps to illuminate recent events. Jones isolates an example elegant in its simplicity. In 2015, members of the Mississippi House of Representatives sponsored a bill to designate the Bible as the official state book—a blatant effort, Jones writes, "to prop up a dying White Christian cultural consensus with the force of law." While the bill failed to make it out of committee, the effort symbolized a psychological truth—namely, that "when leaders feel it is necessary to state explicitly what has always been assumed, they betray their own cultural insecurity."

We've seen a more complex form of bargaining amid grief during the conflict between civil rights for LGBT citizens and religious accommodations for those objecting to such rights. For example, two years ago *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat wrote a widely discussed column, titled "The Terms of Our Surrender," expressing longing for a negotiation in the culture wars, one that might preserve the possibility for religious dissent. Seeing the hope for such a bargaining opportunity slipping away, Douthat moved toward depression and acceptance: "We are not really having an argument about same-sex marriage anymore, and...we're not having a negotiation. Instead, all that's left is the timing of the final victory—and for the defeated to find out what settlement the victors will impose."

Examples of depression, or perhaps "preparatory depression," in the face of White Christian America's death were signaled decades ago by the Methodist theologian Stanley Hauerwas for mainline Protestants (*Resident Aliens*), and more recently by the late David Kuo for evangelicals (*Tempting Faith*). A current case would be Rod Dreher. A prominent blogger for *The American Conservative* and author of several popular books, Dreher has gone through the stages of grief in real time and on public display. He seems to be transitioning from "depression and disillusionment" toward

acceptance, via the radical "Benedict Option" movement.

Among those who have accepted the death without advocating this kind of retrenchment and isolation, Jones rightly singles out Russell Moore, whose 2015 book, *Onward*, captures the spirit perfectly with its blank admission that "it is no longer possible to pretend that we are a Moral Majority." Though Jones has some critical words for Moore, the Southern Baptist leader has nonetheless offered a new hope for Southern Christians to engage White Christian America's racist history, especially by taking the Black Lives Matter movement seriously and by inveighing against the public display of the Confederate flag. "The cross and the Confederate flag cannot co-exist without one setting the other on fire," Moore has written. "White Christians, let's listen to our African-American brothers and sisters.... Let's take down that flag." Such leadership veers sharply away from the tone of his predecessor, Richard Land, who was fired from his radio show for callousness about race in the wake of the Trayvon Martin shooting.

If White Christian America is indeed to go "onward," it needs to dampen nostalgia, overcome fear and anger, and accept a different role in a diverse country. The only way forward is "a different social arrangement," Jones writes, "in which white evangelical and white Mainline Protestants find their seats at the table alongside Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and the religiously unaffiliated." Of course, White Christian America has sought and sponsored this kind of ecumenism before, inviting sundry parties to gather round sundry religious tables. The difference this time is that the tables—and the buildings—are no longer theirs. "This time," Robert P. Jones comments, "they will be guests rather than hosts." ■

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Bernard G. Prusak

The Dean Looks Back

Realizing the Distinctive University

Vision and Values, Strategy and Culture

Mark William Roche

University of Notre Dame Press, $25, 288 pp.

The late Ted Hesburgh, CSC, president of the University of Notre Dame from 1952 to 1987, was often quoted as saying that the university is the place where the church does its thinking. A colleague of mine has quipped that one would hope the church does some thinking elsewhere, too, but Hesburgh's point seems to me well taken. In my experience at least, it's at universities and colleges that the intellectual vitality of Catholicism is kindled.

As many readers of this magazine will know, this claim invites, however, an immediate objection. Roughly put, how many of the two hundred fifty or so Catholic colleges and universities in the United States are really, substantively Catholic in their curriculum and student life? How many, more precisely, are distinctive, in the two senses Mark William Roche uses this term in his critically important new book: both different from their secular peers and excellent in themselves? The jury's still out, but in the meantime it's imprudent to be Pollyannish. Consider in this regard merely the subtitle of the impressive study by Melanie Morey and John Piderit, SJ, *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis* (Oxford).

CHANTELLE SNYDER

Mark William Roche

Roche's book is relevant to the discussion of the ways and woes of Catholic higher education over the past fifty years, but it has ambitions beyond this discussion. Roche was dean of Notre Dame's College of Arts and Letters from 1997 to 2008. More recently, he played an important part in the revision of Notre Dame's core curriculum, which attracted attention, remarkably, in the national press. (Full disclosure: he was also a keynote speaker at a conference I organized a few years ago on "The Idea of a Catholic College.") Though differences between the works abound, the book that Roche's most calls to mind is Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which, as it happens, Roche cites. *Realizing the Distinctive University* is an informative, accurate title for what Roche has written. *The Dean* would be less informative, but accurate all the same.

