

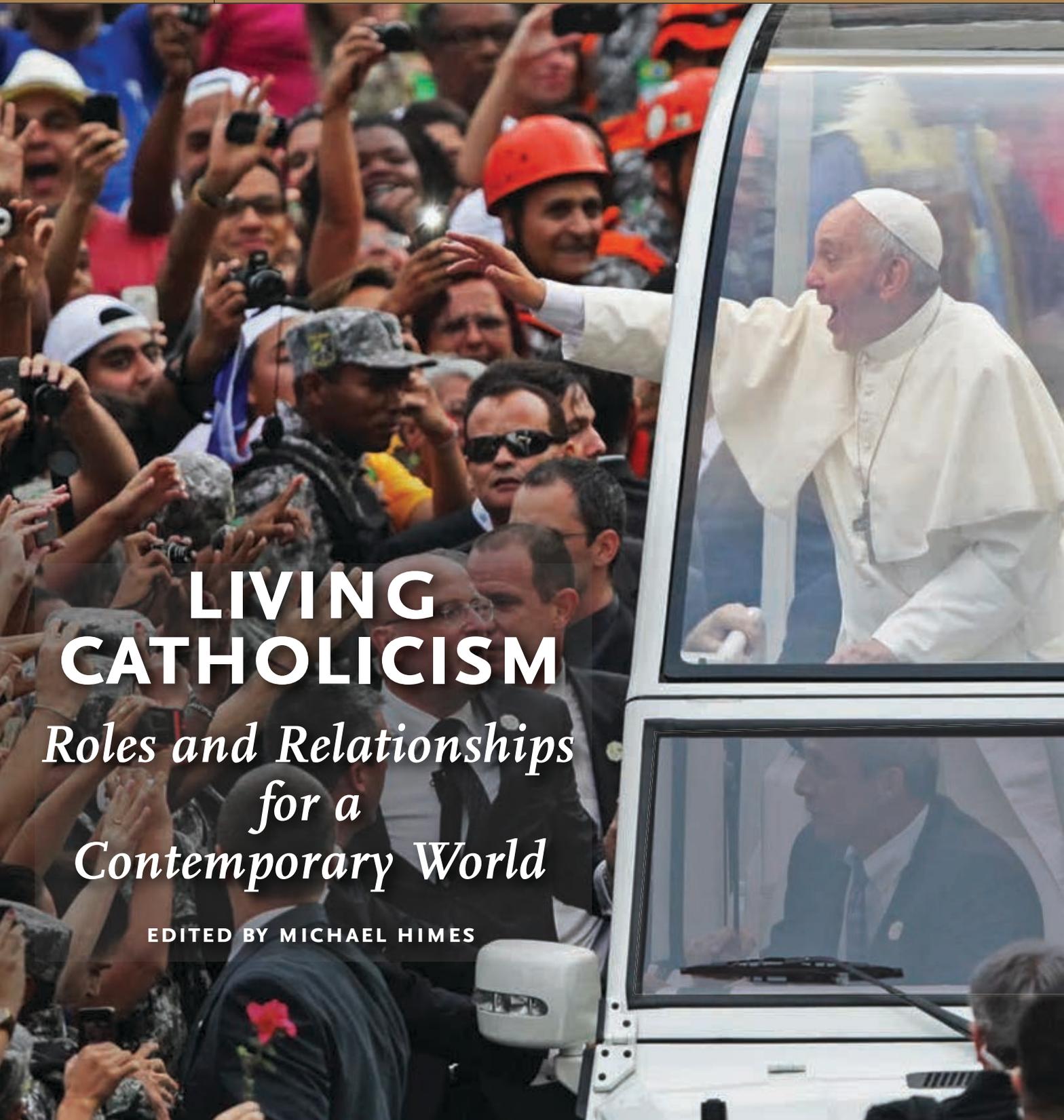
the CHURCH in the 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CENTER BOSTON COLLEGE

SESQUICENTENNIAL  
ISSUE

# C21 Resources

FALL 2013

A CATALYST AND RESOURCE FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



## LIVING CATHOLICISM

*Roles and Relationships  
for a  
Contemporary World*

EDITED BY MICHAEL HIMES

The Church in the 21st Century Center is a catalyst and resource for the renewal of the Catholic Church.

*C21 Resources*, a compilation of critical analyses and essays on key challenges facing the Church today, is published by the Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College, in partnership with featured authors and publications.

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**ON THE COVER**

Pope Francis greets crowd of faithful from popemobile in downtown Rio de Janeiro, during World Youth Day celebrations, July 2013.

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FROM THE C21 CENTER DIRECTOR



Dear Friend:

We begin this issue with a cover image of Pope Francis during World Youth Day in Brazil. An enthusiastic and energetic crowd — young and old — reaching out to a joyful pope, who is reaching out to them, offers a rich analogy for the Church in the contemporary world. Each of us is called to stretch ourselves to form a more perfect Church in cooperation with grace in bringing about the Kingdom of God.

This collection of essays offers examples of renewal — some realized and some aspirational — as the Church responds to the challenges of the 21st century. Through what Pope Francis calls “Pastoral Conversion,” the Church must periodically review the leadership roles with regards to its various ecclesial ministries. Just as critical is the continual examination of the relationships through which these roles address the pastoral needs of the Catholic community.

We have been blessed to work with Fr. Michael Himes as the guest editor of this issue, a true visionary and a gift to the Church. Fr. Himes captures the heart of this issue in his opening essay: *“Living our Catholicism is the assurance that there is and will be a living Catholicism.”*

Please share this issue with family, friends, students, colleagues, and fellow parishioners. We are happy to fulfill requests for additional copies. You might also enjoy the many videos and other resources nested in the C21 website.

Most sincerely,

Erik P. Goldschmidt  
Director

# C21 Resources

FALL 2013

LIVING CATHOLICISM ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS FOR A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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# Living Catholicism:

A Church in Need of Its People

*Michael Himes*



Before we discuss the different roles and relationships in the Catholic Church, such as the role of authority, or the relationship between our diocesan priests and their bishop, or how parishes might function, or any of the countless other issues that deserve discussion among Catholics today, the first question that we must answer is why we care about being a Church at all.

**C**atholicism is alive. Understanding this simple statement is crucial to understanding the nature of the Catholic Church. It is often easy to reduce Catholicism to a philosophy we subscribe to, or a list of truths we believe in. While philosophies and statements of truth are an integral part of being human, Catholicism is so much more. Catholicism is the ongoing history of the People of God. In other words, Catholicism is the life of what we have come to call “the Church.”

Catholicism is alive because we are alive as a community of believers. The way we live our lives is the life of Catholicism. St. Teresa of Avila put this sentiment into provocative and poetic words when she wrote:

“Christ has no body but yours.  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks.  
Compassion to the world.  
Yours are the feet with which he walks  
to do good.  
Yours are the hands with which he  
blesses all the world.”

Take a moment to reflect on that fact. If we are honest with ourselves, this is a daunting realization. The relationships we have with others and the roles we fulfill in our communities are the life of Catholicism.

The articles in this magazine are meant to be prompts for further reflection on the life of Catholicism as it is being lived out by the Catholic Church today. However, before we discuss the different roles and relationships in the Catholic Church, such as the role of authority, or the relationship between our diocesan priests and their bishop, or how parishes might function, or any of the countless other issues that deserve discussion among Catholics today, the first question that we must answer is why we care about being a Church at all. Why do we need a Church with all its attendant problems and questions? Two reasons: because the Word has become flesh, and because God is love.

The too often unasked—and so, not surprisingly, unanswered—question about the Church is “Why have one?” This is not a question about the Church’s mission, important as such a question is. Rather, it is a much more personally pressing question: “Why do I need a church?”





