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SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

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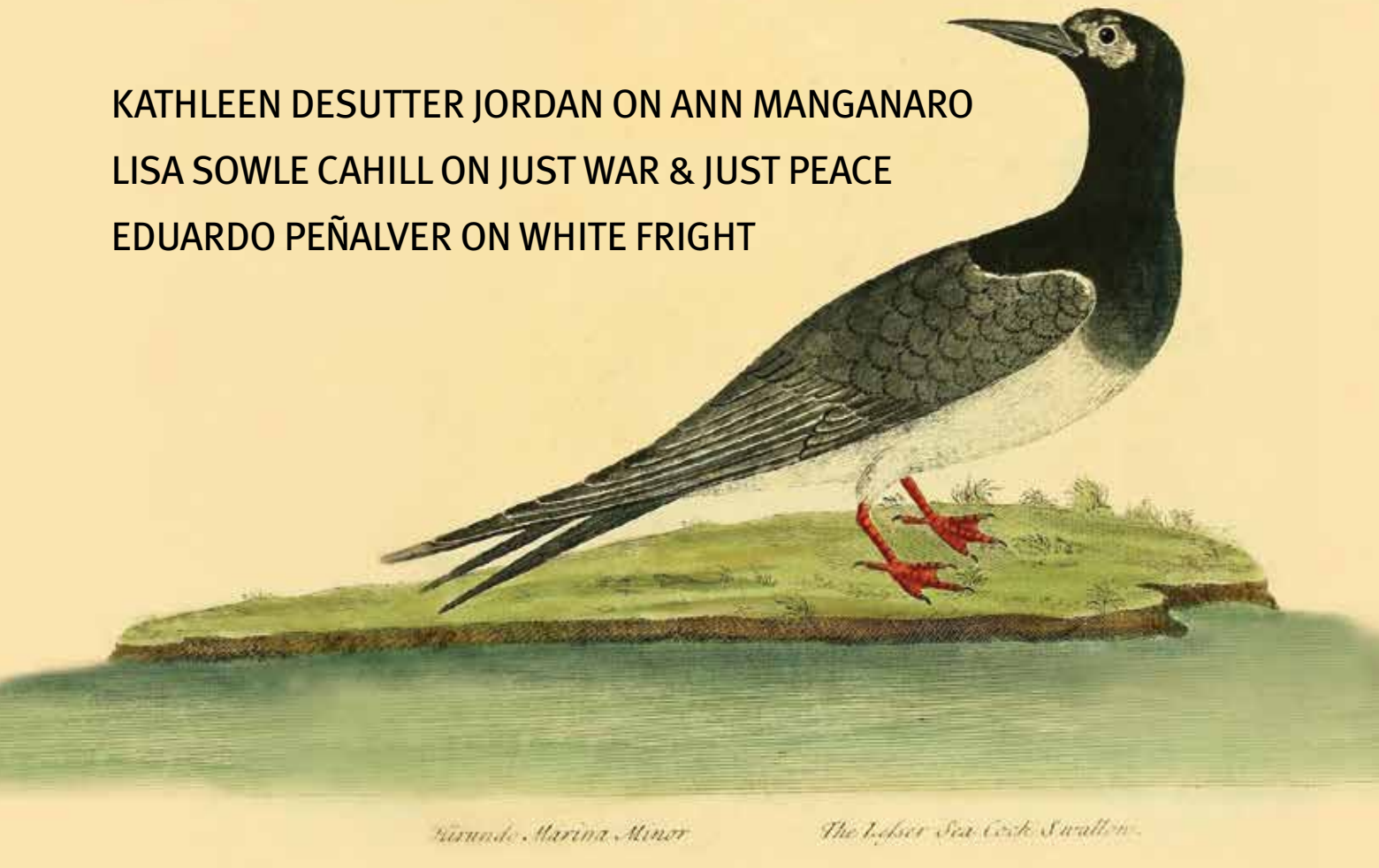

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Subscription Information
855-713-1792
subscriptions@commonwealmagazine.org

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

Publisher
Thomas Baker

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LETTERS

Pacifism, seeking the hidden God

PEACE, LOVE, AND HARMONY

As I read Mark J. Allman and Tobias Winright's "Protect Thy Neighbor" (June 17), I thought of the slaves bought and sold by Jesuits. What those priests missed were Jesus' command that "all may be one" and St. Paul's similar words to the Galatians: "there is neither slave nor free…for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Those intelligent, prayerful slaveholders missed the essential oneness of all creation and all creatures, a truth now supported by science as well as theology.

Allman and Wright seem to miss the foundation of humanity's oneness that disallows killing another human being for any reason. Yes, when war seems the answer, it is difficult to absorb and live out the reality of this oneness. But Gandhi and Dr. King understood that protecting one's neighbors included protecting and loving the neighbors on the other side, the enemy. These heroes of nonviolent peacemaking and their followers moved humanity closer to oneness and equality without killing anyone.

Thomas Merton, a pacifist, condemned the just-war doctrine, which he claimed blinded Christians to "the true horror" of war, the horror that "in war one assumes that it is not only right, but necessary, to kill." I cannot picture Jesus killing anyone. Rather, like all nonviolent heroes he chose to lay down his life for everyone: neighbor, enemy, sinner.

Nonviolence is the only moral route to peace.

FRANCINE DEMPSEY, CSJ
Chattanooga, N.Y.

THE HARDEST PART

I read Nathan Paxton's "Why Keep Waiting?" (July 8) having just returned from the Anglican monastery about which he writes. The Society of St. John the Evangelist is the oldest Anglican monastic order for men. It exercises a lively ministry of prayer, retreats, spiritual direction, and publications, particularly to the academic communities around its monastery at the edge of Harvard Square, as well as to Episcopal and other clergy. I am always surprised at the way, even for the most mundane of the daily offices, the seats in the chapel fill with people off the street. Like Mr. Paxton, they have come to wait in "the beauty of holiness"—perhaps not sure what they seek. The brothers include a nice mix of younger and older men; their welcome is warm and unfailing. The monastery, and the Society's country retreat center on the Merrimack River north of Boston, have been enriched in recent years by a program that welcomes men and women in their twenties for year-long internships seeking to explore their spiritual lives and the Christian faith.

I first entered the monastery chapel doors as a Harvard undergraduate more than fifty years ago, grateful to come to a place where prayer seemed to be taken with ultimate seriousness and they didn't bother you to join a "youth group." In the intervening years I have done a lot of waiting, there as elsewhere. Hiddenness is somehow central to the nature of God, as to our own deepest souls. The brothers have been instrumental over the years in helping me to do some important finding. Mr. Paxton might do worse than to book himself a stay in the monastery guest house and an appointment to talk with one of the monks. It could mean as much for him as it has for me.

I should add that *Commonweal* is far and away the best thing I read. Issue after issue, it never fails. Thanks so much!

REV. JOHN L. MCCAUSLAND
Weare, N.H.

From the Editors

Why Hyde Matters

The 2016 presidential contest has offered an exceptionally vivid contrast in style and substance between the two major party nominees. Since he made his way down the escalator at Trump Towers last June to announce his candidacy, Donald Trump has displayed nearly unprecedented vulgarity, anger, and hate. His policy proposals, such as they are, mix incendiary ideas about the construction of a border wall and conducting "extreme vetting" of Muslim refugees with standard Republican schemes to lower tax rates for the wealthiest Americans.

Facing such an opponent, Hillary Clinton has run a steady, disciplined, and substantive campaign, even as she remains dogged by questions about her Wall Street speaking fees and her decision to use a private email server as secretary of state. Though pulled left on a number of issues by her primary opponent, Bernie Sanders, Clinton has also welcomed the support of prominent Republicans who refuse to vote for Trump. By choosing Sen. Tim Kaine—a Roman Catholic from the key swing state of Virginia—as her running mate, she underscored her claims to competence, experience, and moderation with hopes of appealing to undecided voters willing to join the anti-Trump coalition.

But Clinton has tellingly abandoned moderation on one very important issue. She has embraced the Democratic Party platform's demand for the repeal of the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits the federal government from funding abortions, except in cases of rape, incest, or threats to the mother's life. For a candidate known for caution and calculation, this is a rare step outside the political center, and an especially unwise one.

Given her own claims about the dangers posed by Trump, it is unclear why Clinton would give prolife Democrats and persuadable Republicans a reason to reject her candidacy. Since first passed in 1976 in the wake of *Roe v. Wade*, the Hyde Amendment—which has to be renewed every year—has proved one of the more durable compromises in American political life. That such a compromise could be reached and sustained on the fraught issue of abortion makes Clinton's rejection of it all the more disheartening. So much of the debate surrounding abortion is about when and how or even if to draw lines; the line drawn to keep elective abortions from being funded by taxpayers, however, is one of the few that both prolife and prochoice Americans can support. And for good reason: it is a straightforward way of acknowledging and respecting the deepest moral commitments of those citizens who are certain that abortion is the taking of human life.

Supporting the Hyde Amendment is the politically responsible and morally appropriate position. When you fund something, you encourage it and make it more likely to occur. In the years between *Roe* and the introduction of the Hyde Amendment to federal-spending bills, Medicaid covered the costs for around three hundred thousand abortions per year. After the Hyde Amendment took effect, that number decreased to just a few thousand. Even many prochoice Americans claim to want to reduce the number of abortions; keeping the Hyde Amendment is one modest way to do that.

The most alarming feature of the Democratic Party's new position on the Hyde Amendment is the way it mainstreams abortion as just another medical procedure. The section of the party platform that calls for the repeal of the amendment is squeezed in between a discussion of how best to support those living with autism and the crisis our country faces in providing long-term care for our seniors. That is, abortion is discussed not in the context of women's rights or Supreme Court appointments, but in the context of "ensuring the health and safety of all Americans." The platform affirms that every woman should have access to "quality reproductive health care services" and that the Democratic Party is committed to overturning "federal and state laws and policies that impede a woman's access to abortion." In other words, no limits or even debate seem to be countenanced when it comes to an issue that raises the deepest questions about when human life begins and what responsibilities we have to protect it.

The Hyde Amendment makes it clear that, in fact, abortion is not simply a routine medical procedure. The debate over abortion is inescapably a moral one. The stakes are incredibly high, forcing us to grapple with what it really means to care for the most vulnerable among us. U.S. abortion law is unique in not imposing any meaningful restrictions on access to the procedure. Most European countries, for example, make it more difficult to obtain an abortion after the twelfth week of pregnancy. There are limits to what the law can prohibit, but the law also has a pedagogic function. Regulating access to abortion and making sure taxpayers do not pay for elective abortions is an important way to remind citizens of the gravity of the choice to terminate a pregnancy. The debate about abortion must not be stifled. ■

Charles R. Morris

Fix It, Don't Nix It

OBAMACARE'S REAL BUT IMPERFECT SUCCESS

Although it's far too soon to start counting Electoral College chickens, most of the auguries are pointing to a substantial Democratic victory in November. A victory by Hillary Clinton would at the very least ensure that even a Republican Congress could not repeal Obamacare. If the Democrats could retake the Senate, which looks well within the realm of possibility, there should be room to fix some of the program's most glaring deficiencies. The visceral hatred of President Obama by many in the Republican hierarchy has been such that they have blocked even routine amendments to the law—the kind of technical adjustments to fix obvious drafting errors that were once routine in conference-committee markups.

So far, Obamacare has been a qualified success. Some 12.7 million people have been covered in the Obamacare health exchanges. If one includes expanded Medicaid and provisions like those allowing grown children to stay on their family's plan, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has delivered health-insurance coverage to 20 million people.

Even better, Obamacare has been running well under budget, as health-care costs in general have been a pleasant surprise. In 2008, the Congressional Budget Office forecast that annual Medicare costs would rise to $759 billion by 2018. Last year they revised that forecast down to $574 billion, 24 percent less than the original forecast. Other reimbursement reforms in the legislation, although not strictly part of Obamacare, have been big money savers.

That run of good fortune appears to be over, and not just for Obamacare. Health insurers around the country are filing for large increases. Several big insurers, most recently Aetna, have been withdrawing from all or most of their markets because they have been losing

President Obama signing the Affordable Care Act into law on March 23, 2010

money in nine-digit amounts. There are several reasons for that. Big Pharma has been pushing up their prices unconscionably, taking advantage of congressional prohibitions against the government bargaining over drug prices. Hospitals have also been buying up medical practices, in order to collect the high overhead costs that apply to hospital operations.

Medical-premium increases are likely to be particularly steep in Obamacare, however, because many insurers grossly underestimated their costs. Both the government and the insurers expected the health exchanges to rack up large enrollments from small employers. (One academic paper estimated that over time 20 million people would leave employer-sponsored plans for Obamacare.) Employers who drop their plans are subject to a fine, but it is a modest one, and seemingly worth it just to save the administrative headaches.

Surprisingly, small employers have so far not taken the bait, and to a great extent, are still providing their own coverage. That speaks well of the employers, perhaps, but it has skewed the exchange demographics toward a less healthy clientele. Such people were always a major target of Obamacare, since previously they could get no insurance at all. But without the ballast of relatively healthy people, the premium schedules are too low.

Assuming the program survives Washington's next turn of the political wheel, it will require numerous tire patches. The "family glitch" is on the top of most lists. A rule disqualifies a family for a subsidy if a member has individual health insurance at work that costs less than 9.5 percent of her income, even though the cost of covering the whole family would clearly qualify them for a subsidy. But the biggest anomaly was caused by the Supreme Court decision to make the Medicaid expansion optional for the states. Fixing that would require the federal government to carry the total costs of the expansion, but would be well worth it.

Franklin Roosevelt had tried to introduce a national health-care program in the 1930s, but was forced to drop it in order to get his Social Security program through. Richard Nixon proposed a national health-care program in 1974. It was very simple: there would a single national set of health-care benefits with three arms. Employers would provide the insurance to their employees and pay 75 percent of its costs. The employee would carry the rest up to an annual limit of $1,500. The unemployed and the poor would get the same coverage under a public program, as would the Medicare population. (Health-care costs were only about 5 percent of GDP at the time.) It looked for a while as if it would pass. But Ted Kennedy, to his lasting regret, killed it because its administration would be run through private insurance companies, as in Germany and Switzerland.

Health care in America is a sad story of missed opportunities. For all its warts, passing Obamacare was a heroic achievement, the best we have been able to do in nearly a century of trying. We need to regard it tenderly, repair it gently, and seize every chance to improve it. ■

WHITEHOUSE.GOV

Jo McGowan

What's Worse than Terrorism

TRY HUNGER, DISEASE, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

One of the things that make the spate of recent terrorist attacks so chilling is that the choice of targets seems both random and comprehensive: an airport, a train station, a night club (straight or gay), a concert, a fireworks display, a city bus. The plane you are flying in could drop suddenly from the sky. Don't think prayer will save you, because you could well be attacked in a church, a temple, or a mosque. Don't try and protest anything because they'll get you at the demonstration. And if you have a disability, don't imagine your vulnerability will win you any sympathy—you could well be attacked in your own bed.

One of the most poignant stories from the recent terrorist attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh, involved a man whose nineteen-year-old daughter was slaughtered toward the end of the sickening event. He was standing outside the restaurant the whole night, just yards away from where she was cowering in a bathroom. Yet he was unable to do anything to save her. Like any other parent, he would have eagerly put himself between her and danger, but he never had that option. The area was cordoned off, the police were in charge, and he had no choice but to wait for the whole horrifying nightmare to play out. This man embodied the terrible situation we all seem to be in these days. We feel as if danger lurks around every corner, as if our children—who now seem to be in constant motion, always calling from yet another airport, always visiting yet another city—are trapped, fragile, and unlikely to make it through the night. We are simply waiting for our turn to come.

We are right to be worried. But we are worrying about the wrong things. And this is because we are listening to the wrong people. If Donald Trump and most of the mainstream media are your source of information, then terrorism will be your main concern, and panic, anxiety, and free-floating distress your dominant emotions. But a simple glance at the data, culled from neutral, reliable sources, should calm us down. According to the U.S. State Department, terrorist events in 2015 were down 13 percent from the previous year. While more than 28,000 lost their lives in these attacks, that number is minuscule in terms of the world's total population. Indeed, according to 2011 data, the probability of being killed in a terrorist attack is around one in 20 million.

What, then, *should* we be afraid of? We could start with hunger and malnutrition, which kill 3.1 million children under the age of five every year. Then there are diseases that can be prevented with vaccination, which claim the lives of 2.5 million children under five every year. Or how about climate change? Climate-related disasters since 2000 are up 44 percent from the previous decade and the fallout for the world is unprecedented in terms of human suffering. As crops fail because of drought or flooding, mass migration has become routine. The refugee crisis currently being felt throughout Europe is directly related to climate change. People simply cannot continue to live in areas where they can't grow food, find clean water, or build safe homes. Scarce resources automatically escalate violence and armed conflict. These are all issues we can do something about.