To begin with the differences, unlike Machiavelli, Roche is not seeking to return to a position he has lost. Instead, he is candid about his own mistakes and limitations as a dean and evidently happy to be back among the faculty. Further, Roche's book will not provoke charges of amorality or atheism. Unlike Machiavelli's prince, Roche's dean is thoroughly Christian in seeking power only to serve for the good of the institution rather than for himself. Roche is

in fact scathing about administrators who are not also teachers and scholars and who are loath, accordingly, to make difficult, unpopular decisions, lest they be unable to hold on to power or climb the ranks elsewhere.

What makes Roche's book reminiscent of Machiavelli's is Roche's ruthless attention to what Machiavelli called the "effectual truth": how things really work, as opposed to how we might imagine they would ideally. Notre Dame is Roche's principal example of a distinctive university, though he means his book "to appeal to administrators and faculty at a diverse array of colleges and universities." When he arrived at Notre Dame, a year before he became dean there, he saw in it, in his words, "too much self-approbation and not enough honest assessment of genuine weaknesses." Upon becoming dean, he "stressed that we were not nearly as good as we should be." And so what he did was to introduce changes that provoked controversy and vehement resistance, but became over time the normal operating procedures of the institution and worked toward transforming its culture. He took away hiring lines from departments, split underperforming departments, instituted merit raises, penalized poor teachers with the maximum allowable pay reduction of 2 percent, varied teaching assignments according to research productivity, established a merit-based sabbatical policy and peer-review of sabbatical requests, and overturned recommendations for insufficiently strong hires and weak tenure and promotion cases. About difficult tenure decisions, he affirms the advice of a colleague: "When in doubt, say no." For "low standards weaken an institution for generations, as faculty tend to perpetuate" the standards to which they were held.

This is called playing hardball, so predictably Roche took some heavy hits himself. In retrospect, he confesses that he overestimated "the value of engaged intellectual discussion" and "radically underappreciated the importance of the social and emotional elements of change." The lesson he draws, however, is not that he should have pursued different policies, but that "one needs to think of strategies to embed change within continuity and collegiality." He also reflects that an administrator ought "to cause a rupture only when it serves an important and targeted purpose," just as he or she should know "never to take an important vote when the outcome was not already certain."

All this also might be called insider baseball. It is, but the stakes are higher than those of any game, and especially at present for Catholic colleges and universities. If, as the historian David O'Brien has written, the Roman Catholic Church is "in some struggling sense the very presence of Christ in our history," then the service of Catholic colleges and universities to the church is important indeed. But too many have paid too little attention to hiring for mission, and very many badly need to innovate in order to thrive, if not merely survive, in today's challenging economic circumstances. James Heft, SM, formerly provost and chancellor at the University of Dayton, now president of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California, has claimed that many Catholic colleges and universities have a twenty-year problem going forward. That's how long it would take for these institutions—*with* visionary and strategic leadership—to become distinctive in Roche's two senses: different from their secular peers and excellent in themselves. Roche proposes, in this regard, that "the challenge is to articulate a conceptual ideal that is intellectually compelling and attractive to people who are not Catholic and, at the same time, is deeply Catholic." For principles and strategies for moving from vision to implementation, read this book. ■

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RELIGION BOOKNOTES

Luke Timothy Johnson

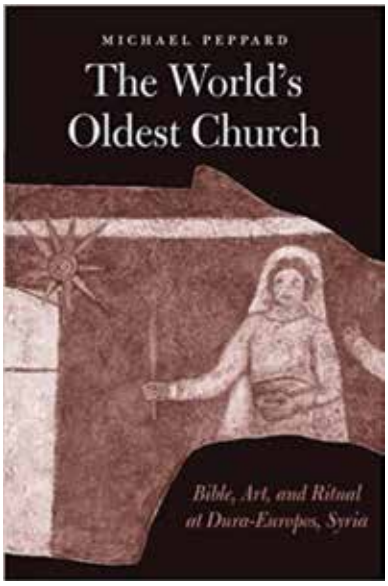
The World's Oldest Church
Bible, Art, and Ritual at Dura-Europos, Syria

Michael Peppard
Yale University Press, $50, 336 pp.