In order to answer this seldom asked question, we may profitably recall two points. I say “recall” because both are so deeply embedded with the Catholic understanding of Christianity that neither can come to us as a new discovery. More often than not, good theology, like good pastoral practice, is a matter not of saying something never heard before but of remembering something forgotten. The first point is that the Word became flesh. Christianity is not about timeless truths. First and foremost, it is news—good news, in fact—about particular events in the lives of particular people living at a particular time and in a particular place.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the term often used to describe this aspect of Christianity was “the scandal of particularity.” Certainly there is something shocking, something scandalous, about the claim that the whole of human history, the whole history of the cosmos, reaches its climax, its fulfillment, in the life, death, and destiny of one Jewish man in Palestine in the latter years of Augustus’s reign and the first years of Tiberius’s. How that one person and his story are of ultimate significance for every human being before him and every human being after him is a very big question, indeed. But it may be important to reconfront that “scandalous” claim today from a slightly different angle.

If Christianity is not about eternal verities that could, at least in principle, be discovered anytime anywhere, if it is, in fact, the proclamation of news about unique events at one point in time and space, then there is only one way in which you and I can learn that news: Someone has to tell us. News requires a reporter. We have, of course, heard

the good news from reporters; in my case, I first learned the Gospel from my parents, my family, my teachers, my pastors. And they learned it from their parents, families, teachers, and pastors. And so on and on, back to the first reporters who proclaimed the great good news. That is why my relationship to God in Christ necessarily requires my relationship to others: I would have no awareness of God in Christ apart from that relationship. One reason why I need the Church is that, apart from the Church, I would have no knowledge of God in Christ.

The second point that highlights our need for the Church is that God is love. Faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is impossible without love for one another. There is certainly nothing new in that statement; the Gospel and Epistles of John certainly said it insistently and powerfully 19 centuries ago, and it has been repeated again and again through the intervening years by women and men who have lived Christianity wisely and well. One cannot understand what it means to say that “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8 and 16) if one has no concrete experience of love. An agapic community is the precondition for true belief in God. All talk about God runs the risk of blasphemy, and all talking to God in prayer the risk of idolatry. For it is perilously easy to chatter about or to our own best image of God rather than God. What guards against that danger is the “controlling metaphor” for God in the Christian tradition: agapic love. If you have no experience of agapic love, then quite literally you will not know what you are talking about if you say “I believe in God.” The Church, on all its many levels from the domestic church of the family to the Church univer-



People crowd Saint Peter's Square to await the sight of smoke from the chimney above the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican March 12, 2013.

sal, is to be an agapic community. Needless to say, on all its many levels it fails again and again. But it confesses its failure and lovingly struggles to love.

Ultimately, the reason we need the Church is because we cannot believe apart from community. To speak of spirituality without roots in a community is to flirt with idolatry. Trying to enter into relationship with God in some private, individualistic fashion is a guarantee that one will be talking to oneself. Apart from the day-to-day, sometimes aching hard, occasionally grindingly dull, always deeply humbling attempt to love those around us in practical ways one simply cannot claim that one is in relationship with God. Never was this said more clearly or decisively than by the author of the First Epistle of John: Anyone who claims that he loves God but does not love his brothers and sisters is lying (4:20).

What follows are articles that seek to understand what it means to successfully live out the aching hard, occasionally grindingly dull, always deeply humbling attempts to love those around us in practical ways. I say "practical ways" because love is an action before it is a feeling. The roles and relationships that are discussed in

this magazine must be actively lived and formed by the agapic love that allows us to experience God. Each article touches on a topic that is an integral aspect of the Catholic Church's life, and it goes without saying that there are roles and relationships left untreated here. It is my hope that these words will instill within you a conviction that Catholicism is alive through your life. You are charged with bearing the Good News in your life and you are charged with loving others so that they might know God as love. The Church needs each of us to participate in its life or it has no life. Living our Catholicism is the assurance that there is and will be a living Catholicism. ■

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Explore several C21 videos featuring Fr. Michael Himes:  
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*Fr. Michael Himes's Homily at Sesquicentennial Mass at Fenway Park*  
*"Catholics: Why We Are A Sacramental People," Fr. Michael Himes*  
*Fr. Michael Himes discusses the role of the theologian with Fr. Michael Buckley, S.J. and Nicholas Lash*



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# Teaching or COMMANDING?

## When Bishops Instruct the Faithful

Nicholas Lash

When the Second Vatican Council ended, several of the bishops who took part told me that the most important lesson they had learned through the conciliar process had been a renewed recognition that the Church exists to be, for all its members, a lifelong school of holiness and wisdom, a lifelong school of friendship (a better rendering of *caritas* than “charity” would be). It follows that the most fundamental truth about the structure of Christian teaching cannot lie in distinctions between teachers and pupils—although such distinctions are not unimportant—but in the recognition that all Christians are called to lifelong learning in the Spirit, and all of us are called to embody, communicate, and protect what we have learned. Much of what is said about the office of “teachership” or magisterium seems dangerously forgetful of this fact.

### ASPECTS OF INSTRUCTION

The concept of instruction is ambiguous. If I am “instructing” someone, I may be teaching or I may be issuing a command. Someone who is “under instruction” is being educated, but “I instructed him to stop” reports a command. “Instructions for use,” however, provide information and hence would seem to be educational. There may be cases in which it is not easy to decide the sense. It is, however, important not to confuse the two senses and even more important not to

subordinate instruction as education to instruction as command.

I have long maintained that the heart of the crisis of contemporary Catholicism lies in just such subordination of education to governance, the effect of which has too often been to substitute for teaching proclamation construed as command. As Yves Congar said, it is impossible to make the function of teaching an integral element of jurisdiction because it is one thing to accept a teaching, quite another to obey an order: “*Autre chose est agréer une doctrine, autre chose obéir a un ordre.*”

### DISSENT AND DISAGREEMENT

Here is a very simple model: The teacher looks for understanding, the commander for obedience. Where teaching in most ordinary senses of the term is concerned, if a pupil’s response to a piece of teaching is yes, the student is saying something like “I see” or “I understand.” If the response is no, the pupil is saying “I don’t see” or “I don’t understand.” When subordinates say yes to a command, they obey; when they say no, they disobey. Dissent is disobedience. The entire discussion about the circumstances in which it may be permissible or appropriate to dissent from magisterial utterances makes clear that what is at issue is when and in what circumstances it may be virtuous, and not sinful, to disobey. There could, in my opinion, be no clearer evidence that what we call “official teaching” in

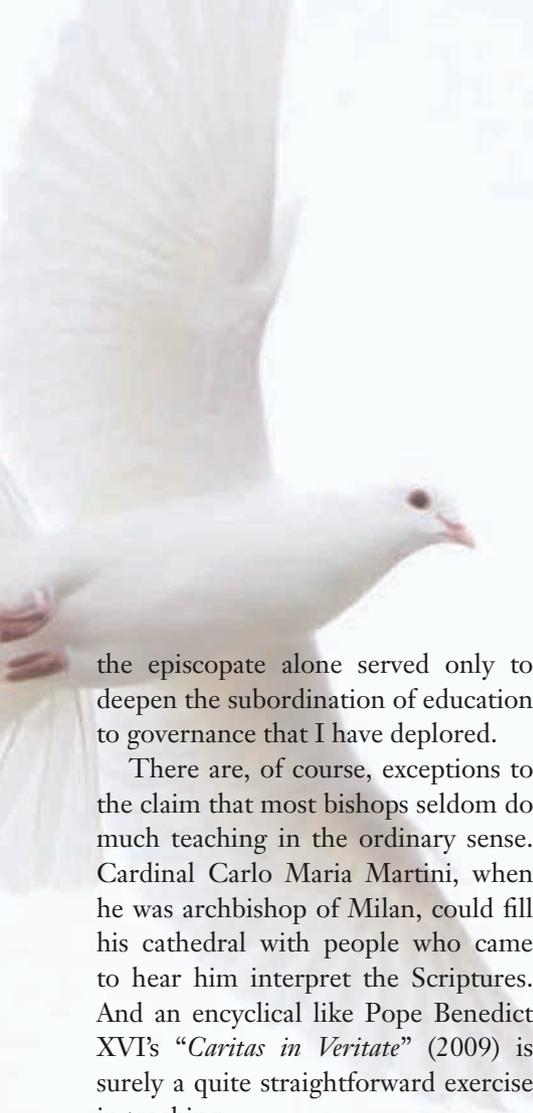
the Church is, for the most part, not teaching but governance.