But it doesn't serve the interests of businessmen like Trump or corporations like Dow Chemical for us to think too much about these problems. That's one reason that 2013 will be remembered more for the Boston Marathon terrorist attack that killed five people and injured 264 than for the landslides in Uttarakhand that killed over *six thousand* people, left thousands more homeless and unemployed, and about which you have probably heard nothing. These landslides were directly related to the construction of a hydroelectric power plant along Uttarakhand's rivers and are just one example of what over-development has in store for the world if allowed to continue unchecked.

The U.S. elections, the Brexit decision, the European refugee crisis, and, here in India, simmering conflicts between Hindus and Muslims and between the upper caste and dalits all mean that we can expect misdirection and fear-mongering to continue and perhaps even increase in the months ahead. We will be encouraged to worry about travel, public places, and large events. Cable news will offer us blow-by-blow details of every terrorist attack. We will be shown images of refugees arriving en masse and creating intolerable burdens in their host countries. The media will encourage us to feel like helpless victims, while opportunistic politicians will incite jingoism and suspicion. Us and them. Black and white. Those who belong and those who don't. This is Donald Trump's philosophy, and he's not alone. Like all strongmen (Vladimir Putin, Narendra Modi, Recep Tayyip Erdogan—the list is long and growing), Trump instills fear in his followers and then declares that only he can protect them from the outsiders who are out to get them.

It isn't actually like that at all. We are human beings first, last, and always. We all breathe, bleed, and grieve. We all love our children and want to protect them. The differences between us are minor compared to the fundamental things we all have in common, wherever we live or worship, whatever we look like. When my husband Ravi and I were filling out the forms for our marriage license, in the space for "race" I dutifully wrote "Caucasian." Ravi? He wrote "Human." ■

Lisa Sowle Cahill

A Church for Peace

WHY JUST-WAR THEORY ISN'T ENOUGH

In "Protect Thy Neighbor: Why the Just-War Tradition Is Still Indispensable" (June 17), Mark J. Allman and Tobias Winright defend just-war theory as a traditional, viable, and peace-oriented expression of Catholic social thought. Their essay takes issue with the concluding document of an April conference in Rome sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International (available, with media coverage and supporting documents, on the Pax Christi website). The document urged Pope Francis and the church as a whole to renounce just-war theory, replacing it with a theory and practice of "just peace." Contributors to the just-peace ethic include the evangelical theologian Glen Stassen, and Catholics Eli McCarthy and Maryann Cusimano Love; it was endorsed by the World Council of Churches in 2013. The just-peace ethic insists that peacemaking practices, virtues, and criteria are constitutive of Christian discipleship. More controversially, however, the conference document demands that Catholics "no longer teach or use just-war theory." There is no "just-war," it claims, and "just-war theory" is used more to endorse war than to prevent or limit it.

Allman and Winright are, respectively, scholars of "*jus post bellum*" and "just policing," two new just-war categories they see as reformulating the theory for an era of unstable states, repressive governments, ongoing civil conflicts, and terrorism. *Jus post bellum* specifies that war must have a just cause and be conducted within constraints such as noncombatant immunity (stipulations of traditional just-war theory). War must also be conducted and concluded so as to foster post-war rebuilding of civil society, rule of law, democratic institutions, and human security. Just policing refers to the limited use of force to ensure respect for national and international law and protection of human rights. Allman and Winright argue that just-war theory is far more than a rationalization of violence. It is an indispensable framework for protecting the innocent, and as such, expresses Jesus' command to "Love thy neighbor." They see the just-war criterion of last resort as already implying a robust commitment to proactive peacemaking, and believe that the Catholic Church does and should validate the use of limited armed force (the use of weapons to physically incapacitate, hurt, or kill), especially for national defense and humanitarian intervention. Allman and Winright call for "an honest dialogue on the church's ethics of war and peace in all its richness and diversity"—a dialogue they see the recent Rome conference as abandoning.

CNS PHOTO / PAUL HARING

A crowd fills St. Peter's Square as Pope Francis leads a vigil to pray for peace in Syria.

Yet if the conference document shortchanged the role that armed force still plays in the Catholic commitment to justice, Allman and Winright downplay the clear trend in post–Vatican II papal teaching that advocates nonviolent resolutions to conflict and condemns war and violence in general. The fact is that "church teaching" is paradoxical, if not internally conflicted, because it both condemns and permits armed force. This is especially true of popes since Vatican II. An honest dialogue must recognize that fact—and, I would argue, consider whether this very ambiguity is part of the "richness" of the Catholic peace witness.

Christian social ethics has long contended with the problem of how to restrain violence. There is certainly no questioning Jesus' own nonviolent example. Positively, Jesus' Gospel of compassion, inclusion, forgiveness, reconciliation, and love of God and neighbor is about creating and expanding communities of love, justice, and solidarity. There is surely something paradoxical if not self-contradictory about Christians, starting with Augustine (and his teacher Ambrose), who justify killing in the name of love and the Gospel.

According to Mark's Gospel, Jesus did distinguish between what belongs to God and to Caesar (12:17); and the earliest New Testament author, Paul, commends obedience to the Roman government in at least some respects (Romans 13: 1–7). Teachers and theologians in the early church warned against killing and military service, but tombstone inscriptions of the era also reveal that some Christians did serve in the Roman army. By the fourth century, Augustine defends Christian participation in government, the military, war, and killing as necessary to punish evil, preserve the social order, achieve temporal peace, and express love of neighbor. Thomas Aquinas, an important source of contemporary Catholic social teaching, grants that it is usually a sin to wage war, but agrees with Augustine that war can be just within limits, especially to protect "the common weal."

Unlike the historic "peace churches," Roman Catholic social ethics has always seen the church and its members as responsible to and in the world, building up just social practices, institutions, laws, and governments. The Roman Catholic Church is not a separatist or sectarian church, but a socially engaged and constructive one, even though its message is prophetic and countercultural. At the same time, popes, other Catholic leaders, and official Catholic organizations consistently call for nonviolent conflict resolution, seeing the way to genuine peace as the creation of just and participatory social, economic, and political institutions. In the words of Paul VI, "If you want peace, work for justice."

Since the Second Vatican Council, then, the Roman Catholic contribution to a political ethics of conflict transformation has leaned heavily toward peacebuilding and away from just-war, especially at the level of magisterial teaching. To be sure, just-war thinking has never been repudiated. *Gaudium et spes* recognizes a duty of the international community to prevent "crimes against humanity," yet also makes just-war subordinate to "fostering peace," condemns "total war," and describes war as a "horror and perversity" that should eventually be outlawed. *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* elucidates the interdependence of the peace of Christ, justice, and love, defining war as the failure of peace.

John Paul II explicitly affirms the use of force for humanitarian purposes, and Benedict XVI endorses the "responsibility to protect." Yet the focus of recent magisterial statements has been the incompatibility of violence with transformational justice.

John XXIII asserts, "it is contrary to reason to hold that war is now a suitable way to restore rights which have been violated." John Paul, Benedict, and Francis all echo Paul VI's cry, "No more war, war never again!" John Paul reiterates that "Violence is evil," "a lie," "the enemy of justice," and "a defeat for humanity," refusing to bless military interventions such as the Gulf War and a U.S. invasion of Iraq. Benedict XVI concurs that "violence never comes from God," and explicitly embraces Gospel nonviolence, calling "love your enemies" its "magna carta." Confronted by the prospect of a military intervention in Syria by the United States and France, Pope Francis insisted that "War brings on war! Violence brings on violence," and led a peace vigil in St. Peter's Square. In his message to the Rome conference, Francis urged the revitalization of active nonviolence and peacemaking, yet reaffirmed governments' right to legitimate defense.

Local bishops' conferences appropriate this papal peacebuilding mandate variously. In Medellín, Colombia, the Latin American bishops called for a nonviolent church in 1968. While endorsing a policy of "strictly conditioned" nuclear deterrence in the 1983 pastoral letter "The Challenge of Peace," the bishops of the United States also embraced gospel nonviolence. In "The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace"(1993), the bishops were more critical of just-war theory, underlining the potential of nonviolence as a principle of politics and government. In 2009, the bishops of Eastern Africa urged an end to hostilities tearing apart their continent, yet demanded international humanitarian "intervention" on behalf of the Sudanese people. Bishops of the "Arab Regions" responded to the "horrible" suffering in Syria and Iraq by asserting that "without true reconciliation based on justice and mutual forgiveness there will be no peace." Nevertheless, like the popes, they upheld "the right of the oppressed to self-defense," and called on "the international community" to use "proportionate force to stop aggression and injustice against ethnic and religious minorities."

Church teaching about the use of force is paradoxical because it is not simply a stringent version of just-war theory that prioritizes nonviolent peacebuilding and accepts armed force as a rare necessity. The paradox is that the teaching, and the popes in particular, use seemingly absolutist language against violence—violence is presented as a flat contradiction of the Gospel—while at the same time validating the

limited use of armed force. This evident inconsistency is open to several interpretations. Is it simple incoherence? A pastoral concession? Or does it mark an unfolding and still conflicted shift from just-war thinking to pacifism (as the Rome conference document envisions)?

In my view, the paradox may be intentional, salutary, and permanent. On the one hand, Christians believe that God's reign of love, reconciliation, and peace has been inaugurated decisively in the ministry of Jesus Christ, augmenting for all the human capacity for justice and reconciliation. On the other hand, there is a deep and real "Augustinian" undertow in a world still marred by sin and evil. In the words of *Gaudium et spes*, "Insofar as men are sinful, the threat of war hangs over them, and hang over them it will until the return of Christ. But insofar as men vanquish sin by a union of love, they will vanquish violence as well."

Although Christians may accept their own unavoidable suffering as the cost of discipleship, they are called to protect and empower the vulnerable, and to resist all suffering that is unjustly caused. In guiding the church, perhaps the popes retain versions of just-war theory (especially as humanitarian intervention) because they recognize what is often the urgent need to protect the innocent. At the same time, the popes have made peacebuilding the first, distinctive, and most important role of the church as church. They do not explicitly exclude the rare justification of armed force, but they do not see validating violence as part of the church's mission, nor of papal leadership.

In the United States, media attention and theological debate since the Rome conference have focused disproportionately on the merits of just-war theory, to the detriment of promoting grassroots peacebuilding efforts. "Just peace," not just war, should be the distinguishing mark and calling of the global Catholic Church. Just peace would involve conflict-transforming practices such as direct nonviolent action, diplomatic initiatives, interreligious political organization in civil society, unarmed civilian peacekeeping, public rituals of repentance, and initiatives of reconciliation. Just-war theory can play a part, especially by pressuring politicians and government officials to adhere to the moral criteria they claim to honor. For example, Kenneth Himes, OFM, offers a trenchant critique of U.S. drone policy specifically on the grounds that it violates just-war standards, especially noncombatant immunity and legitimate authority.

The church everywhere must be urged, motivated, and expected to promote peacebuilding. This is a mission in which U.S. Catholics and most of their leaders have fallen grievously short. Yet social scientists Maria Stephan and Erika Chenoweth argue in *Why Civil Resistance Works* that nonviolent resistance is twice as successful as armed revolt, producing resolutions that are much less likely to devolve into renewed violence. The Catholic Peacebuilding Network (sponsored by Notre Dame's Kroc Institute and Catholic Relief Services) is an ecumenical and interreligious coalition that builds on and expands the church's role as an agent for peace, especially in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia. The Nonviolent Peaceforce reports that when unarmed civilian peacekeepers accompany women in South Sudan, the incidence of rape is zero. In its Women Peacemakers program, the Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego, a Catholic institution, spotlights the important peacebuilding role of women. In David Gushee's *Evangelical Peacemakers*, *Sojourners* editor Jim Wallis describes ten or more successful public, religiously inspired initiatives in the United States to avoid or limit the use of armed force by the U.S. government. Both the United Nations and the United States Institute of Peace now recognize the important role of faith-based peacebuilding.

Active, nonviolent political mobilization and resistance can no longer be dismissed as utopian, naïve, or marginal. In many cases, they work. Gospel peacemaking is an integral dimension of discipleship and a powerful form of real-world politics, to which the global Catholic Church is not yet as committed as it should be. Catholics who are not directly touched by violence too rarely appreciate not only the devastating effects it has on other people's lives and societies, but also their own complicity in that devastation and their own power to bring change.

Francis's 2015 encyclical, *Laudato si'*, recognizes that the reason for lack of action on climate change is not knowledge, good theory, or the support of religious teaching. It is lack of political will. Francis calls the Catholic Church and all faith traditions to create momentum for environmental action through interreligious prayer, public shows of support, protests, and symbolic actions. One result was the Catholic-led pilgrimage from Rome to Paris to urge that the 2015 UN summit on climate change (COP 21) enact meaningful and binding policy on greenhouse-gas emissions. *Laudato si'* has raised consciousness around the world, heightened commitment by Catholics, evoked corresponding documents from Jewish and Muslim leaders, and stimulated programs and initiatives such as the Global Catholic Climate Movement and the U.S.-based Catholic Climate Covenant. Why not a similar effort on just peace and peacebuilding? In June, the bishops of South Sudan, citing the Rome conference, called their congregations to work for justice, peace, and reconciliation to end their country's civil war. Peacebuilding is a mandate for the global church as well.

The message of fifty years of social teaching is that the entire church's mission is to celebrate God's gift of peace. As peacebuilders, Christians are to take that gift beyond the church, nourishing it with other faith traditions. Catholic peacebuilding can work as leaven in societies desperately afflicted by violence, and in societies with a history of violent intervention abroad. ■

Lisa Sowle Cahill *is a professor of theology at Boston College.*

Eduardo M. Peñalver

My America

IT'S NOT TRUMP'S

On the morning of September 11, 2001, my mother-in-law was still in a subway on her way to work in the north tower of the World Trade Center when it was hit by American Airlines Flight 11. For a tense few hours, we waited and worried, not knowing where she was. Eventually, after walking back to Brooklyn from Lower Manhattan, she managed to call home from a pay phone. Two years ago, my wife took my two sons to visit the September 11 Memorial at Ground Zero. As she struggled to explain to my younger son (then five years old) why hijackers had flown airliners into his grandmother's workplace, killing thousands of people, he quietly traced with his finger the path of American Airlines Flight 77 on a map on the wall. A blonde woman rushed up to him and yelled: "Stop touching the map!" Confused, my wife asked the woman whether she worked at the memorial. "No," she said, "but I am an *American*, and it is disrespectful to me."

Judge Gonzalo Curiel is the son of immigrants from Mexico. He was born in East Chicago, Indiana, and earned his law degree at the University of Indiana. As a federal prosecutor, he was responsible for jailing members of the Mexican Arellano Felix cartel. When the cartel threatened his life, he lived for a time under federal protection. His nomination to the federal District Court was confirmed by the Senate in a unanimous voice vote. Earlier this summer, Donald Trump shocked observers—including many in his own party—when he attacked Judge Curiel as incapable of serving as an impartial judge in the Trump University fraud case because he is "Mexican."

My dad was born in Havana, Cuba. My mom is the daughter of Swiss immigrants—dairy farmers in Washington State. In my extended family are in-laws of Mexican, African-American, Trinidadian, Japanese, and Anglo heritage. They include Catholics, Adventists, Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists. My wife is a naturalized U.S. citizen who was born in India. We are raising our sons Catholic, but they also go to Hindu "Sunday school," where they learn Sanskrit chants and study Hindu mythology. Sometimes they like to debate whether—when you die—you go to heaven with Jesus or reincarnate. Born and raised in the middle of central New York State, they have developed a love of the outdoors, a respect for rural America, and a fairly sophisticated taste in country music. I see in my extended family—and in my sons' baroque cultural inheritance—a reflection of America's richness and diversity.

Donald Trump's monochromatic vision of America—his attack on Judge Curiel as non-American, his questioning of President Obama's birthplace, his insulting comments about the Gold Star mother of Humayun Khan (an American Muslim soldier killed in Iraq), his refusal to reject the embrace of white nationalists, and his frequent denigration of immigrants (or at least immigrants who are not, like his first and third wives, from Europe)—feels like the assault launched on my sons by the woman at the September 11 Memorial. And so the current presidential election has become the most personal one of my life. The anxiety it has evoked is stoked by my love of my sons and my uncertainty about what Trumpism means for the kind of future this country—their country—has in store for them. Trump's racial rhetoric has given the election the feel of a referendum on my family's right to understand ourselves as authentically American.