The city of Dura was a Roman outpost overrun by the Parthians in 250 AD and preserved under desert sands until French and Yale University archaeologists excavated it in the 1930s. In terms of its historical significance, the Dura discovery is on a par with the unearthing of Qumran and the scrolls of the Dead Sea sectarians. The artistic renderings in the Dura synagogue, for example, completely overturned regnant assumptions about the aniconic character of ancient Judaism. And the evidence for a Christian house church just down the street from that synagogue, a building also replete with wall paintings, provided both material evidence for the "world's oldest church," and a set of interpretive puzzles for those seeking to understand what worship in that space might have meant.

Michael Peppard teaches New Testament at Fordham University. In his doctoral work at Yale, he had the chance to study the material remains of the Christian baptistry in the Yale University Art Gallery, and to ponder some features of the paintings that the magisterial reports of Dura's first examiners did not, in his view, adequately interpret, above all the striking representation of some women carrying torches approaching what appears to be a white structure. Given its location in a place where baptism occurred, and given the (presumably standard) early Christian interpretation of baptism within the Pauline framework of death and resurrection, the position was initially advanced that these were the women coming to Christ's tomb on Easter Sunday.

Peppard respects and fully lays out the arguments of his predecessors. But he notes that there is scant evidence in second- and third-century literature for Paul's interpretation of baptism, and that, in contrast, there is abundant evidence for alternative interpretations of baptism, above all in Syrian Christianity. He therefore undertakes a fresh examination of all the available



evidence—textual, material, and ritual—to offer a new way of reading the Dura paintings and of imagining how ancient worshipers in that space might have imagined what they were doing. In an approach that is thoroughly interdisciplinary, Peppard examines closely the political and military realities suggested by the remains of this military outpost, Greco-Roman artistic traditions, and the abundant literary resources from Syrian Christianity (ranging from the *Odes of Solomon* to *The Gospel of Philip*) that were ignored by earlier interpreters.

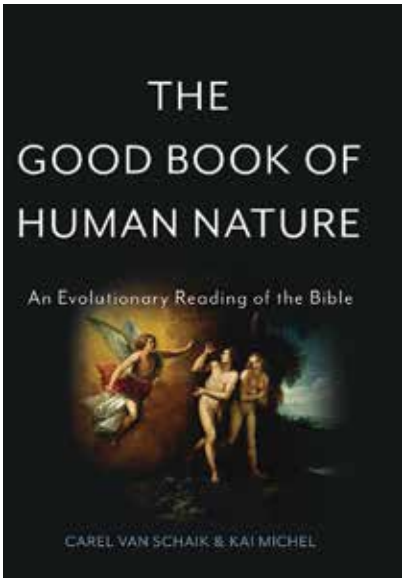
By leading the reader on an imaginary procession through the baptistry, and interpreting each image as a stage in the progression toward baptism itself (using the ancient rhetorical technique of *ekphrasis*), Peppard proposes multiple and complementary understandings of baptism that could have animated ancient worshipers: being sealed as soldiers of Christ, being healed by the one who walked on the waters, and, being given in spiritual marriage. The women carrying torches, he suggests, fit within this last understanding: they are the wise virgins going out to seek the bridegroom in Matthew 25:1–13.

His argument concerning the portrayal of the torch-bearing women is successful, but not all of his reinterpretations are as convincing; I remain unpersuaded, for example, by his position concerning the picture of the woman at the well. But especially for a generation that has little awareness of Dura and its importance, Peppard's sophisticated examination of the artistic fragments in the world's oldest church are both informative and enlightening.

The Good Book of Human Nature
An Evolutionary Reading of the Bible

Carel Van Schaik and Kai Michel
Basic Books, $29.99, 452 pp.

With the insouciant self-assurance that marks those supremely confident that their new approach to a subject offers a simple solution to problems that they think no one else has solved (or even spotted), Swiss-based evolutionary biologist Van Schaik and science journalist Kai



Michel explain the Old and New Testaments from the perspective of cultural evolution. The Bible is not the Word of God, it is "the good book of human nature"; it does not tell us who God is or what God wants of humans, it tells us what humans are and how they adapt to new circumstances. The authors assure us that such an approach is both unprecedented and portentous.