I am not in the least denying that governance, the issuing of instructions and commands, has its place in the life of the Church, as of any other society. That is not what is at issue. The point at issue is that commands direct; they do not educate. It is one thing to accept a doctrine, quite another to obey an order.

### “TEACHERSHIP”

“It is for ecclesiology,” said Robert Murray, S.J., an English Jesuit, “that [the term] magisterium till about the mid-19th century referred to the activity of authorized teaching in the Church. The use with a capital ‘M’ to denote episcopal and especially papal authority was developed mainly in the anti-Modernist documents.”

The 19th-century shift from the name of a function, that of teaching, to the name of a group of officers or “functionaries” was for two reasons most unfortunate. First, it was unfortunate because it created the impression that in the Church only bishops bear responsibility for witnessing to the Gospel. (We should never forget that most bishops were first catechized by their mothers.) Second, it was unfortunate because bishops seldom do much teaching in the ordinary sense, being preoccupied with the cares of middle management. As a result, the contraction of the range of reference of magisterium to



“Sharing our faith is always more than stating our convictions: it is finding our place in that conversation which has continued ever since Jesus began to talk with anyone whom he met in Galilee, and which is the life of the Church.”

the episcopate alone served only to deepen the subordination of education to governance that I have deplored.

There are, of course, exceptions to the claim that most bishops seldom do much teaching in the ordinary sense. Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, when he was archbishop of Milan, could fill his cathedral with people who came to hear him interpret the Scriptures. And an encyclical like Pope Benedict XVI's *“Caritas in Veritate”* (2009) is surely a quite straightforward exercise in teaching.

I have referred to the contraction of the range of “official teachers” to the episcopate. In fact, during the 20th century the magisterium contracted even further. John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* is addressed “to all the bishops of the Catholic Church.” Near the end of it, the pope says: “This is the first time, in fact, that the Magisterium of the Church has set forth in detail the fundamental elements of this teaching,” thereby contracting the range of reference still further—to himself.

According to the Church historian Eamon Duffy, John Paul II, like Pius XII before him, “saw the pope as first and foremost a teacher, an oracle.” However accurate the image of particular popes as “oracles” may be as a description, it remains the case that any pope who behaves within the Church as an oracle misunderstands his office. The image of the oracle is of one who brings fresh messages from

God. This no pope can do, for the Church he serves as its chief bishop has already heard the Word and lives by that faith, which is its God-given response. It is the duty of those who hold teaching office in the Church to articulate, to express, to clarify the faith by which we live.

#### RECEPTION

Hence the importance of the doctrine of “reception.” In one of St. Augustine's sermons (No. 272) he says: “When I hold up the host before communion, I say ‘Corpus Christi,’ and you reply ‘Amen,’ which means: ‘Yes, we are.’” The response of the faithful to sound teaching in the Church is to say, “Yes, that's it.” Where this response is lacking, the teaching is called into question.

*Securus judicat orbis terrarum* (“The judgment of the whole world is secure”). In the months leading up to the first Vatican Council, Cardinal John Henry Newman insisted that he “put the validity of the Council upon its reception by the *orbis terrarum*” (whole world). And when, after the council, he hesitated before accepting the definition of papal infallibility, Lord Acton remarked, “He was waiting for the echo.”

“Human community,” says Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., “is sustained by conversation.” That he regards this axiom as an ecclesiological and not merely an anthropological principle is clear from his later remark that

“Sharing our faith is always more than stating our convictions: it is finding our place in that conversation which has continued ever since Jesus began to talk with anyone whom he met in Galilee, and which is the life of the Church.” Disagreement is an unavoidable feature of serious conversation about the things that matter most. David Woodard, a brilliantly effective but somewhat eccentric parish priest with whom I had the privilege of working in the early 1960s, came back one day after visiting a neighboring parish and exclaimed: “Those people are completely lacking in Christian charity; they can't even disagree with one another!”

*In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas* (“Unity in essentials, liberty in open questions, in all things charity”). Pope John XXIII quoted this 16th-century motto in his first encyclical. It seems to me that where the relationships between governance and education and between the episcopate and teachers of theology are concerned, there are few more important tasks for the bishops to undertake than to act as moderators of disagreement, educators in Christian conversation. ■

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This article is adapted from his C21 talk honoring the theological achievements of Michael Buckley, S.J., delivered at Boston College in 2009, and first appeared in *America*, December 13, 2010. Reprinted with permission from America Press, Inc., 2010. All rights reserved. [www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org).

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# The Pope and Bishops

## Collegiality in Service of Catholicity

*Richard R. Gaillardetz*



Pope Francis greets bishops at the end of a solemn profession of faith of the Italian bishops in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican May 23, 2013.

In the very first line of his first public address, Pope Francis said the following: “You all know that the duty of the Conclave was to give a bishop to Rome.” These carefully spoken words reaffirm what many Catholics have forgotten: The pope is special because of the Church he presides over; not the universal Church, but the Church of Rome. As if to respond to any confusion caused by his words, Francis went on to say the following: “And now let us begin this journey, the Bishop and people, this journey of the Church of Rome, which presides in charity over all the Churches, a journey of brotherhood in love, of mutual trust.” For Francis, in order to fulfill his role as pope, he must first seek to be a bishop to his local church. The central importance of the relationship between a bishop and his local church is what gives Catholicism its unique form of unity that we call catholicity.

As Christianity developed in the first five centuries, a strong bond developed between the bishop and the local church. The very *raison d'être* of the ministry of the bishop was to serve as leader of a local church. Today's practice of ordaining a priest to the episcopate because he was going to serve as a diplomat (legate, apostolic delegate, or nuncio) or as a high-ranking bureaucrat in the Vatican (often referred to as a titular ordination) would have been incomprehensible in the churches of the early centuries. The episcopate was not viewed as an honorific, a reward for ecclesiastical advancement; rather, one was ordained bishop for the sole purpose of pastoring a local church. This firm bond between bishop and local church was reinforced by Church discipline.

We find impressive documentary evidence in the first five centuries that the members of a local church played an active role in the appointment of a bishop to the local church. One of the first documents containing an ordination ritual, the third-century *Apostolic Tradition*, forthrightly states:

Let the bishop be ordained after he has been chosen by all the people; when he has been named and shall please all, let him, with the presbytery and such bishops as may be present, assemble with the people on Sunday. While all give their consent, the bishops shall lay hands upon him.<sup>1</sup>

Also writing in the third century, St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, wrote: “Moreover, we can see that divine authority is also the source for the practice whereby bishops are chosen in the presence of the laity and before the eyes of all, and they are judged as being suitable and worthy after public scrutiny and testimony.”<sup>2</sup> Pope Leo (440-61) would further insist: “He who has to preside over all must be elected by all.”<sup>3</sup>

A second means of strengthening the relationship between bishop and the local church was articulated in canon 15 of the Council of Nicea and maintained into the ninth century. This canon prohibited the “translation” of a bishop, that is, the transfer of a bishop from one diocese to another. Occasional exceptions to this canon were made, but they were rare. There were both theological and pastoral reasons for this prohibition. At the theological level, the transfer of a bishop violated the nuptial symbolism of a bishop’s “marriage” to his people, a symbolism reinforced by the newly ordained bishop’s investiture with an episcopal ring. At a practical level, it forestalled episcopal careerism. As Michael Buckley has observed:

...the early Church saw quite practically in this effort to move from one see to another an endless source of clerical ambition, rivalry, and self-promotion, as well as, more theologically, the violation of the union that should exist between the bishop and the people of his diocese.<sup>4</sup>

If a bishop of a relatively insignificant diocese had aspirations for “promotion” to a larger and more significant church, he might be more inclined to act cautiously, concerned about how his actions might be interpreted by those with the authority to assign him to a more influential post.