Captain Humayun Khan's grave at Arlington National Cemetery

To say that this is how the election is shaping up for me is not to assert that this election means (or must mean) the same thing for everyone. The most decent Trump supporters

appear to back him because they are fed up with what they see as a corrupt political system. Many of them are also motivated by an overpowering distrust of Hillary Clinton. They view Trump as an outsider who will shake things up, and they are willing to overlook his divisive racial rhetoric.

For others among Trump's supporters, his racial rhetoric seems to be part of the appeal. They are either fed up with political correctness or they long for a mythical past in which navigating America's racial landscape was much easier. There is no question that the speed and scale of America's demographic transformation from a (mostly) white nation to the current kaleidoscopic mosaic has been breathtaking. In the 1950s, when my parents were teenagers, the United States was 90 percent white. Today, it is just 70 percent white, and Latinos are approaching a fifth of the total population. Last year, for the first time in American history, whites represented a minority of those under the age of five. The rapidity of this transformation has left some of those formerly in the majority feeling disoriented and even angry. Many of them see in Donald Trump's version of America a comforting affirmation of an order that seems to be slipping from their grasp.

The response to Trump from my conservative coreligionists has been—with a few exceptions—disappointing. A number of Christian conservatives have made the calculated decision to back Trump on the logic that any Republican nominee—no matter how divisive his racial rhetoric—is better than the prospect of Hillary Clinton as president. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan described Trump's attack on Judge Curiel as the "textbook definition of a racist comment." But that racist statement, and many others along the way, did not lead Ryan to step back from his endorsement. "It's a binary choice," Ryan said. "It's either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton.... [A]nd I know where I want to go."

Not content to treat Trump as merely the lesser of two evils, some Evangelicals have chosen to baptize him. James Dobson claimed to have spoken with someone who was present when Trump accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. He is a "baby Christian," Dobson said. He may not know how to speak the language of faith in a sophisticated way, but he is "tender to things of the Spirit."

Even some Christian conservatives who have declined to support Trump have refused to do so not primarily because of his racial rhetoric but rather because they doubt he will actually provide an effective bulwark against the expansion of LGBT civil rights. For example, traditional-marriage advocate Maggie Gallagher wrote in the *National Review*:

> People ask me how Trump could be worse than Hillary Clinton. Here's the main way: He would leave in place Obama's regulatory structure, confirming second-class citizenship for Christians. Meaning that it would now have bipartisan approval and that we would have no mainstream political party from which to fight.

LAMENT

We couldn't get our special wine
(And Pharaoh said, "Not me, not mine").

We're not the people to complain,
But at that very moment, rain—

As in some awful movie—fell
In solid sheets, vacation hell!

I'd never seen a thicker flood
Of first-born deaths, and frogs, and blood.

The awning was insanely battered,
The couple on the beach side spattered—

Their ruined anniversary!
Just a bad joke, it seems to me;

And us, without our special wine
(And Pharaoh said, "Not me, not mine").

—Sarah Ruden

Sarah Ruden's translation of the Oresteia *tragedies is part of a Penguin Random House collection,* The Greek Plays, *published in August of this year. Her new translation of Augustine's* Confessions *and* The Face of Water: A Translator on Beauty and Meaning in the Bible *will appear in early 2017.*

To their credit, some religious conservatives have singled out Trump's divisive racial rhetoric for condemnation. Princeton's Robert P. George and papal biographer George Weigel focused on Trump's "appeals to racial and ethnic fears and prejudice" (and forthright support of torture) in their March 7, 2016, statement against Trump in the *National Review*. But they also took pains to observe that "there is nothing in his campaign or his previous record that gives us grounds for confidence that he genuinely shares our commitments to the right to life, to religious freedom and the rights of conscience, to rebuilding the marriage culture, or to subsidiarity and the principle of limited constitutional government." What they did not say is whether—if there were grounds for such confidence—Trump's racialized appeals would still be disqualifying.

One bright spot on the religious right has been columnist David French. In a column urging Evangelicals not to support Trump, French homed in on Trump's racism. He noted that Trump "retweets the most vile online racists. Everywhere he goes, white supremacists follow, tormenting his online opponents with horrific images and overt threats." I suspect it is no coincidence that French also happens to have a multiracial family, having adopted a daughter from Ethiopia.

This disjointed response to Trump from the religious right should come as no surprise to anyone who has followed presidential politics for the past few decades. The framing of our national political debate as a culture war over "intrinsic evils"—such as abortion and same-sex marriage—in which all other issues pale in importance has painted many religious conservatives into a corner. For decades, they have acquiesced in the Republican "Southern strategy." Any candidate who will credibly defend their agenda on those points must be endorsed, no matter how odious his views on any number of other (by definition, less important) questions. As James Dobson put it, "All I can tell you is that we have only two choices, Hillary or Donald. Hillary scares me to death." Absolutism around abortion and (more recently) same-sex marriage has left a great many Christian leaders without adequate conceptual tools to grapple with the significance of Trump's naked racial appeals.

On July 24, I took my sons to Cooperstown, New York, to see the induction of Ken Griffey Jr. into the baseball Hall of Fame. (Having grown up in Puyallup, Washington, I am a lifelong Seattle Mariners fan, a perennially frustrating loyalty that I have succeeded in passing on to my sons.) Griffey shared the stage with the New York Mets' Mike Piazza, who was also being inducted this year. In his induction address, Piazza spoke movingly about his father, who was the son of Italian immigrants and who was deeply proud of his Italian heritage. He said a few words in Italian that I did not understand. He also talked about being sent by the Dodgers to the Dominican Republic to learn some Spanish so he could communicate with pitchers from Latin America (gesturing to the legendary Dominican pitcher, Pedro Martinez, who was seated on the stage behind him along with the other Hall of Famers who were present that day). He told the story of receiving hitting instruction from the great Reggie Smith, who helped Piazza tighten his swing with drills Smith had learned in Japan. As I sat listening to Piazza, under a warm July sun in this small town in upstate New York, it occurred to me that the belated (and still incomplete) racial inclusion found in America's pastime perfectly mirrors the imperfectly inclusive vision of American national identity that I hope will survive the current election.

Although I sometimes joke about fleeing with my family to Mexico if Donald Trump is elected our next president, there really is nowhere for us to go. Where else but in the United States of America would my improbably Cuban-Swiss-Indian-Hindu-Catholic-country-music-and-baseball-loving sons even exist, let alone feel at home? What else is there to call them but "American"? ■

Eduardo M. Peñalver *is dean and a professor of law at Cornell Law School. The views expressed in the piece are his own, and should not be attributed to Cornell University or Cornell Law School.*

PHOTO BY MEV PULEO

At the Foot of the Cross

Remembering Ann Manganaro, SL

Kathleen DeSutter Jordan

In June 1990, I was present in El Salvador when the guerilla leader Maria Serrano came down from her mountain headquarters, during one of the bloodiest periods of the Salvadoran Civil War, to join a celebration honoring my lifelong friend, Ann Manganaro, on her twenty-fifth anniversary as a Sister of Loretto. One of the highest-ranking women in the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), Maria was dressed in fatigues and accompanied by several armed rebels. A small group of us, including Ann's mother Mildred, had come from the United States for the occasion, and were gathered on the porch of Ann's mud bungalow in Guarjila, a resettlement village in the province of Chalatenango, where as a Jesuit Refugee Service volunteer she had helped start a medical clinic. It was a crisp, sunny morning, and despite the proximity of war, a palpable joy and festivity filled the air. People streamed across the hillsides, gathering for the celebration. Maria could not stay long, but before leaving she addressed Mildred with a broad smile: "We don't have much to bring you, but we bring you our hearts. Thank you for giving us Ana!" To which Mildred brightly responded: "We are not *giving* you Ana—she's just on loan!"

Ann's jubilee celebration in Guarjila took place on Trinity Sunday, just seven months after the brutal November 1989 murders of the Jesuit priests and two women at the University of Central America in San Salvador, and four months after the horrific bombing of a nearby refugee resettlement village, Corral de Piedra, in which five people were killed, including four children. A physician, Ann had been called to aid the victims, and subsequently wrote a stirring account of the incident, "When Citizens Become Targets," for *Commonweal* (April 6, 1990). Her commitment to serving the Salvadoran people, and to living among them, informed the jubilee homily by Jon Cortina, SJ, lauding the faithfulness of Ann's vowed life and the clarity of her "preferential option for the poor."

Kathleen DeSutter Jordan *is a retired nursing supervisor and a former associate editor of the* Catholic Worker.

Ann Manganaro with the author in 1985

The lives of those we know and love present wonderful mysteries of grace. How did a shy young woman from the suburban Midwest turn into someone brave enough to travel by foot from village to village, tending the wounded and training health-care providers? How did my friend become a person renowned for being able to calmly talk her way through military check points—and even, on occasion, out of a commander's office (she told me how her blood ran cold when he asked her, "Are you with Maryknoll?")—in the very same province, Chalatenango, where the North American women religious martyred in December 1980 had worked, and where Maryknoll Sisters Ita Ford and Maura Clarke are buried. Year after year, knowing Ann Manganaro gave me an intimate and inspiring look at the ups and downs of a life dedicated to a vision of good works based on faith, even as it bestowed the joys of a friendship that grew, in mutual regard and reward, over three decades.

Ann and I had met in high school in 1960. We had both grown up in devout Catholic families in suburban St. Louis; Ann was a year behind me at Nerinx Hall, a girls' school run by the Sisters of Loretto in Webster Groves, Missouri. I remember her in those years as quiet, even introverted, and an exceptionally good student. At Nerinx, the sisters created a lively and congenial environment where academic excellence, emotional maturation, and Christian values were nurtured and modeled. Following high school, Ann and I joined sizeable contingents of Nerinx grads entering the Loretto novitiate in rural Kentucky. In the early 1960s, during Vatican II, Loretto provided what in retrospect seems like the best of two worlds. During our first years of novitiate, a semi-monastic environment prevailed, with emphases on daily Eucharist and the Divine Office, silence, choir (with a good amount of Gregorian chant), study, and manual labor. After we returned to St. Louis to complete our studies at Webster College, the challenge involved learning to recognize and respond, as *Gaudium et spes* exhorted us, to "the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties" of the world around us—"especially among those who are poor or who are in any way afflicted."

It's remarkable to look back and see how what Vatican II called the "signs of the times" came to challenge the dominant views of church and state Ann and I had grown up with. For example, while the fresh air ushered in by the council renewed the prayer life of the church, the release of *Humanae vitae* unleashed endless questioning of the church's teaching authority. The ongoing war in Vietnam was challenged not only by pacifists, but also by those applying just-war criteria. The courageous, prophetic witness of Dr. King and the civil-rights movement came to stand in stark contrast with images of cities in flames and the assassinations of our national leaders, including of course King himself. Miraculously—a favorite word of Ann's—we were given, precisely at this crucial junction, a vividly compelling study of scripture as a "living word" or a "two-edged sword," a foundation that linked the contemplative novitiate years with the challenges raised by social-justice issues, providing a grounding for the rest of our lives.

Following college, in the summer of 1969 Ann and I joined another friend to volunteer at the Catholic Worker community in New York City. It would prove to be a sort of second novitiate. In *The Other America*, Michael Harrington credited the Catholic Worker for teaching him about "the terrible reality of involuntary poverty and the magnificent ideal of voluntary poverty." Ann's introduction to the Catholic Worker, and to the witness of its co-founders Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, put flesh and bones on her faith, and became a sort of substratum for her life. "It was just a summer," she recounted in an interview years later, but "the Worker's particular slant on the Gospel"—integrating the works of mercy with the works of justice and living with the poor—was "a real source of revelation that has since been a strong source of nurturance for me."

After that summer in New York, Ann returned to St. Louis and began teaching young children (the initial charism of the Sisters of Loretto). I remained at the Catholic Worker, soon to leave the Sisters of Loretto, and while Ann and I never again lived together, by God's grace our friendship not only persisted but deepened and expanded over the years. We wrote one another faithfully, and after I was married Ann would visit my family and me in New York at least once a year. We spent time together in St. Louis in the summers, when my family and I were visiting relatives. Good fortune also made it possible for us to meet at the Loretto Motherhouse several times over the years, and for both my husband Pat and me to visit Ann in El Salvador.

In St. Louis, Ann continued teaching young children, first at an inner-city parochial school, then at the New City School, a progressive elementary school. After that she pioneered and led the Neighborhood School, a racially

PHOTO BY PATRICK JORDAN

Mural of Oscar Romero & Ann Manganaro at the Clínica Ana Manganaro in Guarjila, El Salvador

and economically diverse school that assisted poorer families through a tuition-sharing program. For Ann this was a time of questioning and frustration regarding the church and religious life, and for a while she stopped praying and attending Mass regularly. Perhaps her scripture studies and her summer experience at the Catholic Worker collided to bring this "crisis of faith" to the fore. At any rate, one afternoon in 1970 she took her Bible in hand and walked to nearby Forest Park. There, sitting beneath a tree, she read the Gospel of Matthew from start to finish. When she was done, she said to herself: "*This* is true! *This* is what I want my life to be based on." By the time she left the park that afternoon, Ann was a changed woman. She was all of twenty-four years old.

From then on—in small, quotidian ways as well as grander ones—Ann's life would reflect the advice offered by Pedro Arupe, SJ: "Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, falling in love in quite an absolute final way." Part and parcel of this new and absolute commitment to a Gospel-centered life was Ann's decision to embrace voluntary poverty. She had grown up in a comfortable middle-class home, and at times she wondered: Who was she to be talking about living poorly? Such questions spurred small lifestyle changes that eventually evolved into the radical voluntary poverty her life came to reflect. Her diet became basically vegetarian; her wardrobe became simpler and sparser. The Sisters of Loretto had stopped wearing a traditional religious habit in the mid-1960s, and early on Ann wore dungarees and sweatshirts. Eventually she pared down to an almost habit-like outfit that proved as easily recognizable in the corridors of St. Louis's Cardinal Glennon Hospital as it was in the hills of Chalatenango: modest black skirt; white blouse, sometimes with a small decoration or embroidery; and flat, Chinese-style shoes, like slippers or ballet shoes (Ann swore by them, and seemed to have had no trouble walking in them for hours across El Salvador). A Maryknoll sister Ann lived with for a while later told me, "Ann showed us how to live the vow of poverty."

While six years would pass between that transformative day in the park and her decision to make final vows as a Sister of Loretto in 1976, the clarity of conviction Ann had reached grounded and guided her. From then on, her faith and prayer were nurtured by active participation in several communities: an informal small Christian community, called Kopavi, in St. Louis; the Loretto community; and the "basement church" at St. Louis University. Ann loved music and grew to appreciate the psalm/hymns created by the St. Louis Jesuits. Prayer in common and sharing in the Eucharist were important in the years she lived at Karen House, the St. Louis Catholic Worker house she helped found in 1977. And over the years in El Salvador, along with her own personal time for prayer and reflection, Ann would say morning prayer with the Oblate of the Sacred Heart sisters, who also lived in Guarjila.

Friendship and community were essential for Ann. Making final vows on a cold winter night in St. Louis in 1976, surrounded by friends, Sisters of Loretto, and family members, she finished her own eloquent personal vow statement, then asked the other sisters present to join her in reciting the closing portion of the traditional vow ceremony. It was an inspiring affirmation of how central Loretto was and would continue to be in her life. Over the five years Ann lived in El Salvador, she regularly wrote letters to the community, single-spaced typewritten pages describing her work and the lives of the Salvadorans she had come to know and love. With journalistic acuity, she chronicled the ongoing daily warfare around her, and the culpability of the U.S.-backed Salvadoran military. These letters inevitably included an appeal for readers to contact their government representatives and insist on ending support for the brutal injustices perpetrated by the Salvadoran government and its military. Some years later, when Ann was ill and had come home from El Salvador, she showed me a letter she'd received from Sister Mary Luke Tobin, the extraordinary leader of the Sisters of Loretto and one of the few women invited to Vatican II. I was struck not only by the great love and support Luke was sending at a time of trial for Ann, but

COURTESY MARILYN LORENZ

also by a question she addressed to her—"What should we [Loretto] be doing in Central America?"—and the faith in Ann's judgment that it disclosed.