Their framework owes a great deal to Jared Diamond's thesis (as in *Guns, Germs, and Steel: the Fate of Human Societies*) that mankind's worst mistake was becoming sedentary: the robust and relatively disease-free life of hunter-gatherers was replaced by the germs and disease (and crime) that arose from living together in one place with livestock. Such disastrous circumstances required of humans not only laws (as for hygiene and property) but also symbolic representations (as of evil spirits) to control and account for crime and disease.

If humanity's "original sin" was becoming civilized, then, the happy hunter-gatherers must represent humanity before the fall. Although they protest that they do not seek to romanticize this more primitive condition, the authors' sketch of the "first nature" of humans is almost entirely positive. In contrast, the "second nature" of humans, expressed through cultural institutions and symbols, is—to echo Freud's title—a recital of civilization's discontents. They don't put it quite this way, but the authors seem to suggest that what they term a "third human nature" requires a prudential upholding of cultural norms while cultivating those primal instincts that enable at least a partial return to the garden.

They do not propose that everything in the Bible comes directly from this move to a more sedentary way of life, but they think they can "reverse engineer the problems people struggled with for thousands of years," the answers to which now appear in the pages of the Bible. Once the Bible is freed from religion, it can reveal actual "historical realities" and aspects of human cultural evolution.

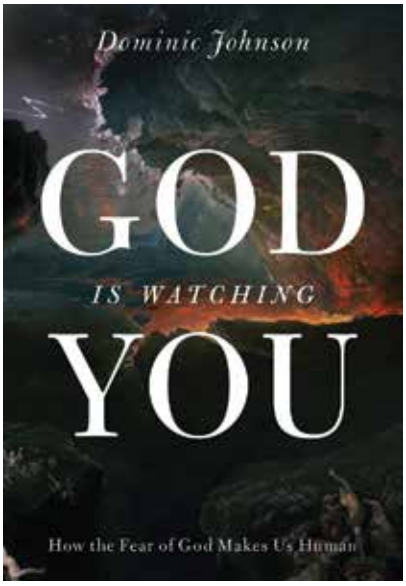
Well, it's a nice thought, and if the actual logic of the approach is not pushed too far, some suggestions are intriguing, if not as new as the authors suppose. That the ritual laws of Torah involve social control and hygiene, for example, is clear enough, and has been recognized many times before (see, e.g., Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 1966). Likewise, while it is pleasant to think that Jesus' perennial appeal even to those without faith lies in his evoking their inner hunter-gatherer, the authors seem unaware that quite some time ago the biblical scholar Gerd Theissen had proposed that Jesus could be thought of in terms of a cultural mutation (*Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Perspective*).

The logic of the approach, however, does need contesting. Whenever a rigid interpretive grid is imposed on literature, two equally unfortunate results are predictable. The first is that many texts simply don't fit the grid and receive scant attention: here, the prophets, the Wisdom writings, and the entire New Testament apart from the gospels and a slice of Revelation, are skimped. The second consequence is that, even for texts that are considered, the rigid grid reduces complex levels of meaning to a single, and often dull, point: while there is some validity in regarding God as the enforcer of civilization's codes, missing the vibrant, vivid, puzzling, and powerful presence of the character "God" in the Bible is to miss the Bible altogether. Readers of this book can learn a lot about the present preoccupa-

tions of evolutionary theory as applied to culture, but they will not learn much about the texts that have done so much to shape our late great culture.

God Is Watching You
How the Fear of God Makes Us Human

Dominic Johnson
Oxford University Press, $27.95, 304 pp.



In this (much smaller) book, the perspective of evolutionary biology is again applied to religion, in this case, the specific religious phenomenon called "the fear of God." Is the sense that we stand under the gaze of God, and that our thoughts and deeds will be punished or rewarded, a superstitious remnant or a positive, even irreplaceable dimension of our humanity? The question is clearly both large and important. Johnson, who is a professor of International Relations at Oxford, offers a slender but data-filled study that does not answer it fully, but provides an analysis—using a variety of empirical evidence—that goes a long way toward rescuing this ancient and widespread conviction from the easy dismissal by the "new atheists" operating within the evolutionary paradigm.

Johnson seeks to show, first, that the conviction concerning supernatural sanctions is not peculiar to Western, or Christian, culture. It is, he shows, "a ubiquitous phenomenon of human nature" that spans the globe, the centuries, and embraces even those calling themselves atheists. Literary and experimental data are offered in support. The second goal of his study—and the part requiring most extensive argument—is to show that the phenomenon is not accidental but rather an "evolutionary adaptation" that enabled humans to suppress selfishness in favor of societal cooperation, as well as, paradoxically, "an individual's evolutionary success." The conviction that "we are seen" serves as a powerful deterrent to anti-social behavior; the notion that we are seen even when no one else is around is supremely effective.