Although Vatican II did not do away with the practice of titular ordinations, it did go a long way toward reestablishing the bishop’s relationship to his

to his relationship with his brother bishops in the episcopal college. When bishops gather together with other bishops, they bring the unique gifts, wisdom, and pastoral concerns of their local church with them. Consequently, in their episcopal gatherings, they manifest not only their collegial relationship with one another; they also manifest the communion that exists among all their churches. What then results in these collegial

“It is the bishop's relationship to his local church that gives full meaning to his relationship with his brother bishops in the episcopal college.”

local church. It taught that the local church achieved its most profound expression when gathered at the bishop’s altar for the celebration of the Eucharist (SC 41) and it insisted that the bishop was the ordinary pastor of the local church to which he was assigned (CD 11) and not merely a delegate of the pope (LG 27).

If we look for contemporary examples of the ancient bond that was presumed between bishop and the local church we might consider the simple but profound witness of the late Raymond Lucker, bishop of New Ulm, Minnesota. He served as bishop of that small, rural diocese from 1976 to 2000. During that time he eschewed an episcopal residence, preferring to make his car his office while residing in various parish rectories throughout his diocese. This itinerant lifestyle allowed him to visit up to 50 parishes each year. Lucker came to know his people as few bishops have. When he met with other bishops he was often quite outspoken in voicing the concerns and insights of those in his diocese. He was convinced that these concerns and insights had something to offer the Church universal.

It is the bishop’s relationship to his local church that gives full meaning

interactions among bishops is a kind of ecclesial “gift exchange.” Each bishop offers the gifts from his own church to the *communio ecclesiarum*, the communion of churches. In this way episcopal collegiality is put in service of the Church’s catholicity. We saw this dynamism at work at the Second Vatican Council. When the bishops were gathered in council session, they often found themselves sitting next to a bishop from another continent. They shared meals with bishops whose experience of the Church was quite different from their own. Their sense of the Church’s catholicity was expanded dramatically by their exposure to the council’s episcopal “gift exchange.”

Where does the ministry of the pope fit into this schema? The pope is, as bishop of Rome, both a member and head of the college of bishops. As such, Vatican II teaches that while the pope possesses a unique authority by virtue of his office as successor of St. Peter, he shares with all of his brother bishops responsibility for pastoral leadership of the universal Church. His ministry of primacy as head of the college will take two basic forms. The most common exercise of primacy we might refer to as *facilitative*. This refers to the ordinary ministry of the bishop

of Rome in which he “confirms his brothers” in the proper exercise of their ministry as pastors of local churches. This facilitative ministry might include the convocation of episcopal synods, papal visitations, and *ad limina* visits along with other means of facilitating communion among the bishops. The facilitative exercise of papal primacy would not involve any direct intervention in the affairs of local churches. The pope’s primary responsibility here is to facilitate the ecclesial gift exchange among the bishops and their churches.

Much less frequently, there may also be a need for an *interventionist* exercise of papal primacy. This interventionist exercise of papal authority should only come into play when the bishop of Rome, either directly or through curial offices, finds it necessary to intervene in the affairs of a local church or churches because the local structures of leadership are incapable of addressing a matter that threatens the unity of faith and communion. Unless the unity of faith and communion of the whole Church is at risk, there seems to be little ecclesiological justification for Roman intervention.

The ministry of the pope and other bishops is central to the Catholic tradition, yet over the centuries it has too often been compromised by its association with ecclesiastical advancement and clerical privilege. The recent election of a pope named Francis, a pope who has already won the hearts and minds of many with his evangelical simplicity and commitment to a service of the least in our midst, offers hope for a renewal of the ministry of the bishops as a necessary service to the Church’s catholicity and communion. ■

RICHARD R. GAILLARDT is the Joseph Professor of Catholic Systematic Theology at Boston College and president of the Catholic Theology Society of America.

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## Primacy in Communion

The call for a greater participation by the particular churches and their bishops applies to the exercise of the universal magisterium. The bishops are not only coresponsible for the universal Church, they are also official witnesses to the faith of their local churches and of the Church at large. They should join in the formulating of solemn dogmatic decrees and also in matters of less importance. They—along with theologians and the *sensus fidei* of the faithful—should contribute to the statements of the ordinary papal magisterium that are addressed to the entire Church and that bind it in some degree. This should be the case especially when such a statement is intended to prohibit or limit the discussion of controversial questions.

In recent years, many bishops have suggested ways to end this papal centralism. Among their recommendations, at least six are very significant:

1. A standing committee of several cardinals and bishops from around the world should advise the bishop of Rome. The committee’s membership should change every three to five years, so that it would not become a supreme authority in the Church.
2. The synod of bishops should adopt a process that facilitates interaction and decision-making within the episcopacy. At the same time, the Vatican should recognize the synod’s authority to take initiatives and issue final documents.
3. The Vatican should rely more on synods and respect the proper autonomy of the episcopal conferences.
4. Representatives of the local churches as well as of the regional and universal churches should participate in the selection of bishops.
5. Catholicism should recover its original triadic structure. In the first millennium, the Church was organized in three tiers: the particular church and its bishop, the regional church and its primate, and, finally, the universal Church and the bishop of Rome as Peter’s successor. This threefold structure allowed the Church to be a communion of local churches while also fostering inculturation. A two-tiered or dyadic structure replaced the three-tiered form only after the East-West schism (finalized in 1054) when the East lost the Petrine ministry of unity and the West neglected a regional structure.
6. The revival of the triadic form should bring about the separation of the bishop of Rome’s Petine universal role from his patriarchal regional role.

These steps would help recover the Church’s essential character, namely, to be a communion of communities.

~ Hermann J. Pottmeyer, reprinted from *America* June 3, 2000, with permission of America Press, Inc., 2000. All rights reserved. [www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org).

<sup>1</sup>*Apostolic Tradition* 1, 2, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Epistle 67, 4.

<sup>3</sup>PL 54: 634.

<sup>4</sup>Michael J. Buckley, “What Can We Learn from the Church in the First Millennium?” in *The Catholic Church in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Michael J. Himes (Liguori, MO: Liguori, 2004), 20.

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# The Church's Inner Renewal

*Pope Francis*



Pope Francis waves at the end of a canonization Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican May 12, 2013.

The Council of Bishops' Conferences of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida considered Pastoral Conversion to be a necessity. This conversion involves believing in the Good News, believing in Jesus Christ as the bearer of God's Kingdom as it breaks into the world and in his victorious presence over evil, believing in the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, believing in the Church, the Body of Christ and the prolonging of the dynamism of the incarnation.

Consequently, we, as pastors, need to ask questions about the actual state of the churches which we lead. These questions can serve as a guide in examining where the dioceses stand in taking up the spirit of Aparecida; they are questions which we need to keep asking as an examination of conscience.