By God's grace, as I mentioned, our own friendship flourished over the years. Common interests and values—a love for Loretto, for the church and the Catholic Worker, and, of course, for the St. Louis Cardinals—bound us together in support and challenge. We were able to pray together, tease, correct, advise, argue with, and encourage one another. Ann delighted in watching my children grow up, and we were fortunate, even with the miles between us, to be able to accompany one another in significant moments. Ann was with us shortly before Hannah's birth and when Justin was baptized. Pat and I were present when she made her final vows. In the summer of 1991, when my mother was killed in an automobile accident, Ann delayed a return flight to El Salvador in order to sit with us, offering incomparable solace.

Along with these important points of contact at crisis moments came the simple pleasures of friendship, of knowing someone well. Ann loved music. Her vow of poverty notwithstanding, she loved to eat. And she drove like a bat out of hell! I first discovered this the summer we took a "drive away" car from St. Louis to New York, and I found myself repeating "slow down!" over and over. Years later, traversing El Salvador's rough and military-patrolled roadways, Ann was driving a small group of us in a Land Cruiser to Guarjila for her jubilee. More than once I hollered from the back seat (to appreciative nods from my fellow travelers): "Ann, it's okay if we get there five minutes later—take it easy! Slow down!"

There were many other occasions over the years when I was concerned for Ann's safety or well-being. As she began seriously looking into living in Central America in 1987, the first place she considered was Guatemala. My heart sank in fear for her safety; when I brought it up, she told me gently that any place she would go would inevitably pose dangers—which proved true in spades when she wound up in El Salvador in the midst of its civil war. I repeatedly encouraged Ann to make sure she had companions or a community wherever she did decide to go. Despite genuine efforts to make this happen, she often ended up far too isolated. It's hard not to think that the loneliness she experienced over the years in El Salvador was as traumatic for her as the horrors of the war itself—but it is even harder to think she would have chosen otherwise.

In the summer of 1975, Ann overcame her natural reticence to tell me about a growing friendship between her and John Kavanaugh, SJ, a Jesuit priest at St. Louis University and later a columnist for *America*. She greatly admired his roles as a gifted teacher, mentor, author, and chaplain to students; he also played the guitar and had a good singing voice. It was clear to me that Ann was falling in love. Their relationship—one of uncommon depth and fidelity to their religious vows—would become life-giving for each, illuminating and strengthening the path toward what Dante called "the Love which moves the sun and the other stars."

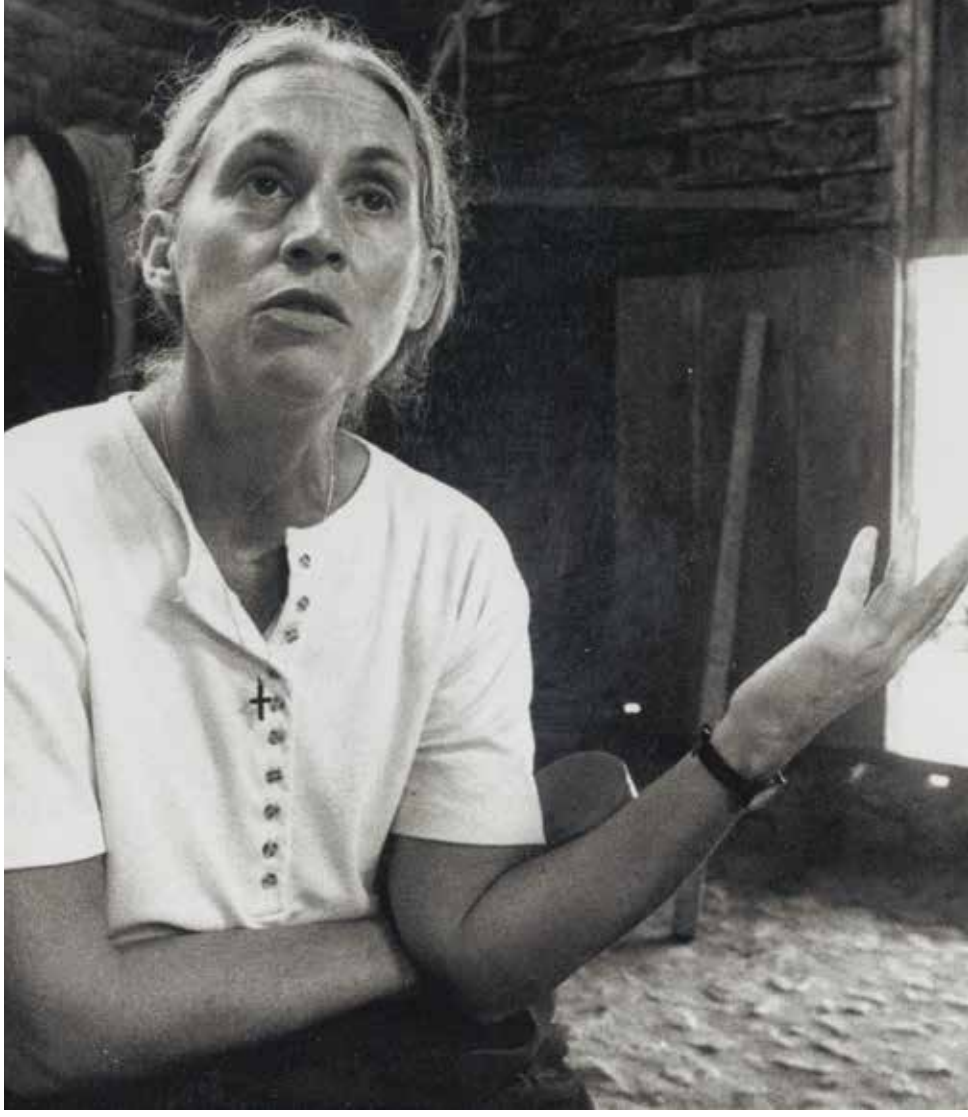
It was during this time that Ann began writing poetry. Her poems, she said, were "intensely personal," and while she had no intention of publishing them, she would often send them to me, written out in her distinctive hand. While her earliest poems were replete with images flowing from her love of nature, and her later ones resonant with the sounds and faces of El Salvador, her middle poems were written primarily for John. A certain haltingness, bespeaking new love, comes through in the first of them, soon replaced by cadences reflecting the "utter amazement" she felt at being "loved so marvelously, so reciprocally." At root was a sense of the essential sacrifice included in their love for one another, as in these tremendously poignant lines from a poem she wrote in 1979: *"A toast to the beautiful brown-eyed children we might / Have had… / Our daughters and sons remain / Unborn, lovely, laden with all the grace / Which by God's grace we learn to bear elsewhere."* On the back of this poem Ann wrote: "I think you are the only person besides John I've ever shown either of these to, but perhaps I'll be braver now."

"Braver" indeed did Ann become, and in so many realms of her life. Having decided to study medicine, she began premed studies in St. Louis in the spring of 1977, not long after making final vows. That fall she moved into Karen House, whose address, "1840 Hogan," would be her "home" address for the rest of her life. There Ann took on her share of the myriad tasks necessary to make a Catholic Worker house of hospitality function, and continued doing so while finishing medical school—with honors—in 1982, and a residency in pediatrics, in 1985. Around this time, she confessed to feeling "very tired." That was unsurprising, given the many demands on her time and energy. But in June 1985, she discovered she had breast cancer. Surgery was followed by months of chemotherapy, during which she continued working both at Cardinal Glennon Hospital and at Karen House, with occasional respites at her family's home. The experience gave her a "keen sense" of her own mortality, Ann said, and an "overwhelming and almost literally uplifting sense of being loved by so many people."

Her plans to go to Central America were delayed by her doctors, who advised two years of close follow-up. Finally, in January of 1988, Ann wrote to tell me that she had arrived in El Salvador. Despite the violence and brutality of civil war, the country quickly became home. She described feeling almost overwhelmed by the loving welcome Salvadorans showed her—"just because I came, just because I'm willing to be here with them in the midst of all their suffering and struggles," as she wrote in June of that year. Working with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), she went to Guarjila, a newly established resettlement village for refugees who had been forced to flee across the Honduran border and were returning to build a new life. The diocese of Chalatenango had organized a program to address the significant health problems of the returning refugees; health promoters in each

village were chosen for training, and Ann, along with other international volunteers, helped develop the training program.

For the next five years Ann would remain "willing" to live amid the dangers of war and the suffering of those she lived with and came to love. In the midst of death-squad slayings, bombings, and disappearances in Guarjila and surrounding villages, she was able to provide routine health care, and often acute care for gunshot or bombing wounds. On one occasion, as she wrote me, a diagnostic mnemonic from med school days—"Hot as a hare, red as a beet, mad as a hatter"—helped her diagnose a case of acute poisoning and save a young man's life. Her primary work, however—and what became her major long-term contribution to health care in Guarjila and its surrounding area—was in the field of maternal and infant care, and the ongoing training of the local health-care promoters she taught to provide it. Ann loved babies, and took great delight in being part of a team that helped reduce both infant and maternal morbidity and mortality.



Ann Manganaro in 1993

The founding name of the Sisters of Loretto was "Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross." In El Salvador, Ann was clearly at the foot of the cross, day and night, with the Salvadoran people. Inspired by the vitality, tenacity, and courage of those with whom she lived and worked—"I find myself learning from them what I always hoped to be true," she wrote, "that love is stronger than death"—she nevertheless acknowledged "terrible pangs of loss and loneliness." A letter of May 1990 describes "a sense of doom and foreboding," and confesses that "all the sorrows and horrors I've witnessed in the last two and a half years finally caught up with me." Her work was "most satisfying," yet it was "overshadowed by the reality of the war that penetrates all life here, including my own." Though solidarity with fellow JRS volunteers and others serving in El Salvador bolstered her spirit, at intervals Ann experienced painful mood swings, and in these periods described herself as feeling "preoccupied, foolish, awkward, anguished at times, off-balance," and prone to a great sense of failure and disappointment. At such low moments, her balance returned primarily via prayer, which restored her, she wrote, through "sheer literal grace."

As the war in El Salvador wound down and then—in January 1992—officially ended, Ann described the complexities of the calm that peace had ushered in, writing that "the full impact of the war, of all the pain and death and destruction is only beginning to be felt," and noting that only now "do we begin to let our emotional barriers down and realize what we've lived through." Describing a retreat she'd made that fall as an experience of "deep grace," she wrote of feeling she'd been given "a heart of flesh" and of being "re-centered, refocused, rekindled somehow," adding that "I hope it lasts!" It wasn't long, however, before she admitted to feeling weary, "very tired and very sad." She marked it down to knowing she'd be leaving El Salvador soon (she was exploring the possibility of going with JRS to Mozambique), and to "post-trauma stress," which she described with textbook-like precision: "I had four years of tragedies stored up inside me. All of these memories start surfacing, one after another.... You store up a lot of experiences you don't adequately mourn or grieve or even feel."

She was, as always, deeply immersed in the community around her, a world very far from my own; and thus I was taken completely by surprise one morning at work in April of 1993, to hear Ann's voice on the phone, telling me she was at home. "Ann, how *are* you?" I asked. "Well, Kathleen, I'm a little under the weather," she responded. In fact, she had returned to St. Louis after having suffered weeks of fatigue and intermittent chest pain, nausea, and loss of appetite. One afternoon, exhausted, she lay down to nap. Palpating her own abdomen, she was shocked to discover that her liver was swollen and misshapen. Only

PHOTO BY MEV PULEO

after having completed an advanced training program for health promoters did she see a doctor in San Salvador, who advised her to return home for further tests. By the time Ann called me, scans had confirmed metastases of her breast cancer to her liver, sternum, and spine. She went into the hospital that evening.

From then on we talked almost every day. Ann asked that I and other friends "keep praying for me to keep my spirit strong," and admitted to feeling scared. "I think I'm afraid of dying, but mostly that I won't have one more day to feel good," she told me. "I feel so sad and depressed and *robbed*!" Soon tests revealed further metastases. Ann informed her doctors that should she fall into a coma, she did not want to be put on a ventilator. She did opt for more chemotherapy, however. "I want to have some more time with my family and friends," she explained to her oncologist.

Fortunately, there was more time—but not enough. These were incredibly rich days, however. Both in the hospital and at her mother's large and gracious home, where she had grown up with her eight siblings—her father, a doctor himself, had died fifteen years earlier—Ann allowed us to accompany her day and night, to massage and bathe her, to hold her hands. She reveled in prayer and song and silence, and kept her sense of humor. She deeply appreciated the Eucharists we shared (with John Kavanaugh as celebrant), the music sung heartily by co-workers from El Salvador and Karen House, and by Loretto friends. "I carry your heart in my heart," she would say to us each night, quoting a poem by E. E. Cummings. Close friends came from far and near. Her mother, Mildred, showed extraordinary courage over these weeks, overcoming her own profound distress to comfort Ann physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

"Really hard" feelings, as Ann called them—feelings of hopelessness and even despair—were never far away. But she was able to pray, and to listen to others pray. We talked on Pentecost Sunday, just a week before she died; she'd felt well enough that morning to be carried outside to the garden for Mass, and she was ecstatic. "Kathleen," she said, "I think there's been a *miracle*!" Though that day's gifts of hope and strength quickly vanished, they offered sustenance for all present. Two days before Ann died, friends prepared a prayer service. John Kavanaugh noted that the day's Gospel happened to be the very same one read at her final vows Mass—about the rich young man asking Jesus how to gain eternal life. When John had trouble locating it, Ann took the Bible and searched herself. Instead of the reading about the rich young man, however, she chose a reading about taking up your cross—and, as John later told me, changed it to inclusive language and read it aloud in a broken voice: "Those who lose their life will find it."

One of Ann's favorite places in New York City was the Cloisters, a museum magnificently positioned on a hillside in upper Manhattan overlooking the Hudson River. It holds the medieval art collection of the Metropolitan Museum, and almost every time Ann visited we would make a trip there. Inevitably she headed straight to the quiet, dark room holding the beautiful Unicorn Tapestries. One time, for variety's sake, I suggested we go instead to the Metropolitan Museum itself. How we laughed on discovering that the first room we were drawn to turned out to be the Met's great hall of—medieval art! But the Met also holds an exquisitely beautiful early Renaissance painting, Giovanni di Paolo's *Paradise* (1445), that we both loved and returned to several times over the years to see. In it, elaborately garbed groups of saints and angels joyfully greet one another in a resplendent garden of Paradise. We always tried to identify the figures, and then imagine out loud who our own casts of characters in paradise might include.

Di Paolo's painting overflows with vivid beauty and hopefulness—qualities that come to the fore now, as I recall the gatherings both in Guarjila for Ann's jubilee and in St. Louis in 1993, after her death. John Kavanaugh was the celebrant at Ann's funeral, as he had been at her final-vows Mass years earlier. Later, in the years between Ann's death and his own in 2012, John would collect and print her poems, interspersed with selections from her journals and his own commentary; and the first reading at Ann's funeral was a poem she had written at Easter, 1981, titled "What is at stake is Paradise." Remembering that, and also our conversations over the di Paolo painting, I wonder who either of us, today, might picture in "paradise." Ann, of course, has it easy—all she has to do is turn around.

It's been over twenty years now since my friend died—she would have turned seventy last July—but her unique witness of love of God and neighbor continues to be celebrated and remembered today, inspiring and challenging all of us, as Jesus exhorted, to "go and do likewise." While Ann would not wish attention, two memorials might pass muster. Several years after her death, a new, much larger clinic was built in Guarjila and named in her honor (La Clinica Ana Manganaro). On the outside wall of the clinic, to the left of a window, is a portrait of Blessed Oscar Romero, and to the right, a matching portrait of a smiling, obviously happy Hermana Ana. Back in St. Louis, meanwhile, the Loretto community made it possible for a small garden to be created at Nerinx Hall, Ann's high school. The plaque, placed there by the healthcare promoters she guided in El Salvador, remains today, inscribed with an image of a rainbow and dedicated, in both Spanish and English, "To Sister Ann, Who Taught Us All the Colors of the Rainbow."

Like many others whose lives she touched, I feel blessed to have had Ann "on loan" for as long as I did. My own personal memorial, one of immense gratitude for the gift of our friendship, is captured in a lovely reflection by Raïssa Maritain about a statue of God molding Adam at the Chartres Cathedral: "A feeling which opens the heart toward God is good. That is why true friendship is good." ■

Sister Sparrow

How Birdwatching Got Me Through—Twice

John Wilkins

The other day, I heard a sound that was new to me in nature. I was out on an island in London's Thames estuary. As evening drew on, I was watching geese on a bank by the side of a creek. Above me were telephone wires strung between poles.

I did not particularly notice the starlings at first. They came flying in and settled on the wires, sometimes in small groups, sometimes in packs. These are the gaudy con men (or women) of the bird world, dressed in spangled purple.