The appeal to supernatural sanctions arises, in evolutionary terms, as a concomitant of a theory of mind and the development of complex communication skills. But whatever its source, Johnson argues that belief in a supernatural order of punishment and reward is "hardwired" in humans. Indeed, he states that "atheism has to be learned, but supernatural beliefs are part of human nature." But what future do such beliefs have in an increasingly secular world? Johnson acknowledges the growth of secularism in certain parts of the world, but calls into question the claim that religion is dying. He recognizes the expansion of

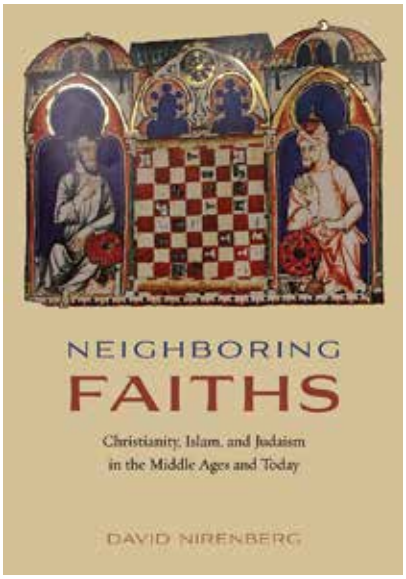
governmental methods of monitoring and punishing societal deviance, but he doubts they are as effective as religious convictions, or that they convincingly substitute for such convictions.

As helpful as Johnson's study is in showing how the fear of God serves to stabilize societies, its evolutionary and sociological perspective makes it fall short of a full appreciation of "how the fear of God makes us human." He does not consider at all, for example, the ways in which an acute awareness of God enabled individual humans to resist the norms of the dominant culture. Whether we think of Socrates obeying his *daimon* rather than common opinion, or of the Stoic philosopher scorning the judgment of the crowd because of obedience to his "governing principle," or of the prophet who spoke against king and temple in the name of the Lord, or of Jesus casting fire upon the earth, the "fear of God" that Proverbs 1:7 calls "the beginning of wisdom" has destabilized society as much as it has stabilized it.

Neighboring Faiths
Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today

David Nirenberg
University of Chicago Press, $27, 352 pp.

David Nirenberg's 2013 book, *Anti-Judaism: the Western Tradition*, is a stunning history of ideas that shows how the concept of Judaism functioned variously across time as a point of opposition for the expression of ideologies ranging from earliest Christianity to Marxism. The present volume by this impressively erudite University of Chicago professor is at once more focused and more expansive. More focused, because it concentrates on relations among Jews and Christians—Muslims appear much less frequently—between the years 1391 and 1492 in the Iberian kingdoms. More expansive, because it considers not only ideas, but also how ideas (and imaginations!) were articulated, not only in literary polemics, but also



in sexual interactions, property rights, political privilege, and social status.

The introduction and fourth chapter are new, while the other chapters appeared as essays in learned journals; each piece is tightly argued and based on the close examination of a truly staggering number of primary sources. Overall, Nirenberg wants to oppose a "static state" view of the relations among the three religions in favor of an approach that recognizes constantly shifting and mutual adaptations. Historical events make a difference in how identities come to be negotiated; Nirenberg's interest is in dissecting just how history and identity construction intersect.

The essay "Love between Muslim and Jew" stands out as the only study that engages those two minority populations within a Christian realm, but two other chapters, "Christendom and Islam" and "Islam and the West: Two Dialectical Fantasies," are noteworthy for their acknowledgement that present realities inescapably affect our readings of the past, just as our readings of the past affect our understanding of present tensions. He devotes a few devastating pages, for example, to Pope Benedict XVI's unhappy comments on Islam in 2006.

Most of the specific studies, however, concern Christians and Jews between 1391, the date of the massacre of Jews in Valencia that spurred mass conversions, and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Nirenberg shows how the presence of forcibly converted Jews (the *conversos*) created severe problems of self-definition among Christian preachers (like St. Vincent Ferrer), and stimulated efforts to segregate populations, to mark the Jewish "other" even more explicitly, and even to develop notions of genealogy that could now be considered, cautiously, as racial in character.