1. Do we see to it that our work, and that of our priests, is more pastoral than administrative? Who primarily benefits from our efforts, the Church as an organization or the People of God as a whole?
2. Do we fight the temptation simply to react to complex problems as they arise? Are we creating a proactive mind set? Do we promote opportunities and possibilities to manifest God's mercy? Are we conscious of our responsibility for refocusing pastoral approaches and the functioning of Church structures for the benefit of the faithful and society?
3. In practice, do we make the lay faithful sharers in the Mission? Do we offer them

the word of God and the sacraments with a clear awareness and conviction that the Holy Spirit makes himself manifest in them?

4. Is pastoral discernment a habitual criterion, through the use of Diocesan Councils? Do such Councils and Parish Councils, whether pastoral or financial, provide real opportunities for lay people to participate in pastoral consultation, organization, and planning? The good functioning of these Councils is critical. I believe that on this score, we are far behind.
5. As pastors, bishops, and priests, are we conscious and convinced of the mission of the lay faithful and do we give them the freedom to continue discerning, in a way befitting their growth as disciples, the mission which the Lord has entrusted to them? Do we support them and accompany them, overcoming the temptation to manipulate them or infantilize them? Are we constantly open to letting ourselves be challenged in our efforts to advance the good of the Church and her mission in the world?
6. Do pastoral agents and the faithful in general feel part of the Church, do they identify with her and bring her closer to the baptized who are distant and alienated?

As can be appreciated, what is at stake here are attitudes. Pastoral Conversion is chiefly concerned with attitudes and reforming our lives. A change of attitudes is necessarily something ongoing: "it is a process" and it can

only be kept on track with the help of guidance and discernment. It is important always to keep in mind that the compass preventing us from going astray is that of Catholic identity, understood as membership in the Church.

We do well to recall the words of the Second Vatican Council: "The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1). Here we find the basis for our dialogue with the contemporary world.

Responding to the existential issues of people today, especially the young, listening to the language they speak, can lead to a fruitful change, which must take place with the help of the Gospel, the magisterium, and the Church's social doctrine. The scenarios and the *areopagi* involved are quite varied. For example, a single city can contain various collective imaginations which create "different cities". If we remain within the parameters of our "traditional culture", which was essentially rural, we will end up nullifying the power of the Holy Spirit. God is everywhere: we have to know how to find him in order to be able to proclaim him in the language of each and every culture; every reality, every language, has its own rhythm.

*Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 28, 2013* ■

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 8: © STEFANO RELLANDINI/ Reuters/Corbis

# Father Brother *Friend*

## Bishop-Priest Relationships

*Wilton D. Gregory*

Pope John Paul II appointed Bishop Gregory as the sixth archbishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. In November 2001, Archbishop Gregory was elected president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and during his tenure in office, the crisis of sex abuse by Catholic clergy escalated. Under his leadership, the bishops implemented the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

**T**he human person is designed to be in relationship with others on many different levels. We can all recall the importance of the special relationships in our lives, both those from our past as well as the life-giving relationships that we currently enjoy today....

### **PATERNAL/FILIAL**

When my young priests tell me that they want and expect me to be a father for them—as they often do—I might well have to ask them, according to the standards in which cultural matrix—as Jesus and His Father who are perfectly united in love—or somehow as a substitute or surrogate father or a prolongation of the relationship that they might have had with their own fathers? Bishops, as much as we might truly love our priests, we cannot nullify or substitute for an unfortunate paternal relationship—neither should we attempt to rectify a regrettable personal history, nor should we be blamed for such painful histories. In all humility, we all realize that we can never measure up to that perfect Father-Son relationship that Jesus enjoys with His Heavenly Father. Yet we can and must love our priests with the heart of a true father. And our priests have every right to expect that of us. Of course that perfect relationship that Jesus enjoys with His Heavenly Father does include

complete submission and total obedience as a sign of the Son's love for His Father. And we bishops also suspect that such complete and perfect submission and obedience may have occurred only once!

### **BROTHER**

All the members of the presbyterate belong to a single fraternity—those who are native sons to the diocese, those who come from other places and backgrounds, and yes—even the bishop. Establishing a fraternity among the priests of a diocese is a challenge when the members of the presbyterate come from so many different cultures and ethnic communities. Each priest carries within himself the image and ideal of priesthood that he gained from his own personal heritage. Yet a presbyterate must congeal in such a fashion that individuals are respected and the people of God are well served according to the cultural circumstances operative in the diocese.

The bishop must be a brother among brothers. This sense of fraternal love is critical between priests and bishops and for the health and holiness of the local church. Priesthood offers us a fraternal bond that links us all to Christ and to each other and ultimately all for the sanctification of the people entrusted to our care.

*The bishop  
must be a  
brother among  
brothers.*

Brothers do not always agree! Anyone fortunate enough to have a brother and to be a brother knows exactly what that reality means. Brothers love one another with a sincere and yet oftentimes a quite competitive love. Brothers help one another to grow up, to develop skills, and to learn what

within the Sacrament of Orders, but strengthens the bonds that should tie one to the other.

Bishops and priests enjoy these three relationships not as isolated moments but as increasing encounters of grace throughout the years. Obviously, human relationships do not develop in a never-ending progressive and intensifying manner. There are peaks and valleys that represent moments of challenge and advancement. Yet when bishops and priests learn to love and respect one another, they do pass from initial paternal-filial bonds, through the fraternal expressions of trust, to those experiences of friendship that married couples so often describe as the pinnacle of their long years of trust and love for one another.

Such a friendship is dependent upon the individual. It must respect a person's ability to engage another and it may not always be achievable. Some priests may not be comfortable encountering a bishop as a friend. Some bishops may not be able to have such a friendship with every one of his priests and ultimately may be fearful of being considered partial in his treatment of his priests. When the Church of

Christ is served by bishops and priests who may have developed strong and lasting expressions of care and affection, everyone in the Church benefits. Parishes are well served, the young and the old are edified, the sick and the lonely are comforted, the stranger is welcomed, the poor are ministered to, and above all, God Himself is praised within the Church that He loves most perfectly and completely. ■

WILTON D. GREGORY to serves as the archbishop of Atlanta. Reprinted with permission. Archdiocese of Baltimore, John Carroll Lecture, March 7, 2010.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 13: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops President Wilton Gregory pauses before releasing the first of three major reports after the sexual abuse scandal erupted in the United States at the National Press Club in Washington DC, January 6, 2004. © LARRY DOWNING/Reuters/Corbis