I began to give them full attention. Gradually the wires began to resemble thick black cables as more and more arrivals somehow squeezed themselves into the throngs already perched there, wheezing, clicking, whistling, and chuckling as they do. The wires swayed as birds kept on landing. There were hundreds of them now.

Without warning they flew down as one into the field below them. The grass turned black. Then silence fell. You could sense them waiting, preparing. Something was going to happen. And abruptly all of them exploded into the air together like a miniature nuclear bomb. Think of the sound when a bird spreads its wings and takes off, and multiply it by hundreds. I can hear it in my imagination still.

So there I was, bird watching. Many years ago when I began this pursuit it was regarded as somewhat odd, out of the mainstream. Not now. As an awareness of natural ecology has spread, people understand that birds are a link in the chain that has human beings at its apex. A link that is complete in itself, inviting and repaying intense study that can take a lifetime.

John Wilkins, *former editor of the London* Tablet, *is a regular contributor.*

There are different sorts of bird watchers. That's a portmanteau word that covers them all, but there are gradations within it. "Bird watchers" as such tend to be more passive. Some of them, though aware of birds, are not in the business of identifying them and becoming familiar with their habits; others associate birds witrh particular landscapes, and give their heart to both; others again concentrate on the lives and behavior of particular species; others like to go to reserves and be shown the latest attraction or rarity.

"Birders" like me are proactive, visiting promising sites to see what may turn up. We are thrilled if we come across species less familiar to us, but we are also capable of spending half an afternoon watching a larks' nest in a field, observing the parents come and go along a grass tunnel, feeding their young.

That's how I started—watching the common sparrow. I woke one morning as a boy to find myself paralyzed down my back—very frightening at that or any age. The doctor diagnosed rheumatic fever, and prescribed resting all that summer, in bed. When the weather was good my mum would put a camp bed in the garden and I'd spend the time there. Looking up I watched the sparrows under the eaves of our house, courting, lechering, chattering, bringing in long wisps of straw or grass for their nests, then later feeding their young and teaching them to fly.

A friend down the road lent me a bird book his family had. By today's standards it would be considered an amateur job, lacking altogether the detailed depiction of plumage with pointers to the diagnostic marks, the precise description of note, song, and habitat. But what the pictures in its pages did do was reveal the mystery that was lying all

SARAH BAUMANN

Barn swallow

around me unnoticed, waiting to be discovered. At the end of the garden there would be blue tits hanging under twigs like acrobats, perhaps a song thrush's nest with blue eggs, and in the woods down the road there would be migrants that had flown from Africa, tiny bundles of fluff, warblers, navigating in ways that are still little understood.

How come the Arctic tern crosses the globe from north to south and back again annually; that adult cuckoos migrate before their offspring, which nevertheless know how to follow them; that after young swifts leave their nest, they may not land again for several years afterwards?

The world is full of marvels, and some of them are closer than you think. I was hooked. I still am.

"Twitchers" are a different bird watching tribe again, though almost all bird watchers and birders have a touch of the twitcher in them. No one quite knows why they are called that, but it is possible the name refers to the movement or twitch of the hand as it puts a check by each species seen. Twitchers collect species of birds as train spotters collect engines. The aim is to reach the highest total of different kinds in a year, and top twitchers are intensively competitive. They are plugged into a telephone network that reports to them hour by hour where the latest rarity has turned up, and they will drop everything and drive through the night if necessary to add it to their list.

Like bird watchers everywhere, most twitchers are males. Some look as though they might be lorry drivers or brick layers, and may sport tattoos. Others are artistic-looking types, with shoulder-length hair and earrings. If I spot a group of them, I like to set up my telescope near them so I can hear them talk. They live for birds and you will not hear conversations like that anywhere else. I am careful not to say much myself, for my accent is at once labelled as "posh," which to them means that I cannot be seriously dedicated, as they are. And indeed most birders are somewhat afraid of twitchers, for their capacity to spot and identify any bird is phenomenal.

I watched a television program about them once. It featured the autumn descent of twitchers onto the Scilly Isles, lying out in the English Channel, and a prime spot for rare bird visitors that are passing through or have strayed off course. The television program showed the passengers

TONY IANNOTTI

The author

descending from the ferry in serried ranks, one after the other, wearing their distinctive camouflage clothing with telescopes over their shoulders like guns. An army of twitchers, raring to go.

Things went well at first, but then came disruption. On the radio network it was reported that an unusual flycatcher, a jewel amongst rarities, had turned up in Wales. The twitchers rushed off en masse to the airport to charter a helicopter or light plane. But the chief of them was in a dilemma. He had just arrived and this visit to the Scillies was meant to be his honeymoon. Which came first—the rarity or his new wife? He decided he had to stay behind with her, but the regret in his voice as he was interviewed showed that he felt he had not chosen wisely. In any case, he added, the marriage did not last, because the wife found it impossible to put up with his "antics."

Bird watching is not in essence an objective pursuit, like the study and naming of trees and butterflies, though these can lead on to it. It's a passion. It's a love affair. It was for St. Francis, who loved birds especially and preached to them as his sisters. They listened, then flew off, according to the stories, to the four quarters of the world. St. Francis's friars wore brown and had hoods, like the larks, and like them were always singing.

In his "green" encyclical letter, *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis reflects on why the saint whose name he took called birds his "sisters." It was to emphasize, the pope says, how far they were from being objects.

Birds give us an insight into creation that dogs and cats, for example, don't. Dogs might want to be like us; birds do not. They are a separate branch of evolution, complete in itself. So watching them can transport us to places that dogs and cats can't. Bird watching takes us to Creation as it exists outside us. When a nightingale is in full flow, it is doing something different from what a tenor or a diva does in an opera performance.

When I go to the woods or marshes, I often spend the first half-hour just soaking myself in the space around me—the water meadows and fields, the woods, pools and dykes, the smell of the wild, the huge skies. Human beings don't command space like birds do. Flying in a plane, you are an intruder. For humans, space is not a natural element, whereas for a bird, it is.

There's a healing power in that. In Britain we have two celebrated naturalists, Eric Mabey and Mark Cocker, who wrote a remarkable book together called *Birds Britannica*. Or rather, their names appear together on the cover. In fact the book was written by Cocker, because Mabey was suffering from a complete nervous breakdown that lasted for two years.

When he eventually emerged, he wrote a book called *Nature Cure*. He describes how the whole world of nature lost its resonance for him. He had loved it. Now it no longer spoke to him in any way. It was dumb, mute, dead. He couldn't read the signs any more. The spirit went out of it.

He's less good about how the meaning came creeping back, I think because he does not really understand it. He has no theology.

In a minor way, because in my case it was always passing, I have had the same experience. I remember the moment out in the marshes when the Black Dog of depression left me. I was sitting helplessly on a large white branch beside the shore, thrown up as jetsam by the sea, dead. I felt nothing, just a void. The woman who was with me shared without speaking. But then I gradually became conscious that there were clouds of wading birds over the creek that day, twisting and turning in unison according to some extraordinary sixth sense. A thought came to me unbidden, as clear as though someone had spoken it: "It is all worth it." The devils that had fastened on my shoulder departed, and did not come back.

Like Mabey, I had experienced a nature cure. Bird watching takes people out of themselves. It changes you. You are looking at a realm of nature that is apart from you and has to be treasured as it is in itself. If you give it love, it will give you joy. ■

A Problematic Believer

An interview with David Means

Anthony Domestico

David Means, a recognized master of the short story, is the author of four collections of fiction, most recently *The Spot* (2010). Means's stories display the compressed intensity of poetry, throwing off little lyrical flares every few sentences, as in his description of a car "roar[ing] off in a rooster tail of dust." Like Alice Munro, he manipulates time in surprising ways—dilating and contracting, telescoping an entire life, with all its dramas and regrets, into a single paragraph. This effect is especially acute when he writes, as he often does, about events of dramatic import and limited temporal scope: a bank heist, a murder, a police standoff. He reminds us of how flexible the apparently rigid form of the short story can be.

Means was born in 1961 in working-class Kalamazoo, Michigan. As he told the *New Yorker*, "Our neighbor was a paper-mill worker, and a drunk, and I remember feeling that Bruce Springsteen was making songs about the people in my world." Most of his stories are grounded in a world of closed factories and desperate crimes, and they are peopled by outsiders: tramps and criminals, prostitutes and war veterans, "these stupid sinning willful men who were dying by their own clock." Means describes himself as a "problematic Christian," and he finds in such outcast figures—and, more specifically, in the violence they inflict on one another—a space for thinking about grace and redemption. Baptisms and purgative fires abound; the cross, and the pain it embodies, is a constant presence. Means is a theological writer in the way that Flannery O'Connor is a theological writer: he is attentive to the violence of grace, what T. S. Eliot called the "pentecostal fire / In the dark time of the year."

In April, Means published *Hystopia*, his first novel. It takes place in 1960s America, but America at a slant. President Kennedy, survivor of several assassination attempts, has won a third term, escalated the war in Vietnam, and created a federal bureaucracy called the Psych Corps to deal with returning vets. The Corps specializes in "enfolding"—a process of repressing traumatic memory through medication and "reenacting particulars of the causal/trauma events." Southwestern Michigan has been cordoned off and designated the Grid: "a safe place...in which certain patients, after treatment, might go to have a controlled transitional experience before being released into general society." Imperfectly enfolded vets roam the countryside, murdering and dealing drugs, driving around listening to the Stooges. The world of *Hystopia* seems ripped from the punk rock imagination—crazy and druggy and violent and anarchic.

Means teaches at Vassar College and regularly publishes in the *New Yorker*. I spoke with him by e-mail.

Anthony Domestico: Why write a novel? That's a huge question, so to make it more specific, perhaps you could talk about something much smaller: the sentence. Your short stories contain such wonderful sentences, and I'm wondering if you noticed any differences in the kinds of sentences you used when writing a novel.

David Means: The easy answer is that the story I wanted to tell in *Hystopia* could only be told in a novel. I wanted to grab hold of something big and get deep into it—the Vietnam War, PTSD, a certain family trauma I went through—and find a way to expose an even deeper mystery while answering it at the same time. A story can basically just expose mystery, while a novel gives a feeling of having at least a hint at an answer. But I think the two questions are connected somehow. In the stories, each sentence had to carry a certain (big) burden. A short story is mainly just a small sliver of a much wider narrative, and the sensation the reader gets from it comes from that sense, around the edges, that you're just getting a glimpse into something. With a novel you obviously have a much wider sense of space and time, and the reader becomes immersed in a different way. They're somehow aware that they're no longer just glimpsing. They don't have to provide as much of the contextual work. And they don't mind sentences that simply must be there—clean and simple—to move the wider plot forward.

AD: One of your major concerns is time—how we experience it and how we represent it fictionally. How do you deal differently with time in a novel?

DM: With the wider canvas of the novel I felt freer to use structure somehow, to let more than one story—and more

Anthony Domestico *is an assistant professor of literature at Purchase College, SUNY. His book on poetry and theology in the modernist period is forthcoming from Johns Hopkins University Press.*

than one aspect of the historical moment—play against each other. The short stories feel quick, like a brilliant arc, but the novel could stretch things out—while in a paradoxical way tightening, too. Each novel provides its own technique for addressing the flow of time; in mine I felt myself trying to confront personal memories—my own—along with history (Vietnam, battle scenes), and then those of the main characters. Nobody is really less qualified to talk about these things than the author. But I can say that trauma and memory and history were all at play; traumatic memory freezes time in a way, locks into it, and those who are traumatized feel unable to stay in the present moment because these horrific memories come in fleetingly, suddenly, and destabilize the sense of being present in time. Violence shifts the sense of time; time stretches out in peaceful moments—at least it does for me—and then draws back in tense moments.

AD: Your fiction often reminds me of a line from Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*: "Where the world was salt there would be greater need for slaking." Your attention to how we long for redemption precisely because the world is so broken makes you, at least for me, a writer of great theological power. Are you comfortable being described in this way? Do you see yourself as emerging from any particular literary/theological tradition?

DM: I'm comfortable being described that way because it comes from you, at a personal level—which means you're looking and seeing, perhaps, something symbolic in the work. I can say that I don't mind being put into a tradition that includes Walker Percy and Flannery O'Conner and James Agee. I'm writing, most certainly, out of my belief—although it might, for some, be hard to see because I'm interested in characters isolated from a sense of knowing, or a certain kind of awareness. But it is there, I think. I quote Thomas Merton in the book. I've read and I find a great deal of solace in Merton's thinking: he makes a strong point in his essay "Seven Words," in which he digs into the nature of death. I'll quote him:

> In a society of men [and women] who are exclusively intent on their own pleasure and survival, even though it has no meaning, just because they are convinced that their life ought to be interminable, death begins to play a very important part. Death is called upon to nourish and to stimulate the 'sense of life.'

I happen to think we live in a death-obsessed culture—and the form of our current obsession came, partly, out of Vietnam. Yet the paradox is that we completely try to avoid speaking of death, I mean really speaking about the truth of it, unless it's in terms of health, of staying alive as long as possible. On the news, they are now saying someone "has passed," or is "finally gone," and I think—every time I hear that—that in avoiding the word "dead" we are avoiding something fundamental, some aspect of time itself, and that our obsession with quick, cartoony death is somehow related to an avoidance of the truth.

David Means

In any case, I'm a complex and problematic religious person, but I do believe in the deep humility of the Christ story, in the cosmic story of suffering and redemption. I'd say, and I feel a little uncomfortable speaking about this, that my sense of time—as you pointed out—has something to do with the fact that for me, the only way out of the isolation and pure despair in the face of death comes from my sense of time as it relates to a much wider universe—call it the quantum universe, or call it God. But again, I'm one of those problematic believers—those are the kind that I think Merton respected. I embrace my doubt as much as my faith. And I most certainly have the deepest respect for anyone who doesn't believe at all. And on some days I see life as a simple absurdity.

AD: Towards the end of *Hystopia*, Eugene—the character who has written the novel we just read—describes one of the major difficulties of being a writer: how to "get in there and find a way to show how those tiny, little fucking moments of ignorance provide pure grace." How do you understand grace? And how do you understand the writer's task in relation to grace?

DM: For me, grace lies in a paradox: the moment you are fully in existence while also fully aware of the vastness of time itself; so you're sitting there in a hospital hallway holding a baby and the baby is looking up at you and you're in the moment but also aware of the hugeness of the moment, the inexplicable forgiveness in the tactile feeling of this newborn life in your hands and the absolute innocent need inside the baby's gaze. The writer's job is to be as true as possible, not only in the drafting but the revision process, to the words and the reality that they are representing and creating. That requires an attempt at humility before the material, somehow. Humor and grace, for me, are entwined.

Here's the interesting thing about your question and

BEOWULF SHEEHAN

the quote you provide: Does it take a certain amount of ignorance to find grace? I'd say it does. I'd say it takes a humble admission that at a certain level reality is beyond complete knowing, or understanding. Eugene is frustrated because he can't provide an awareness of grace, moments of clarity, to those characters who are ignorant of its possibility. But that's what a writer can do. She can provide a character who doesn't know that outside the world there is something much larger while, at the same time, allow the reader in on the secret truth.

AD: In *Hystopia*, you return again and again to the human need for narrative: as one character thinks, we all long for "words clearly spoken. Structure around everything, the lines graphed and solid." Yet the novel just as frequently animates the many forces—trauma, madness, desire, and history—that frustrate this need for narrative structure. How do you understand the relationship between these two forces, however they are characterized (clarity and obscurity, structure and chaos, narrative and lived experience)?

DM: Shared stories convey the human spirit, the internal nature of being human, and yet all of those things you mentioned—madness, trauma, history—act to keep us from sharing stories, or to erase or diminish or hide stories. I've always said that most stories disappear with the dead and only a small sliver remain recorded. It's the job of a writer to catch stories and hold them and put them into form. I had a particular, deeply personal story I wanted to rescue. I found a roundabout way to get it out there.

AD: *Hystopia* is a quietly allusive text. A side character threatened with blindness is named Haze—a clear echo of Hazel Motes from O'Connor's *Wise Blood*. Hemingway and Heller are ghostly presences throughout, and I noticed several echoes of T. S. Eliot, from an early sentence that riffs on the opening of "The Waste Land" to later lines that recall the conclusion to "The Hollow Men." What writers or works did you feel yourself channeling, or at least thinking about, during the writing process?