A rewarding book for those not content with simplistic renderings, and who are attracted to complex issues meticulously examined, this is still not an easy read; the 211 pages of text are followed by 72 pages of notes—many of them engaging subsidiary issues—and 31 pages of bibliography. It demands of the reader as well a high tolerance for postmodern academic discourse. Together with his magisterial *Anti-Judaism*, however, this collection of essays confirms Nirenberg's place as a particularly incisive and trustworthy historian of religion. ■

Luke Timothy Johnson, *a frequent contributor, is the R. W. Woodruff Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. Two of his most recent books are* Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity *(Yale) and* Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church *(Eerdmans).*

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The Hardest Blessing

Rebecca Collins

Halfway through my solo pilgrimage from Le Puy-en-Velay, France, to Santiago de Compostela, Spain, I stared down at the tomb of the Cid, a war hero best remembered as the subject of a twelfth-century epic poem celebrating the expulsion of the Muslims from the region. His remains were enshrined at the heart of the Burgos Cathedral. Not far off, a statue of St. James the Greater, the apostle of Jesus, trampled Moors under his horse while pointing a sword at their heads.

I had decided against the conventional study-abroad semester to devote three months to a pilgrimage, hoping to find my way to gentleness in a world of violence. But what I learned about the history of the Camino, with all its memorials of the "reconquest" of Spain by Christianity, did not seem to point to gentleness. Bishops in the eleventh century marketed the pilgrimage route partially as a celebration of the expulsion of the Moors from northern Spain and southern France. The figures of the Cid and St. James as *Matamoros*—"Moor-slayer"—came to stand at the center of that vision, as evidenced in passages of the oldest pilgrim guide to the Camino, the twelfth-century *Codex Calixtinus*. In Latin America, early *conquistadores* also invoked St. James as the *Mataindios*—Indian-slayer. No simple apostle of a crucified Jesus, James was to them a conqueror, a man who would not so much convert the natives as vanquish their unbelief.

Altarpiece of the Chapel of St. John the Baptist and St. James "the Moor-slayer" at the Cathedral of Burgos

As the Obama administration sent war planes to combat ISIS and fellow pilgrims confessed their distrust of dark-bearded men, I stared into the face of St. James the Matamoros, seeing in the rising tide of modern religious conflict a connection to twelve centuries of mythologized conquest. The residue of a holy war still seemed to pervade the route. How, I wondered, had I come to think that I would find solace on a route marked by swords?

And yet, ironically, I found the greatest antidote to religious hatred and aggression on the same route. The Camino's history was not only one of conquest, but of long centuries of service and hospitality. Nuns, priests, monks, and lay hostel managers humbly served the pilgrims, the strangers passing through their villages in varying states of health and strength, welcoming them each day to Masses and vespers, meals and beds. Today, on the route of religious conquest, in the heart of the West, the modern sentinels of St. James offer bread and lodging as they have done quietly through the ages. Pilgrims, walking on routes of penance toward a deeper relationship with God, the source of love, have long stared into the face of a different St. James.

As the legend goes, James journeyed to northwestern Spain to proclaim the Gospel and, upon his return to Jerusalem, was beheaded by Herod Agrippa. His disciples took his body back to Spain and buried it, where it was discovered in the ninth century. This St. James, the pilgrim, carries a staff and a scallop shell—the symbol of the pilgrimage—and wears a simple brown smock. He is often seen as a statue, lying on a public bench outside a church, fatigued and covered in scrapes. His is unmistakably the face of a refugee, a suffering stranger.

I wish I could say that love has won on the Camino, but I think that would be too simplistic. Rather, the Camino is an outer manifestation of the inner struggle against harshness and toward the love of God. It is an increasingly ecumenical route, welcoming pilgrims of varying commitments to Christianity and other religious backgrounds. The face of the suffering stranger, the pilgrim in search of love, has broadened. And the challenge for pilgrims is to love and trust the other suffering strangers.

Every day, I remember a woman in León. Leaving the one luxury accommodation I had used on the route as respite from over a month of knee problems, I stepped back out onto the streets, alone again with my aching joints. A statue of St. James the suffering pilgrim sat in front of me. A woman crossed between me and the statue and placed her hand on his head—blessing James, blessing me, and blessing all the wanderers of the earth searching for gentleness. Perhaps the blessing that is most difficult to give and receive is the blessing of St. James the suffering pilgrim: a blessing of one's weakness and pain in a world of violence. ■

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