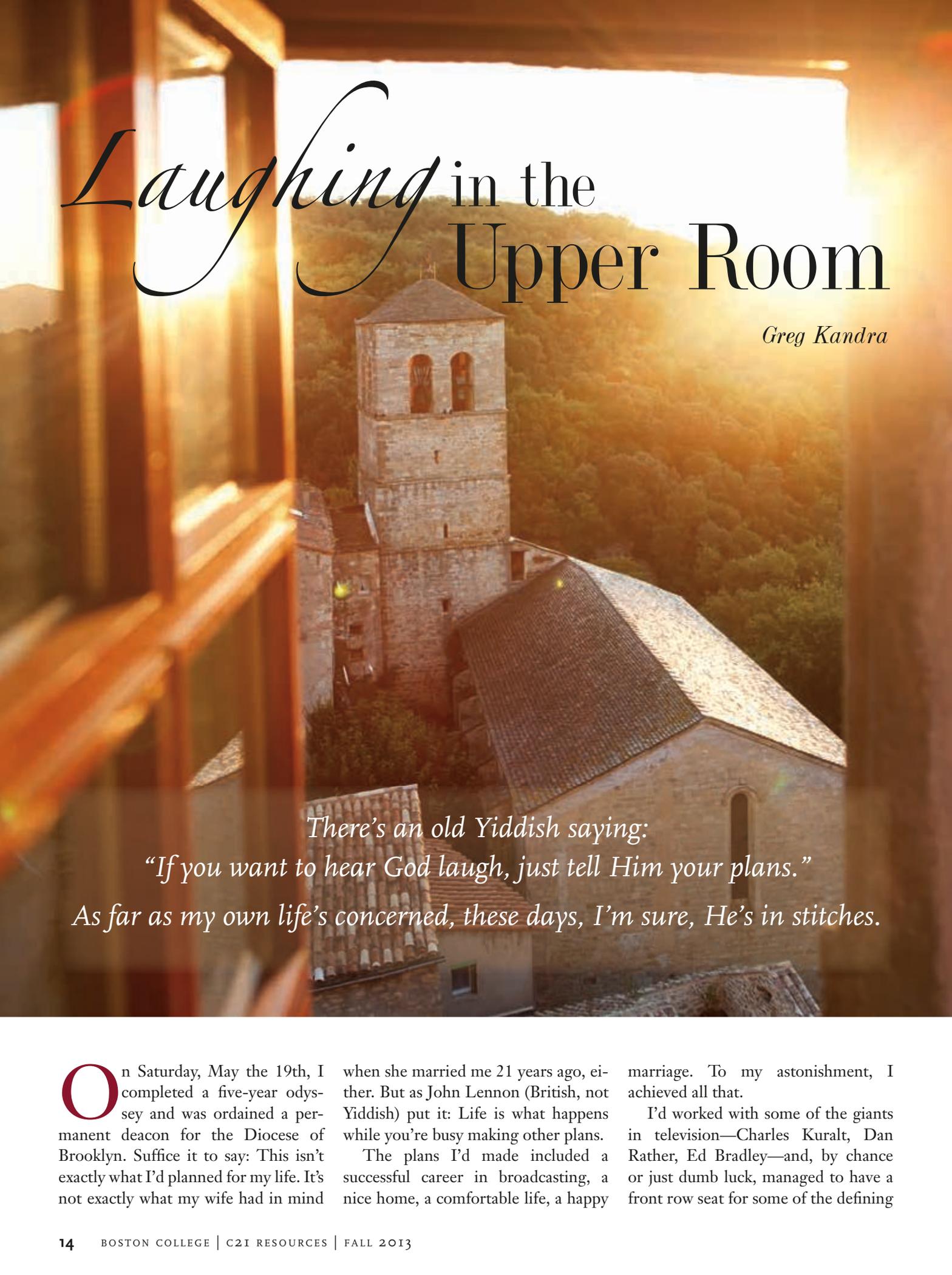
it means to be a member of a family. A bishop is a brother to his priests and like any fraternal relationship—at times it can be a test for both.

Because a bishop is a brother, he can be challenged and tested as any brother can be and we usually are with some regularity. Because a bishop is a brother, he can be assertive and competitive in prodding a brother priest as we must frequently do. Because a bishop is a brother, he can be expected to be a source of support and a trusted confidante as we must always be. A bishop is a brother to his priests when he realizes that they belong to the same family and share a common Father and are loved by the same Mother.

## FRIEND

Bishops and priests should strive to enjoy such an adult relationship that is also a spiritual reward that comes with knowledge of one another, collaboration with one another, and trust in one another. The prescribed responsorial refrain proposed to be sung during the sign of peace at the Ordination of Priests refers to the Johannine text: No longer do I call you servants but my friends because you know all that I have done among you. Friendship of this sort is a gift from the Lord and represents a goal to be achieved between bishops and priests—the fruit of a mature love and respect one for the other. Such a friendship does not blur the individual responsibilities or obligations that each has

“Friendship of this sort is a gift from the Lord and represents a goal to be achieved between bishops and priests—the fruit of a mature love and respect one for the other.”



# *Laughing* in the Upper Room

*Greg Kandra*

*There's an old Yiddish saying:*

*"If you want to hear God laugh, just tell Him your plans."*

*As far as my own life's concerned, these days, I'm sure, He's in stitches.*

**O**n Saturday, May the 19th, I completed a five-year odyssey and was ordained a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Brooklyn. Suffice it to say: This isn't exactly what I'd planned for my life. It's not exactly what my wife had in mind

when she married me 21 years ago, either. But as John Lennon (British, not Yiddish) put it: Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans.

The plans I'd made included a successful career in broadcasting, a nice home, a comfortable life, a happy

marriage. To my astonishment, I achieved all that.

I'd worked with some of the giants in television—Charles Kuralt, Dan Rather, Ed Bradley—and, by chance or just dumb luck, managed to have a front row seat for some of the defining

events of my generation, including the first Gulf War and 9/11. I'd amassed some attractive dust collectors—including two Peabodies, two Emmies, and four Writers Guild Awards. I was making a nice living. So why wasn't I happier? In the middle of making a living, and making a name for myself, I discovered a yawning cavern in my life. Something was missing.

## ELEVATION

While on retreat at a Trappist monastery in 2002, I found my answer. There, I stumbled on something unusual: a deacon. He was from England, but at that time was living in France. I'd never met a deacon before. I'd heard about them, and once or twice I'd seen them, but my parish back in Queens never had one, and I was intrigued. (Deacons, I discovered, are married, and they have jobs outside the Church. They are part of the Catholic clergy, and receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. They preside at weddings, baptisms, and funerals, and can proclaim the Gospel at Mass and preach.) We spent a long afternoon talking about the diaconate, and I was amazed to learn that he also worked in broadcasting, for the BBC. He'd done some freelance work for CBS, too, and we knew a lot of the same people. Was God trying to tell me something?

The next day, I saw the deacon in action, serving Mass in the abbey church and preaching a wonderful homily in three—yes, three—different languages. And it was then that it struck me. Here was a man much like myself, doing what I did for a living, and elevating his life to God in a way that was, to my disbelieving eyes, quite beautiful. Could I do this? As I sat in the abbey and heard the chants and watched him elevating the chalice, it dawned on me: Yes. *Yes*. You can do this. You *should* do this.

When I returned home and told my wife, she understandably thought I was nuts. But time and prayer and lots of long talks around the dinner

table convinced the both of us that maybe, just maybe, this is something I could do, and should do, and soon. When I joined the diaconate program in September 2002 my life as I knew it was about to end.

What followed were five years of classes, homework, workshops, and retreats. Weekends were taken up with Church work—as a lector or eucharistic minister. Evenings were spent on schoolwork. The comfortable and uncomplicated world I'd known became less comfortable, and more complicated, as I juggled all the different demands of my job, my marriage, and my schoolwork. More than a few times, I thought: Am I out of my mind? What was I thinking?

My colleagues at CBS took this development in my life in stride—Katie Couric started calling me “Father Greg”—and over time, I became the one person everyone in the newsroom went to with a question about anything even remotely Catholic.

## THE WAITING

But what I remember most of all from those years of formation was the sense of unending anticipation—of waiting, and watching, and wondering. It was a long period of extended discernment. All of it came to an end, fittingly, just a few days after Ascension Thursday—the time when the apostles had been left alone, and were waiting for the Holy Spirit. At my Mass of Thanksgiving following ordination, I spoke in my homily about feeling like the apostles during that time before Pentecost—living in an upper room, unsure of what was about to happen, prayerfully yearning for the next part of their lives to begin.

I knew how they must have felt. And on May 19th, my waiting was over. I left my upper room.

Each of us at some moment in our lives has known that upper room, that place of uncertainty. We can measure its walls. We have all walked its floor, locked its windows, and prayed that no

one will find us—just like the apostles in that dark valley between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost.

## GOD'S PROMISE

I think the message of those days before Pentecost is one of the hardest to accept: It is simply to trust. Trust that God's promise will be kept, that he will not leave us orphans. Because when we feel abandoned and alone—when we flee to our own upper rooms—that is when God often makes Himself known.

It is a difficult message to absorb. Often over the last five years, I've had to keep reminding myself to trust—to place whatever concerns I had into the hands of God, and have faith that he would resolve them. I think it will be a lifelong struggle.