DM: Because it's a Michigan novel—I grew up spending summers in Petoskey, not far from Hemingway's Walloon Lake, and I even ate pie at Jesperson's, a place Hemingway went to as a kid—I knew I was at least in some way in conversation with Hemingway. The Two-Hearted River is in *Hystopia*. I went up there as a teenager with a buddy of mine. But I've read just about all of the Vietnam literature, and the classic war narratives of World War I and World War II. Paul Fussell's epic masterpiece, *The Great War in Modern Memory* was a major influence. And I included a little sly reference to *Catch-22*. That came partly from the freedom I felt writing something longer. *The Iliad* was a major influence; along with Dr. Jonathan Shay's amazing study of PTSD and myth, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character.*

AD: Speaking of Hemingway, a character thinks at one point about the relationship between war, fiction, character, and speech: "Hemingway's war had produced a certain kind of character, a new way of thinking and speaking that came from what was left out, from the things war had demolished and pushed away forever." What kind of character did Vietnam create? And how does that relate to the kind of character our current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are creating?

DM: The Vietnam War fed rock-and-roll and the American culture, and rock-and-roll fed some of the combat culture later in the Vietnam War. *Catch-22* was a novel that was as much about Vietnam as it was about the Second World War, and it was read and passed around and I think the acute attention to the double-speak of bureaucracy and the absurd nature of military language, merged with another, less jaded and less cynical aspect—a hope, a sense of the possibility of change (I mean, James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* was popular with the war protestors.) Then you had Bob Dylan writing lyrics that were honestly lyric; an openness to the poetic—an energy that started with the Beats. Along with that, you had, coming back, imported from the inmate nature of combat, a certain language inspired by African-American usage—what Henry Louis Gates called signification, I'd say that you had this incredible outburst—fueled by the anti-war movement—of new ways of using language, and it wasn't, as one might expect, ironic. There were serious things at hand; seriousness was important, but so was playfulness as a way to expose the truth.

But after Vietnam, with Reagan, we were shoved around a corner—looking only ahead—and for some reason, with the exception of Raymond Carver and a few others, a certain kind of irony and pity, the kind that H. L. Mencken mocked, began to seep back to the literature and music—things began to get soft and fuzzy and inane. (But not in punk rock. Punk struggled to clarify, as did women's literature, and African-American writing.) I don't want to say this, but I might even speculate that all that softness and silliness, along with video games, eased the way for the Iraq War. Wars don't simply end. It takes time for them to filter into the culture, and I'm sure that it's going to take time to fully realize the culture forming out of 9/11 and the Iraq War.

AD: Do you see yourself writing more novels? Do you think that the experience of writing a novel will change how you approach short stories in the future?

DM: Yes, one way or another, I learned a lot in this process and feel freed up to work in longer forms, and I'd like to write another novel, and I'll certainly write more stories. My method has always been, as much as possible, to approach each piece of fiction one at a time, and to take as long as necessary. If something isn't going to work, I usually put it aside. I'm working on a longer nonfiction piece, and part of it will be published in *Harper's* soon. The scary thing about writing is that with each story you write you've done something that can't be done again; you can't go back to that story again. On the other hand, I've barely touched on my own life—my family in Michigan—and now that I'm older, I feel less restraint in going back. ■

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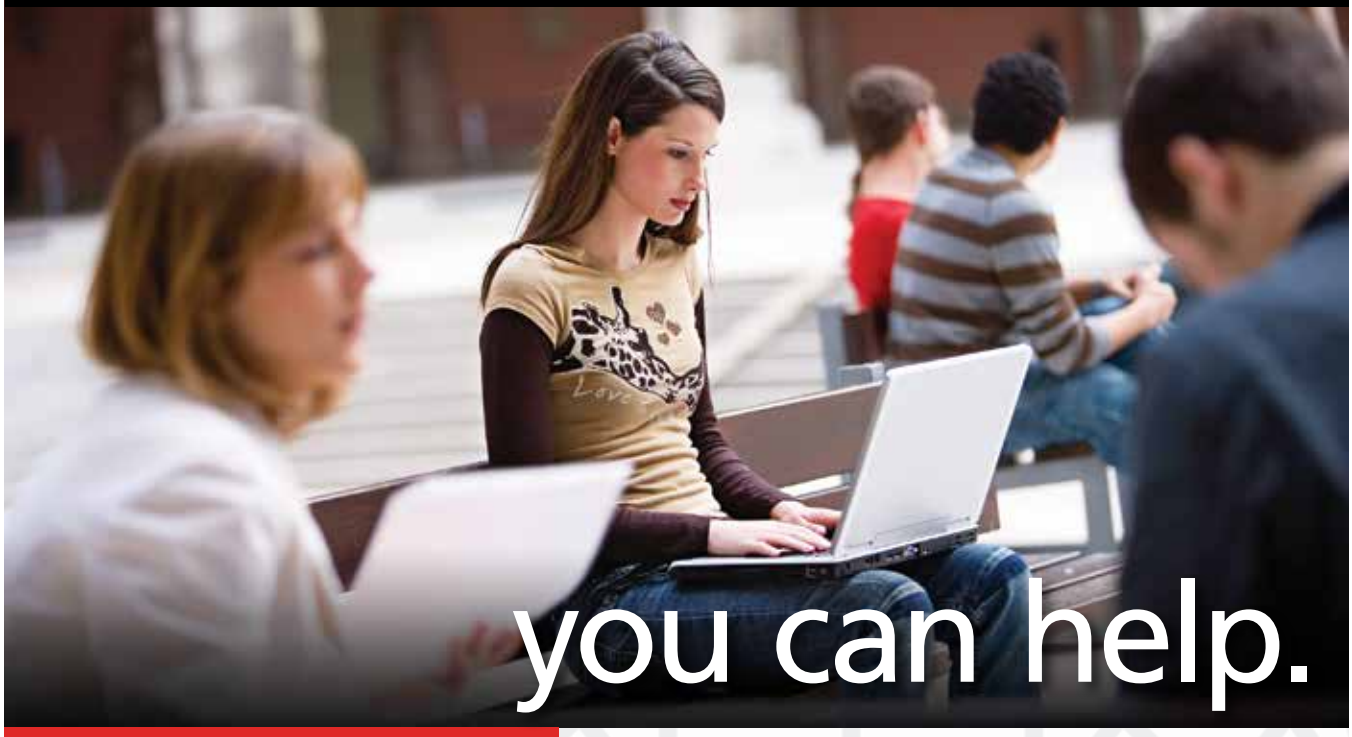

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Richard Alleva

Fragile Illusions

'CAFÉ SOCIETY' & 'FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS'

Café Society's plot is a repository for all the familiar Woody Allen themes. In 1935 a young Jewish naïf, Bobby Dorfman (Jesse Eisenberg), leaves his endlessly squabbling New York family (theme: the warmth and abrasiveness of the Jewish nest) to see if his Uncle Phil (Steve Carrell), a successful agent, can find him employment in Hollywood. A low-level job materializes and so does Phil's beautiful, dewy secretary (Kristen Stewart), whom Bobby courts without realizing she's his uncle's mistress (theme: impoverished innocence romantically vying with worldly, cynical success). Rejected by the girl (theme: the incomprehensible sexual decisions of desirable women), Bobby returns to New York for employment in his gangster brother's nightclub, Café Society, which he successfully manages after his brother is convicted of murder. On death row, the brother converts to Christianity only because it promises an afterlife with a certainty absent from Judaism (theme: the cowardice and irrationalism of religion, especially Christianity). After the execution, business at the nightclub takes off because high society is titillated by the fact that it was founded by a murderer. Bobby becomes rich (theme: malevolent fate sometimes cuts us a break). After marrying a socialite, our hero reunites briefly with his former love when she, now married to Phil, visits Manhattan, but there's no true rekindling of the flame (theme: even when life gives us moderate contentment, we remain the playthings of fate).

Jesse Eisenberg and Kristen Stewart in Café Society

Bobby is a Candide, an innocent caroming off one worldly corruption after another, but whereas Voltaire entertains us by showing that his hero's character is being tempered (if not deflowered) by his misadventures, there's no suspense attending Bobby since his innocence projects itself as colorless, undentable amiability. As a lover, he's never passionate. As a rival, he never really collides with Phil. Perhaps Allen's point is Yeatsian—"The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity"—but if so, he fails to dramatize it here. (Compare his gripping fulfillment of the same theme in *Crimes and Misdemeanors*.) And while Voltaire surrounds his naïf with fascinating scoundrels, Allen barely sketches in Bobby's antagonists, though Steve Carrell does manage to suggest the mental anguish beneath Phil's hustling glibness. Jesse Eisenberg's performance, composed as it is of half-smiles, half-shrugs, and half-winces, is no better than half a characterization.

Movies with superficial characters aren't necessarily bad as long as their plots are both surprising and consistent—even consistently absurd, as with the best screwball comedies. But we can guess all too easily where *Café Society* is heading at every point. Let the Dorfmans acquire a loudmouth, aggressive neighbor and we know that the gangster son will dispose of him. Let the girl gift her older lover with a signed photo of Valentino and we foresee that this will become a significant plot point. Allen's early films were chaotically plotted, but who cared as long as the dialog crackled with snark and wit? Now that his scripts aspire to be classically well-constructed, his dialogue has become as stilted as the stuff heard on afternoon soap operas. The younger Allen would never have one character tell another "I love you" and have the other reply, "My heart beats faster when you say that." Unless, that is, he was about to follow it with a wisecrack.

Yet for all its narrative neatness, the characterizations are often inconsistent. In an early scene, Bobby is portrayed as so ethnically sensitive that he refuses to have sex with a novice prostitute he's hired when she turns out to be Jewish. Yet later he encounters a Waspy society dame who reels off a long list of Jewish stereotypes (miserliness, political subversion, etc.) that she totally accepts. So he marries her! What's going on here?

Allen's direction occasionally reverts to its former inventiveness. (When Bobby pays the aforementioned prostitute to go away, she dithers and blithers at his rejection but also carefully counts the cash.) And the great cinematographer, Vittorio Storaro (*The Last Emperor, Apocalypse Now*) dips all his director's labored angst into a salmon-pink loveliness. But something seems blocked. In the work of some elderly artists—the late masterpieces of Verdi, Ibsen, Luis Buñuel, Stravinsky—we encounter a serenity, a clarity, even a playfulness that bespeak an unsurrendered zest for

LIONSGATE / AMAZON STUDIOS

life. But Allen's last few films (even the overrated *Midnight in Paris*) seem to come from a man who wants to push the messiness, annoyances, and even the surprises of life as far away from him as possible. Perhaps Allen would like to become a hermit?

The life and artistic misadventures of Florence Foster Jenkins, generally considered to be the worst singer ever to perform in public, present an ambiguous gift to filmmakers. Upon first hearing her voice (one CD recording is titled "Murder on the High Cs"), you might assume she was a musical comedian in the manner of Anna Russell or Victor Borge. But once you know something about her life—that she was given syphilis by her first husband, was a competent pianist until an illness destroyed her digital coordination, contributed generously to the New York arts scene (which supplied the small audiences for her private recitals), was shielded from ridicule by her second husband and unofficial manager, and was so devastated by the laughter and bad reviews greeting her first and last public performance (at Carnegie Hall!) that she suffered a heart attack and died a month later—you may well wonder if this is the stuff of farce, satire, or tragedy.

For their biopic, scriptwriter Nicholas Martin and director Stephen Frears have found the perfect solution: they simply sound all the registers of Florence's story from high to low, from the ridiculous to the sublime. The result is a comedy that makes room for pain, pathos, quiet lyricism, and even a touch of slapstick. Like so much of Frears's work, *Florence Foster Jenkins* radiates generosity. You laugh at the lady's voice but never at her.

Performing artists used to say of a moment of inspiration, "the god descends." When you look at Meryl Streep's face as she launches into an aria and proceeds to slaughter it, you can see that a god has indeed descended, but he's a mischievous god who has flooded his human vessel with a profound love of music and mercifully deafened her to the dog-like yippings her vocal cords produce. Streep makes it clear that Florence isn't merely a victim of sycophantic flattery, but also a blissful dweller in the parallel universe inside her head. When a bad review finally breaks through the defenses erected by her husband, she is devastated—not like a self-deceiver undeceived but like an Eve who suddenly finds the gates of Paradise shut and locked behind her, and doesn't understand why the angel on guard keeps insisting there was actually nothing behind those gates in the first place.

We are accustomed to Streep constructing her characters with the use of heavy make-up and accents, and here she is more fortified than ever: a fake nose, prosthetic double chin, bald pate *cum* wig (Jenkins lost her hair to syphilis), false bosom, expanded middle. The make-up never does the acting for Streep, but she does use it to help suggest the dignity of a galleon calmly bobbing and dipping in harbor, ready at any moment to sail out into open water. This woman is neither mad nor pathetic; she is the mistress of a rich interior life.

Without the help of heavy make-up, Hugh Grant gives us a character as fully realized as Streep's. Gone are his patented stammering and blinking, and with them goes the gaucherie out of which he once got such comic mileage. His St. Clair Bayfield, failed actor and con man though he once was (and still is, in some respects), is also a knight guarding his lady's fantasies. It's pretty clear that Bayfield attached himself to Florence for her dough, but Grant certifies the script's insistence that, somewhere along the line, he grew to love her. The most poignant sign of this is that when St. Clair, emceeing an arts benefit, performs a Hamlet soliloquy, he tears it to tatters as atrociously as Florence does her arias, but in the privacy of their bedroom, to lull her to sleep, he recites one of Shakespeare's sonnets beautifully. This is an honorable gigolo and a diligent caretaker.

Sometime during the writing and filming of this big-hearted and emotionally versatile movie, a god descended. ■

James J. Sheehan

Operation Hubris

Mission Failure
America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era
Michael Mandelbaum
Oxford, $29.95, 504 pp.

America's War for the Greater Middle East
A Military History
Andrew J. Bacevich
Random House, $30, 480 pp.

In April 1999, Robert Kagan and William Kristol published an editorial in the *Weekly Standard* with the lapidary title "Win It." Their immediate purpose was to urge more vigorous military measures to defeat Slobodan Milosevic, but they took the occasion to link the NATO air war against Serbia with what they defined as "the single overriding question of our time: Will the United States and its allies have the will to shape the world in conformance with our interests and our principles, challenging as that task may be? Or will we allow much of the world to slip into chaos and brutality, to be shaped by men like Milosevic and Saddam Hussein and Kim Jong-Il and the dictators in Beijing?" Michael Mandelbaum's and Andrew Bacevich's very different but equally disturbing books illuminate the extraordinary mixture of delusion and narcissism that Kagan and Kristol managed to pack into those few lines. The Greeks had a word to describe this way of looking at the world. That word was, of course, "hubris."

Mandelbaum's *Mission Failure* begins with a scene hubristic enough for any ancient tragedian: March 3, 1991, at Safwan airbase in Iraq, General Norman Schwarzkopf, surrounded by high-ranking officers from Britain, France, and Saudi Arabia, met with an Iraqi general to sign a ceasefire that acknowledged the allies' decisive victory in what would eventually be called the First Gulf War. *Time* proudly announced "the birth of a new American century—the onset of a unipolar world, with America at the center of it." Nine months later, the Soviet Union disappeared, thus ending four decades of global rivalry with the West. Basking in the warm light of military victory and apparent geopolitical hegemony, Americans spoke of a "new world order" that would be shaped by our principles and interests for the benefit of all mankind.

Mandelbaum's book chronicles in painful detail the collapse of these hopes in the quarter century that followed America's deceptively decisive victories in 1991.

Mission Failure examines every aspect of American foreign policy between 1991 and 2014. This policy, Mandelbaum argues, was driven by Washington's conviction that it was both possible and necessary to transform political and economic institutions throughout the world—in other words, that the United States would be able to influence the domestic conditions as

U.S. Navy F-14A Tomcat in flight over burning Kuwaiti oil wells during Operation Desert Storm

well as the foreign policy of other states. These efforts, as Mandelbaum's title indicates, failed everywhere. Although he is critical of policymakers (sometimes, as in the case of Iraq, not quite critical enough), he argues that the reason the American mission failed was "in the nature of what the United States was attempting. It did not achieve its goals because those goals were not achievable with the available tools."

To borrow a distinction first suggested by Charles Darwin, Mandelbaum is a "lumper" rather than a "splitter"—that is, he is more interested in comparisons, connections, and coincidences than in distinctions, deviations, and differences. Sometimes Mandelbaum's lumping gets out of hand, as when he asserts that Bill Clinton and George W. Bush were both reckless, the former because he dallied with a White House intern, the latter because he launched a major war that plunged the Middle East into chaos. There are also times when his interpretative framework has trouble containing events as different as the expansion of NATO (which he regards as a very bad idea), humanitarian interventions in Somalia and Bosnia, and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Nevertheless, this is a bold and challenging book, filled with interesting insights. Even when one disagrees with Mandelbaum's analysis, his arguments are stimulating and informative.