But I have learned that God doesn't want us to spend our lives in the upper room. The lesson I've learned is this: Open the windows. Let in the light. Have faith. And trust.

Because Pentecost eventually comes. Grace will abound. Wait for it. Look for it. And listen closely for it. Because, when you least expect it, while cloistered in the four walls of your life's upper room, you just may hear the beautiful and unmistakable sound of God's laughter. ■

GREG KANDRA is a Roman Catholic deacon of the Diocese of Brooklyn and serves as the multimedia editor of Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA). Reprinted with permission. *Deacon Digest*, November 2007, pp. 18-19.

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# NAVIGATING *the* SE

Barbara Quinn

Change is a constant. It is also difficult. What parent doesn't know that as they watch children grow seemingly overnight? Businesses and educational institutions are regularly faced with the need to reinvent themselves. Globally, we experience unprecedented paradigm shifts as technologies revolutionize our ways of thinking, the unpredictability of the environment casts the world into chaos, and international economies erupt like volcanoes! This ubiquitous tempest of change confronts us with crucial decisions. We can rebel against the inexorable evolution of life or we can muster the courage to embrace transformation as we search for the promise and name the peril that change holds. Such adaptability will exact relinquishment and even pain, but responding to the signs of the times can ultimately bear the seeds of a new and better way.

Conviction that new life can emerge as old forms die lies at the heart of the Paschal Mystery revealed and embodied in Jesus the Christ. The center of Jesus' world was total obedience to God and God's vision for all humanity. His radical commitment to God's justice, peace, and reconciliation, to the marginalized and the poor, and to his claim of identification with God as God's anointed One threatened those who clung to power and privilege, unleashing in them criticism, rejection, and a determination to kill him. Not only was God's vision so central that Jesus was willing to die for it but, paradoxically, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection revealed and celebrated the utter belief that love triumphs over hate, hope over despair, and life over death. And so the Risen One and the agenda

of the Reign of God live on. We need not fear change if we hold fast to the One who has gone before us.

How do we respond to life's changes? Will we hide in the safe shelter of the familiar or stay the course of transformation, trusting that wise change can lead to the fullness of God's life?

Surely, our Catholic Church faces monumental shifts today that deeply impact the various roles and relationships within it. As we discern how the Spirit is calling us forward, we need to be willing to engage in a communal process: naming what is no longer adequate; calling forth gifts wherever and in whomever they are found; remaining faithful to the central vision of God's hopes for our world. United in this commitment, we will have the freedom, courage, and creativity to give birth to new expressions of God's Reign today.

I would like to offer an example of one group's dying and rising, that is, how the Sacred Heart Network of Schools in the United States, founded by the Society of the Sacred Heart, underwent a dramatic evolution in its relationship to lay colleagues. This example, I believe, is instructive for the work of transformation in the Church at large.

When the Society of the Sacred Heart came to the United States in 1818, the Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ) founded schools for young women and served as the primary administrators and teachers. Those were the "good old days" when the nuns *were* the ministry. The founders articulated deep spiritual principles, set rigorous academic standards, and established a way of life built on the primacy of relationships. St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, founder of the Society of the Sacred Heart,

had the original vision of forming *saintes savants*—wise saints and holy scholars! This grounding vision impelled RSCJ to shape an education that cultivated both the contemplative and apostolic dimensions of life. It was the springtime of a new vision of education as schools sprang up across the country. And then came the slow but sure autumn season as the roots of this educational vision matured and deepened.

But the stark challenges of winter came, too, as the number of RSCJ in the schools dwindled. In the 1960s, Vatican II awakened the Church to the needs of the poor, to "read the signs of the times," and to embrace the universal call to holiness. This was good news! But a new vision has new implications. A number of the RSCJ left the schools to serve the poor and to embrace other forms of educational ministries. In 1970, the U.S. province humbly faced the limitations of its existing model and admitted that it no longer had enough RSCJ to sponsor all their schools. Furthermore, they realized that before long there would not be a sufficient number of RSCJ educational administrators. The painful decision was made to close some schools. Lay colleagues, parents, and alums were not happy! They felt a deep ownership of the schools and were outraged that their opinions went unheeded!

A committee of RSCJ agreed that they could never allow such "non-collaboration" to happen again. While recognizing the competence of their lay colleagues, the RSCJ needed to find a way to imbue the spirit and mission of Sacred Heart education in their lay colleagues so as to ensure fidelity to the original vision. Only then would new models of Sacred Heart education rest

# ASONS *of* CHANGE



on a firm foundation. Lay colleagues enthusiastically embraced this partnership while recognizing their need for formation to the essential spirit of Sacred Heart education. Thus, the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Schools were born in 1975. The goals state:

*Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to...*

*...a personal and active faith in God;*

*...a deep respect for intellectual values;*

*...a social awareness which impels to action;*

*...the building of community as a Christian value;*

*...personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.*

Criteria were articulated for each goal, giving the goals greater specificity and allowing for new emphases as times changed. Two additional elements were built into the process to ensure lay-religious partnership: a *collegial* process that would involve all constituencies of Sacred Heart schools in learning and living the Goals and Criteria and a *process of accountability* to ensure that the Goals and Criteria were realized concretely. This would be enacted through a review of each school every five years. The relevance of these elements for an emerging Church is obvious and crucial.

The partnership between the Society of the Sacred Heart and its lay colleagues is robust. Among the 22 Sacred Heart schools in the United States, 17 are led by lay administrators. RSCJ and lay colleagues, including trustees, regularly participate in Formation to Mission programs that deepen understanding and foster renewal of the guiding impulse of Sacred Heart education: to form women—and now

men—as wise saints and holy scholars prepared to serve a 21<sup>st</sup> century Church and world through the lens of the Goals and Criteria.

Change is constant. It is also difficult. But if we stay focused on God's Reign, if we are humble enough to name what is no longer adequate, and if we trust that we have among us the gifts we need to go forward even if it means letting go of the familiar, we can be assured of the promise that new and deeper life will emerge. This is a choice. It is also the Gospel way! ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 17: © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2011.

# Roamin' Collar

## Multiparish Priests

*Jennifer Willems*

**F**r. Ed Vanorny loves celebrating liturgy with his parishioners—even if that means traveling 185 miles to four faith communities every Saturday and Sunday to do it. “I think the Mass I do energizes me all over again to barrel into the next one,” says Vanorny, who was ordained for the Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota, 10 years ago at the age of 53. He has been the pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Gregory, Immaculate Conception Parish in Bonesteel, Sacred Heart Parish in Burke, and St. Anthony Parish in Fairfax for three years.

At one time there were 10 priests covering the parishes of Gregory County, which now includes 365 Catholic households in the southeast corner of the diocese. Parishioners were still being served by two priests until Vanorny replaced them, and they continue to adjust to their new pastoral reality. The parish councils and finance councils of two of the parishes have merged, for example, and it is likely that the other two parishes will follow suit.

“The primary issue for me—and the parishioners are very much attuned and sensitive to this—is cutting back on some of the administrative duties I have been doing,” he says, explaining that he sees their spiritual needs as his main focus. That “gets shortchanged a lot,” he admits. “People tell me, ‘Father, you don’t have to visit my mother in the hospital who is dying. We know you have a lot to do.’ That frustrates me.”

Nevertheless, Vanorny doesn’t appear to miss much. He travels 2,500 miles each month to visit the two hospitals, nursing homes, and care centers in Gregory County and to be present at events at the three local high schools.

### **JOB OPENING**

As new models of parish ministry continue to play out, it has become clear that lay Catholics are not only willing and able to make them work, but are vital to their success. Mark



Mogilka, coauthor, along with Kate Wiskus, of *Pastoring to Multiple Parishes* (2009, Loyola Press), cites the new position of parish life coordinators as a prime example.