The weakest section of *Mission Failure* is Chapter 5, "The Middle East." Here Mandelbaum rehearses the official Israeli view that the failure of the peace process is entirely the Palestinians' fault; because they are mired in a corrupt and violent political culture, the Palestinians have repeatedly refused the extraordinarily generous terms offered them by a series of Israeli governments. This is not the place to untangle the history of the Israeli-Palestinian problem; suffice it to say that the story is a good deal more complex and contested than Mandelbaum would like us to believe. More important for his overall argument is his treatment of what he calls the "peace process orthodoxy," the persistent belief, shared by every American government since the 1970s, that a two-state solution was both necessary and possible. Mandelbaum suggests that Washington's commitment to the peace process was one more "failed mission," produced by a lack of understanding of how the world works. In fact, the reason why one administration after another has desperately sought to encourage an Israeli-Palestinian accord is the very realistic conviction that, however difficult a settlement might be to achieve and sustain, it would be far better than the alternatives. Anyone who doubts the accuracy of this assessment need only take a hard look at the catastrophe that is now unfolding in Israel-Palestine.

Like Mandelbaum, Andrew Bacevich begins his story in the desert, but with a scene very different from the victory celebrations at Safwan airbase. During the night of April 24–25, 1980, in a remote location

in the Iranian outback, American commandos tried to launch a raid to rescue the U.S. embassy personnel being held hostage in Tehran. Poorly planned and ineptly executed, the mission collapsed at the initial landing zone; when the five surviving helicopters fled the scene, they left behind eight dead Americans, who would be the first but by no means the last casualties in the war for the greater Middle East that, thirty-six years later, shows no signs of coming to an end. The causes, conduct, and consequences of this war are the subjects of Bacevich's powerful and compelling new book.

The war for the greater Middle East was, as the title of Bacevich's first chapter states, a "war of choice." Ironically, it was Jimmy Carter, the least belligerent of postwar presidents, who made the choice, first by deciding to provide covert aid to the Afghan rebels resisting Soviet invaders, and then by issuing the so-called "Carter doctrine" of January 1980, which made control over the Persian Gulf a vital interest of the United States. With these two steps, the Middle East, which had been of no more than marginal interest for most Americans, began its fateful move toward the center of national attention, the place where our will to shape the world was to be tested. This was not, of course, what Carter and his advisers intended, but, as Bacevich repeatedly points out, unintended consequences were a persistent feature of the American engagement in the region.

Unpleasant surprises, like unintended consequences, characterized the war in the Middle East from that chaotic April night in the Iranian desert in 1980, through a long list of subsequent disasters, some relatively small (Beirut, Somalia), some extremely large (Iraq), down to the apparently endless campaign now being waged along a broad front against the so-called Islamic State and other radical Islamic groups. The original motivations for war—the demand for oil and the fear of Soviet expansion—disappeared. Former clients—Afghan rebels, Saddam Hussein—morphed into enemies, and different military tactics—airpower, conventional warfare, counterinsurgency, drone strikes—were adopted; everything changed, but the war went on. As its character evolved, the war's advocates periodically issued proclamations celebrating missions successfully accomplished and victories decisively won, proclamations that swiftly turned to ashes in the mouths of those who made them. Instead of victory, the war created the situations it was supposed to prevent: disorder, violence, political and sectarian radicalism, and widespread misery.

Although Bacevich covers much of the same ground as Mandelbaum, his book has a different tone and emphasis. Bacevich is much more sharply critical of American leaders, both political and military. Moreover, he is less willing to see policy failures as the result of good intentions gone awry. The primary motivation for our engagement in the Middle East, he argues, was maintaining the supply of oil that was, or at least so we believed, essential for our way of life. We intervened in the Balkans not, as Mandelbaum suggests, for humanitarian reasons but to preserve the NATO alliance. And while some people in Washington certainly hoped that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 would help spread democracy in the region, the architects of the war saw it as a way of establishing American power, the first in a series of military and political victories in the Middle East and beyond. Homegrown arrogance, ignorance, and ambition, not the obdurate resistance of external conditions, are the central themes in Bacevich's account. He would certainly not, for example, agree with Mandelbaum's rather astonishing conclusion about the Iraq war that "America's failure stemmed ultimately not from what the Americans did or did not do in Iraq but from who and what the Iraqis were."

What are the lessons to be drawn from these two books? The most obvious lesson is how foolish it is to believe, as Kagan and Kristol seemed to suggest, that the United States' capacity "to shape the world in conformance with our interests and our principles" is simply a matter of will. The United States remains the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth, but there are limits to what we can do. Finding these limits and learning how to act within them are essential for any successful statecraft. Although far from perfect, it seems to me that the Obama administration has been better at this than either Mandelbaum or Bacevich is willing to admit.

Recognizing limits is especially important when military power is involved. Both books demonstrate how often American leaders have misused the formidable armed forces at their disposal. Operational or tactical successes have frequently been attended by strategic failure because decision-makers did not match military means with political ends—the very essence of strategy. Nor were they able to recognize that the means they chose would shape the outcome they got, an inability that produced many of those illusory victories and unanticipated defeats about which Mandelbaum and Bacevich write with such urgent eloquence.

Bacevich is right, I think, when he insists that the overriding question of our time is not whether we have the capacity to shape the world (we don't), but whether we have the willingness and ability to shape ourselves, "restoring effectiveness in self-government, providing for sustainable and equitable prosperity, and extracting from a vastly diverse culture something to hold in common of greater moment than shallow digital enthusiasms and the worship of celebrity." Writing in midsummer 2016, as the presidential campaign occupies the public square like some unruly and capricious mob, I find it more challenging than usual to sustain the hope on which our future ultimately depends. ■

James J. Sheehan, *a frequent contributor to* Commonweal, *is professor of history emeritus at Stanford University.*

Valerie Sayers

Wolves & Lambs

The Little Red Chairs

Edna O'Brien
Little, Brown and Company, $27, 320 pp.

It is a commonplace that there are only two plots in fiction: a stranger comes to town and a man goes on a journey. In her wrenching new novel, Edna O'Brien, the great Irish overturner of commonplaces, joins both plots but twists them in distinctive fashion. In the first half of *The Little Red Chairs,* a charismatic white-bearded stranger appears in Cloonoila, in the West of Ireland, proclaiming himself a healer when he is really a war criminal in hiding. He is finally arrested, but in the novel's second half, the Irishwoman who has fallen in love with him is the one who goes on a journey, one of redemption.

I don't use the term "journey of redemption" lightly. Few novelists convincingly allow characters to recognize, much less redeem, a failure to see beyond their own suffering, and Edna O'Brien, who famously broke with Catholicism long ago, might be horrified by talk of redemption. Here, however, she has fashioned both halves of a surprising plot fusion into a strange but convincing and deeply moving story. A writer whose early work shocked the literary establishment with the news flash that Irishwomen were sexual (as well as intellectual and writerly) beings, O'Brien now deploys every narrative tactic she has developed over a formidable fifty-six-year-and-counting literary career and makes this novel her own offering of reparation to the victims of brutality.

O'Brien's opening chapters entice with a playful tone and a style that intermittently resembles the language of fairy tales: "Long afterwards, there would be those who reported strange occurrences...dogs barking crazily, as if there was thunder, and the sound of the nightingale, whose song and warblings were never heard so far west." Such lines serve to remind us, even as lighthearted scenes play out, that fables can turn dark indeed. Though the retired schoolmaster asks his fellow pub-goers to remember another self-proclaimed healer—Rasputin—they are mostly content to let Dr. Vlad dupe them. Unlike the gullible residents of Cloonoila, however, readers may suspect that Dr. Vladimir Dragan, self-proclaimed poet, herbalist, and physical therapist is in touch with the dark possibilities of both lyric and nature.

The townspeople appear in brief flashes, like members of a chorus step-

TERRY BALLARD

Valentia Island, County Kerry

ping forward: Dara, the barman and non-stop talker who finds shelter for the mysterious stranger; Mona, widowed devotee of Padre Pio and romance novels, who hopes that Dr. Vlad, too, "will bring a bit of romance into our lives"; Sister Bonaventure, or Boney, kindly and completely up to cultural speed, who presents herself as one of Dr. Vlad's first massage clients. One figure steps forward for progressively longer stretches: Fidelma, a dark-haired beauty of forty married to an older man. She has failed at business and, because she has suffered two miscarriages, believes she has failed at pregnancy as well. Even before the novel shifts gradually into more realist mode, O'Brien has dropped hints of a complicated psychological compulsion that makes plausible Fidelma's decision to begin an affair with Vlad or Vuk, as he is also known.

"Don't do it!" the reader wants to cry out. "Don't you remember that 'Vuk' means wolf?" O'Brien has chosen the Serbian saga *The Mountain Wreath* for its line, "The wolf is entitled to the lamb," to open her tale—but Fidelma has not read that epigraph. It is up to readers who remember the brutal siege of Sarajevo and the massacre of Muslim Bosnian men and boys at Srebenica, overseen by the "Butcher of Bosnia," Radavan Karadzic, to realize that the white-bearded stranger is a barely-disguised version of Karadzic himself. O'Brien has leapt beyond fable and lyric realism into the territory of alternative history, where a contemporary, internationalized Ireland convincingly becomes a hiding place for a military leader, poet, and psychiatrist who oversaw the torture and slaughter that shocked even a complacent world. (In reality, Karadzic was arrested in Belgrade and eventually imprisoned for war crimes.)

O'Brien summons tremendous narrative courage to depict the physical and psychological torments a pregnant Fidelma endures after Vlad's arrest. The scenes of her torture at the hands of Serbian thugs, alongside the reminders of earlier torture in Bosnia, are almost unbearable to read—but like the dark heart of *The Brothers Karamazov* (or, for that matter, *Heart of Darkness*, which this novel invokes), the scenes must be played out if the novel is to bear witness to the presence of evil. O'Brien does not dwell on the degradation and violence, but faces it with brief indelible images. Then she moves on.

And in the second part of her story—Fidelma's journey to London, the city of refuge for so many fleeing poverty, violence, and torture—Fidelma has the chance to see her own suffering in the context of a world of damage. O'Brien depicts the contemporary challenges facing impoverished refugees in a London of technology, wealth, and privilege with the same assurance she brings to her portrait of a remote Irish village that is nonetheless plugged into a fully connected world. Her novel doesn't trouble with a unified tone or narrative style as it moves from setting to setting; rather, it tells a story that hurtles forward in whatever mode suits the moment. It is an odd, stitched-together, completely compelling narrative, the best contemporary novel of conscience I have read since J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*. It is also an affirmation that victims can find not just dignity but a measure of peace.

The novel's title refer to the Sarajevo Red Line, a 2006 installation of thousands of chairs that memorialized the victims of the Siege of Sarajevo: the little red chairs paid special tribute to the children murdered by Karadzic and his followers. Such an unexpected form requires the vision of an artist—by bypassing logic and argument, the image serves as a forceful moral jolt. So, too, does Edna O'Brien's imagined encounter with evil that knows no national boundaries. Our hyper-connected world, so easily distracted as civilians flee torture, bombings, battles, and privation, needs a novel like *The Little Red Chairs* to shake us from our complacency. ■

Valerie Sayers, *professor of English at Notre Dame, is the author of six novels including* The Powers.

David Carroll Cochran

In Plain Sight

The Boys in the Bunkhouse

Servitude and Salvation in the Heartland

Dan Barry

HarperCollins, $26.99, 340 pp.

Growing up in Lubbock, Texas, I remember kids talking about the "state school" down in Abilene where "retarded people get sent." It was a counselor at this facility whose scheme for providing cheap labor led decades later to scenes of elderly men with intellectual disabilities being escorted by social workers from an old schoolhouse in rural Atalissa, Iowa. The story of these men gets the full telling it deserves in Dan Barry's powerful, moving, and at times heartbreaking book, *The Boys in the Bunkhouse: Servitude and Salvation in the Heartland.*

The connection between Abilene and Atalissa can be traced to the late 1960s, when that counselor approached a man named T. H. Johnson about taking in some residents from the facility and similar ones around the state to work on Johnson's ranch in Goldthwaite, Texas. The plan would save the state money for the men's care while giving the men the opportunity to learn new skills. It would also provide Johnson affordable labor. He agreed, housing the men and putting them to work in his turkey operation. The arrangement morphed into a contract-labor business, which took advantage of federal rules designed to help those with intellectual disabilities find work by allowing employers to pay them below minimum wage at a rate based on their productivity compared with workers without disabilities. A deal was soon struck to provide workers for a Louis Rich turkey plant in West Liberty, Iowa. So in 1974 several dozen men were shipped north; they were housed in nearby Atalissa and bused to the plant each workday. And that's how they proceeded to live for the next thirty-five years, until state officials in Iowa finally shut down the operation in 2009.

Barry's book is a damning critique of what these men went through. And it's made more powerful by letting those who ran the business also have their say. The state schools, which warehoused those with intellectual disabilities out of public sight, were brutal places themselves. Johnson's promise to "deinstitutionalize" the men would afford them the dignity of work while providing a sense of family and belonging. In Atalissa, they became part of town life, active attendees at dances, parades, and the local Lutheran church. Annual highpoints included the county fair, birthday celebrations, and huge Christmas parties at the schoolhouse open to the entire town. Johnson seemed genuinely to believe that he was acting in the men's best interests, and Barry's interviews with them make clear that they developed close relationships and have happy memories of their time together.

But this kind of heavy-handed paternalism is perhaps the best that can be said of Johnson's operation. Exploitation and abuse were the overwhelming realities, a theme present from the beginning of the book and dominant by its end. The work itself was brutal. Barry spares no details in describing industrial turkey operations—from artificial insemination to slaughter ("a bloody, filthy, feathery mess")—and how the men worked decades in notoriously high-turnover jobs. Stuck on the fast-moving line, they often had to urinate in their pants. Their productivity matched that of other workers, whom they often trained, but Johnson's company consistently underreported it to justify their sub-minimum-wage pay; while each man received a few dollars a week in cash as spending money, the company pocketed their remaining wages. Promises of growing savings accounts and a plush retirement home back in Texas were false: Keith Brown's savings of $87.96 after thirty-five years of work was typical, and the home was never built.

Meanwhile, the conditions inside the Atalissa schoolhouse were steadily deteriorating into a nightmare of clogged toilets, filthy mattresses, and roach-infested food. Rule infractions resulted in beatings and other physical punishments, including being chained to beds or forced to walk in circles while carrying heavy weights. Occasionally men would run away, only to be returned by local law enforcement. One exception was Alford Busby: he froze to death after fleeing on a January night into the Iowa winter. By the end, the work had taken an enormous physical toll on the men, many now in their sixties; some suffered broken bones, hearing loss, and fungal infection, while others

COVER DETAIL, *THE BOYS IN THE BUNKHOUSE*, HARPERCOLLINS

were living with untreated diabetes and rotting teeth.

The Boys in the Bunkhouse is one of those books where frequent digressions and backstories are as rich as the central narrative. Barry traces the evolution of the language used to describe such human beings over time, from "cretin" and "moron," to "mentally retarded," "deficient," and "challenged," to the current "intellectually disabled," which is the term he uses. He looks at Atalissa's history, from its founding to its heyday to its slow decline, "as the old die away and the young stay away." He reports on the backgrounds of social workers, townspeople, a local pastor, and a lawyer from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (who is part of what may be the world's greatest marriage proposal). Most moving, he details the varied pasts of the men themselves. It helps that Barry—a columnist for the *New York Times*—is an excellent writer, with the ability to interweave stories and powerfully set scenes in the voices of various characters (though anyone familiar with Waterloo, Iowa, may find his description of that city overly lyrical). As hard as its tale can be to read, the book is hard to put down.

Ultimately, Barry's account is a chronicle of injustice unfolding in plain sight. Most people who came into contact with the men failed to grasp the full extent of their plight, a dynamic the book's structure skillfully replicates for readers by foregrounding the paternalistic care and gradually unspooling the extent of their exploitation and suffering. The few who did raise objections were defeated by a mix of corporate greed, government failures, misconceptions about those with intellectual disabilities, and the public's simple lack of interest in who is "killing and eviscerating turkeys for the country's cheap deli lunches and annual days of giving thanks."

There is hope at the story's end: protests by family members and articles in the *Des Moines Register* finally prompt the men's rescue. An inspiring group of state social workers and a government-funded nonprofit in Waterloo step in to provide an alternative model for supporting those with intellectual disabilities, one that combines care with independence and choices in housing, employment, and relationships. And there is some vindication in a successful EEOC employment-discrimination suit against the company, though only a fraction of the wages stolen from the men over the decades is recovered.

The most important source of hope, however, is how these men who endured so much clung so stubbornly to their humanity and cared for one another through it all. They, at least, upheld human dignity and practiced solidarity, even amid so many others who did not. ■

David Carroll Cochran *is Professor of Politics at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. His most recent books are* Catholic Realism and the Abolition of War *(Orbis) and* The Catholic Church in Ireland Today *(Rowman & Littlefield).*

Tom Deignan

Don't Blame the Brits

The Princeton History of Modern Ireland

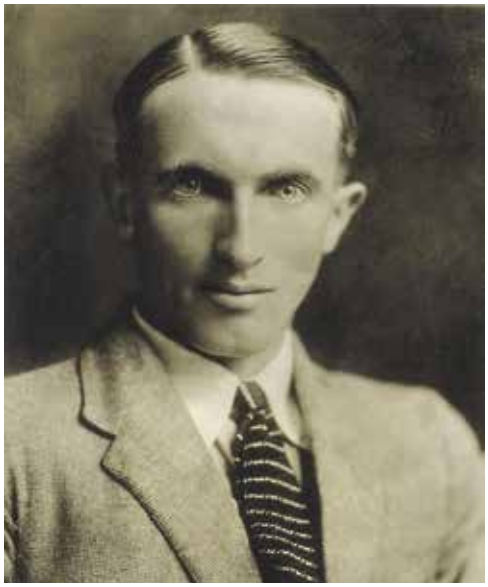
Edited by Richard Bourke & Ian McBride
Princeton University Press, $45, 526 pp.

Earlier this year, around St. Patrick's Day, journalist Timothy Egan was promoting his recent biography of American Civil War general Thomas Francis Meagher. Placing Meagher's life into a broader historical context—he'd been banished, for political activities, from his native Ireland to Tasmania—Egan told NPR's Leonard Lopate: "For almost seven hundred years it was a crime to be Irish in Ireland.... It was a crime to practice your religion...to own property.... [The English] did everything they could...to de-culture these people."

All these years later, much popular Irish history is still viewed through the lens of English colonialism. But the authors and editors of *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* offer a welcome corrective to such narrow thinking: they want readers to (if you will) look beyond "the Brits."

"It is useful to examine the history of Ireland in [a] more flexible and complex framework," writes co-editor Richard Bourke, a professor at Queen Mary University of London. "This reorientation helps us move beyond attempts to plot the story of Ireland as one of trauma or victimhood." This theme is referred to again and again in the twenty-one articles included in this volume, which spans nearly five centuries, from Jane Ohlmeyer's "Conquest, Civilization, Colonization: Ireland, 1540–1660" to Diarmaid Ferriter's "Twenty-First-Century Ireland."

In the former, for example, Ohlmeyer argues that "English imperialism in Ireland lacked any overriding, coherent, and consistent framework...allow[ing] some Catholics, together with many Protestant planters, to co-opt the colonial processes to strengthen their regional power bases." In case the point is not clear, John Bew, in his essay "Ireland Under the Union, 1801–1922," disapprovingly quotes Roy Foster's assertion that "interpretations of the Union have often been 'brutally simple: colonization as rape, union as shotgun marriage.'" Such one-dimensional accounts of Irish politics are mercifully absent from these essays.



Liam O'Flaherty

Overall, *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* makes a fine addition to the library of any reader looking to take a deeper dive into the diverse forces that have shaped Irish history. There are several—perhaps inevitable—drawbacks to such a project, such as the occasional lapse into obtuse academic language. "The centrality of violence to the historicist narrative of nationalism should be added to such pragmatic considerations," writes Marc Mulholland in "Political Violence." Not exactly the kind of prose that will stir the imagination of the non-specialist reader.

Another limitation is that, while the articles are necessarily broad, there are times when the subject matter begs for more details and deeper analysis. Take Maurice Walsh's "Media and Culture in Ireland, 1960–2008," an essay that tells the fascinating story of (among other things) the creation and evolution of Telefís Éireann, Ireland's state television operation, which did not debut until New Year's Eve 1961. "By the late 1950s television was no longer a distant abstraction, because households along the east coast were able to receive broadcasts from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)," writes Walsh. He later adds, "If Ireland did not have its own version of the technology, the argument went, the country would end up swamped by British stations."

Walsh commendably explores the unlikely television stardom of both Bishop Eamon Casey and Father Michael Cleary, emblematic products of a culture that craved mass entertainment, yet feared the moral damage it might do to a deeply Catholic country. That both of these men eventually became embroiled in sexual scandal—each secretly fathered children—makes them even more powerful symbols of the various cultural forces that roiled Ireland in the second half of the twentieth century. Readers may want to hear a lot more about this clash of religion, sex, and popular culture.

Other standout entries include explorations of the Irish language as well as the diaspora, topics that are often shoved to the margins but provide key insights into Ireland and its history.

Then there is Lauren Arrington's impressive "Irish Modernism and its Legacies." After an overview that touches upon the very different but equally important writers Liam O'Flaherty, J. M. Synge, and Elizabeth Bowen, Arrington focuses on the connections that link T. S. Eliot and the unjustly lesser-known Irish poet Thomas MacGreevy. Later, Addington perceptively notes: "Although Joyce and Beckett both chose to live the rest of their lives outside of Ireland and are often considered part of the interna-

tional avant-garde, their work is nonetheless a reaction to the Irish revival." This is an important reminder of the profound Irishness of two authors more typically associated with world literature.

Religion, of course, receives ample attention in this volume. Ohlmeyer's essay as well as "Ascendancy Ireland, 1660–1880," by Ultán Gillen, are both good on the tumult of rebellion and warfare that compelled a cycle of religious conversions and had grave consequences for Catholics and their ownership of land.

Co-editor Ian McBride's essay—simply entitled "Religion"—is long and substantive if also, at times, opaque. McBride ably analyzes Ireland's "obstinate religiosity" and offers genuine insight into a pressing question about Ireland in the wake of the 1840s Great Famine: "What accounts for the extraordinary success of the devotional revolution in turning the mass of the Irish people into practicing Catholics within a generation?" McBride reminds us that Irish Catholicism was not static in the nineteenth century, and (answering his own question) intriguingly ties faith to trends in demography and emigration as well as traditions of land inheritance.

McBride also observes that the "Protestant Ascendancy...above all was locked in a struggle with an international organization supported by the great imperial monarchies of Europe," though this leaves the reader wondering why this volume does not have more to say about Ireland's relationship with the Vatican. And readers familiar with the notorious twentieth-century anti-Catholic journalist Paul Blanshard will find Mcbride's quotation of him questionable, even if it is meant to be ironic.

On a related, eternally vexing question of recent Irish history—Northern Ireland—*The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* offers much, but not, again, without the potential for controversy. (Now that clashes have generally left the streets of Derry and Belfast, they have marched on to the halls of academia.) Niall Ó Dochartaigh offers a thorough take on the North since 1920, though neither his essay nor Mulholland's aforementioned "Political Violence" finds room to mention key events like, say, the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry in January 1972.

In many ways, though, given what Ireland endured in the 1990s and 2000s—the sex-abuse revelations and a roaring, then battered, economy—such events can seem nearly as distant as the Easter Rising. Indeed, as was often noted during the Rising's recent centenary, after centuries of dashed, rebellious dreams, Ireland finally began marching on the road to independence in 1916. And so there is no small irony in the fact that by the time the twenty-first century rolled around, the Irish people still found themselves (to use Diarmaid Ferriter's words) "bereft of meaningful sovereignty." No, they were not "reliant on" a distant colonial power or church authorities. The Irish, thanks to a housing bubble and banking mess, were held captive by a desperate need for "bailout funds."

It's hard to blame the Brits for that. Though not impossible. ■

Tom Deignan *(tdeignan.blogspot.com) is a columnist with the* Irish Voice *newspaper and has written about books for the* New York Times, Washington Post *and* Newark Star-Ledger. *He has contributed to numerous books on history and literature, and is the author of* Coming to America: Irish Americans.

The Lord Delights

Jerry Ryan

"When one tries to speak lovingly of God, all human words become like the tears of blind lions seeking sources in the desert."
—Léon Bloy

Not long ago I discovered the work of Daniel Bourguet, a Lutheran minister who lives as a hermit in the south of France. The first books of his I read were adapted from retreats he had given during Lent and Passiontide. Bourguet's pious style might put some people off—it is a style better suited to oral presentation than to the page—but if one can look past it to the substance of his reflections, one will find some remarkable insights. I was so impressed by his work that I translated one of his books into English and naïvely set out to find a publisher. I never found one. I shared my translation with several friends, hoping for some encouragement and also wanting to share what I thought was a gold mine. Nobody seemed particularly impressed. What I found to be quite moving was considered too mystical or sentimental.

In retrospect, I think the problem may have been Bouguet's strange insistence that God has "sentiments," that he feels our pain and rejoices when we turn toward him. Many of us consider this way of talking about God to be childish. Yet in the Bible God reveals himself as having very human emotions—even some that are not very pretty, like anger and jealousy. God is described as changing his mind and repenting of evils he has allowed. In the creation narrative, we are told that God made man in his image and likeness. This means that we are in some way like God, but it also means that God is in some way like us. This is the basic relationship on which revelation and, ultimately, the Incarnation are based. Theology tells us that all our discourse about God is analogical. God speaks to us about himself truly, but in a language we can understand. The divine reality exceeds that language: it is unimaginable, unspeakable. The challenge is to acknowledge the similarity between us and God without forgetting the radical dissimilarity. We are always in danger of drifting toward either anthropomorphism or agnosticism. I worry that the tendency within Christianity today is toward a kind of agnosticism, in which God is relegated to some unknowable sphere and religion is reduced to a kind of moralism—to actions rather than words.

This is understandable, since the culture at large has become more and more agnostic. More and more people are describing themselves as "none of the above" in surveys of religious affiliation. "Spirituality" is in, and dogma is out. We are part of that larger culture and we need to engage with it, to accept what is authentic in its insights. No doubt there was an overemphasis on dogma in the past, and so now there is a reaction against it. On another level, there has also been a reaction against a very sentimental and basically egoistical type of piety, which neglected the social imperatives of our faith.

Still, I think we should be careful about overcompensating. There

BOB EKBLAD

Daniel Bourguet

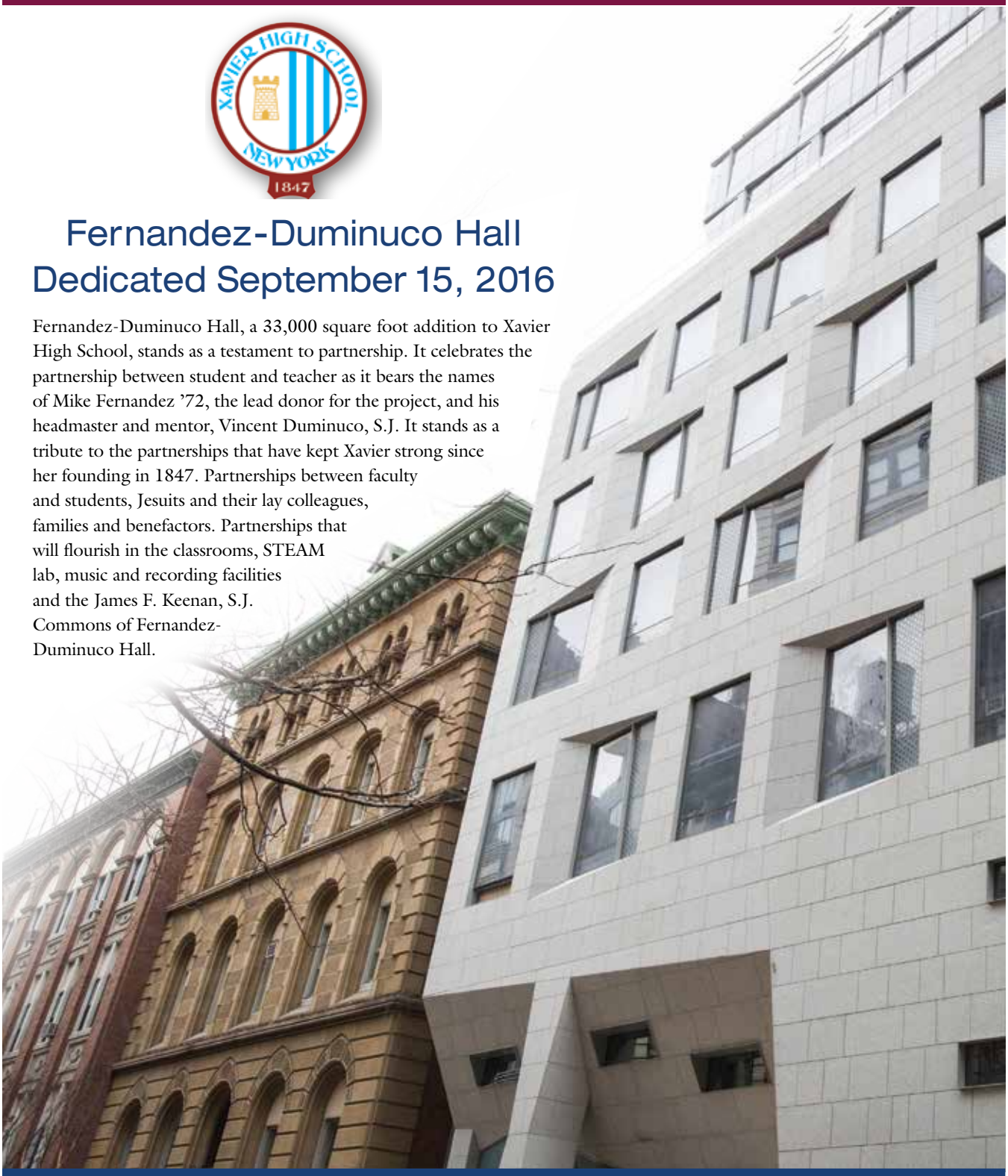
is another point of view that we are in danger of forgetting—God's own point of view. We can grasp something of that point of view by what God tells us about himself in the scriptures, but also by what he leaves to our imagination. There is, for example, the perennial problem of suffering in God. Theological wisdom tells us that God is impassible, almighty, perfectly happy. But we cannot really imagine an indifferent and impassive and happy God serenely watching his creatures destroy themselves. The whole mystery of the Incarnation says something entirely different. One of the themes Bourguet develops is that of the apparent silence of the Father during the Passion of the Son. The Father sends his Son a comforting angel during his crisis in the garden of Gethsemane. And there is the mysterious apparition of Simon of Cyrene, who is identified as the father of Alexander and Rufus. In fact, Simon is the only Biblical personage who is identified not by his father but by his sons. We are to think of him, then, as a father, and perhaps as a figure of the Father of Jesus, helping him bear his cross. Again, we see the Father expressing his immense sorrow in the tearing apart of the curtain of the Holy of Holies; it is as if he were tearing his vestments in grief. From these discreet signs, we can sense something of a silent suffering too great for words.

Can we speak of God's happiness, his beatitude, as something actually "happening" in God, despite the fact that, according to classical theology, he is beyond all change? Can we not see the human reactions of Jesus as reflecting the sentiments of God? "He who sees me, has seen the Father." Have we become too sophisticated to believe that we can make God happy or sad, to take scripture at its word—at God's word—when it tells us that the Lord delights in and rejoices over us (Zepheniah 3:17)? One of the best sermons I ever heard was on why we should pray. The preacher's answer: because God likes us to pray to him. End of sermon. ■

Jerry Ryan *joined the Little Brothers of Jesus in 1959. He lived and worked with them for more than two decades in Europe and South America. He and his family now live in Massachusetts.*

Fernandez-Duminuco Hall Dedicated September 15, 2016

Fernandez-Duminuco Hall, a 33,000 square foot addition to Xavier High School, stands as a testament to partnership. It celebrates the partnership between student and teacher as it bears the names of Mike Fernandez '72, the lead donor for the project, and his headmaster and mentor, Vincent Duminuco, S.J. It stands as a tribute to the partnerships that have kept Xavier strong since her founding in 1847. Partnerships between faculty and students, Jesuits and their lay colleagues, families and benefactors. Partnerships that will flourish in the classrooms, STEAM lab, music and recording facilities and the James F. Keenan, S.J. Commons of Fernandez-Duminuco Hall.



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