When dioceses began to experiment with this ministry 15 to 20 years ago, it was typically women religious who filled the role. More often today one finds permanent deacons or lay women with a master’s degree and training who are meeting the need.

While there was some initial confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the coordinators, “In the vast majority of cases the communities grew to love and appreciate those leaders,” says Mogilka.



Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet celebrates a preconclave Mass at St. Apostoli Church in Rome, March 10, 2013.

Arvilla Juenemann is one of the people who heard the call to move into parish leadership while she was working as the secretary for several parishes in a rural Kansas team ministry during the 1980s. It came during a Scripture class sponsored by her diocese, when the instructor told them a change was coming.

“She said, ‘In five years there’s not going to be all the priests and sisters we have now. It will depend on lay people like you to fill these kinds of positions and do the teaching and work in the parishes,’” Juenemann recalls.

“Something in my head said, ‘If this is coming in five years, someone has to be ready.’ I think that was God’s call

to me so I could be ready when the time came.”

It spurred her to finish her catechist training. In 1993 she was hired to be the first parish life coordinator at St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays. She is now one of seven ministering in northwest Kansas.

Juenemann currently serves in Selden and Immaculate Heart of Mary BVM Parish in nearby Leoville. While some priests worried that having parish life coordinators might diminish their role in the parish, she says others welcomed the change.

“They said, ‘I was ordained for the sacraments. This will allow me to do better what I was ordained to do,’” she

explains, adding that this countered the fear some priests had of not writing every check or preparing every couple for marriage.

The Diocese of Salina has developed guidelines for the parish life coordinators as well as for priests, and there are regular meetings for continuing education, fellowship, and prayer.

“I think we all work well together. The bishop [Paul Coakley] has been supportive. He has repeated time and time again that in this church there is room for all to minister.”

## NEW CHURCH

“When you’re pastoring multiple parishes or handling multiple ministries, you must empower people,” says Msgr. Charles Beebe, pastor of two rural parishes in the Diocese of Peoria, Illinois—St. Joseph in Roanoke and St. John in Benson. “I’m there to oversee what’s happening. I’m there to support it. I don’t have to be there to put every light on the Christmas tree.”

The members of the Roanoke parish, for example, have taken responsibility for organizing a Bible study, and the church environment owes its beauty to a committee that includes a florist, an interior decorator, and volunteers who love to be involved.

“You have to identify the talents in the community and identify the people who have strengths where you’re weak,” Beebe says. “I’ll do what I do best, and you do what you do best, and everyone grows.”

Roanoke parishioner Beverly Micheletti appreciates that approach.

“The church belongs to the people—it belongs to us. That’s what Msgr. Beebe has made us feel. We as a community have become more involved in our church,” says Micheletti, 71, a lifetime parishioner who has served as a lector and extraordinary minister of Communion.

“It’s nice being involved instead of just going into church for Mass and coming out again. You’re helping the church, from cleaning to praising,” Micheletti says. “This is where I was baptized. This is where I was married. This is where my children were baptized. This is our church.”

Multiple-parish ministry has philosophical as well as practical ramifications. “For me,” says Fr. William Surmeier, longtime Kansas pastor and a licensed clinical professional counselor with Catholic Charities, “it’s about my vision of church, and my vision of church is not a pyramid with Father on top, but a circle with Jesus in the middle. Do we have different roles? Yes, we do.”

To remain effective as a sacramental minister and a full-time marriage, family, and individual counselor, he makes it a habit to invite others into his ministry and encourages his staff to do the same.

“I think healthy priests are those who are not threatened by lay leadership and by lay involvement and by creating new structures. A healthy priest doesn’t find security in where his brick is at in the pyramid,” says Surmeier. “A healthy priest finds his security in calling forth the gifts of those around him.”

Multiple-parish ministry is a reality, and it rarely comes out of the blue, says Wiskus of Mundelein Seminary. Helping people in the pews understand what is happening, challenging them to fully live out their baptismal call, and providing formation for them—as well as for the permanent deacons, seminarians, and priests—makes all the difference in their ability to participate in the Church’s mission.

“When people move from How am I being served? to What does being a disciple of Christ call me to do? things start to happen,” she says.

“The ministerial load can be shared more equitably. Everyone would contribute more readily. The church would grow, and vocations would increase,” Wiskus says, noting that from its earliest days the Church has had a good example of how to manage ministry to more than one faith community.

“Paul was the pastor of multiple parishes, and his circuit was pretty big. Recognizing that, we have a history and wealth of information and inspiration to draw on. We know it can be done.” ■

JENNIFER WILLEMS is assistant editor of the *Catholic Post* in the Diocese of Peoria. Copyright 2009 *U.S. Catholic*. Reproduced by permission from the March 2009 issue of *U.S. Catholic*, [www.uscatholic.org](http://www.uscatholic.org).

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# So What is the *Role* of the Laity, Anyway?

*Michael Anthony Novak*



**T**he earliest Church documents made no mention of the “clergy” and the “laity.” Early Christianity was, as a Jewish phenomenon, generally a “lay” movement: with few members coming from the Jewish priestly class. Today we speak of the laity as those who are not ordained as bishop, priest, or deacon within the Church. More

generically, the word means a non-specialist, as in “Explain the medical diagnosis in layman’s terms....” To ask what the role of the laity is within the Church, then, seems to result in a predetermined answer: Their role is whatever is left over from the role of the specialists, i.e., the ordained. This is a negative answer, as though saying that the role of the laity is to *be* non-

ordained. In reality, we see lay people in the Church doing a great many things, especially since the explosion of lay ministries after the Second Vatican Council.

One of the chief intentions of the bishops at the Council was to turn to the laity in an explicit way, calling them to take full ownership of their faith. Unlike our contemporary

## 1 Corinthians 12: 4-7

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

tendency to divide the world into polar opposites, the Council Fathers articulate a more realistic vision of the Church: the Pauline notion of the Church as the Body of Christ. The Apostle Paul described the Church as composed of a great number of parts with different functions, similar to the human body. Each function, Paul insisted, is a gift from God uniquely designed to serve the whole. Paul calls these gifts *charisms*—a Greek word meaning “gifts of grace”—which are given to all people from God through the Holy Spirit. Grace is most simply understood as God’s activity on our behalf. These gifts of grace, then, are specific and recognizable forms of God’s activity in, through, or for us. Paul’s description of the Church as *being* this collection of gifts climaxes in the argument of his famous “love” chapter: that our different gifts are supposed to function together, to bind us together as “Church.” The Greek word from which we get “Church” means group or community or assembly. It indicates a unity among different people, a unity that has such spiritual depth that we call it a communion with one another. This communion is achieved by the mutual submission of our gifts to one another through the ultimate gift of God’s love.

Paul names a variety of such gifts. He mentions being apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, those exercising gifts of healings, helpers, administrators, speakers of various kinds of tongues, interpreters, those who serve, exhort, contribute, give

aid, and do acts of mercy. The Spirit often builds upon our natural talents, extending them with a spiritual potency beyond ordinary strengths and weaknesses. Occasionally, these gifts show a radical departure from the natural, through which the activity of God becomes more apparent: such special circumstances are often described with words like inspiration, miracles, or holiness. These gifts are not just to be understood as formal lay ministries within the Church. We see, more broadly, that the Spirit of God acts through our specific talents and roles as they bear upon our being doctors or parents or police officers. Thus God’s grace—God’s power and activity—transforms our natural gifts into something beyond ourselves.

In the mid-20th century, Pope Pius XII’s 1943 encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* stimulated an explosion of Catholic biblical scholarship, which helped recover an awareness of Paul’s description of Church in terms of spiritual gifts. The bishops at Vatican II took this insight into Paul’s idea of charisms to reconceive the role of the laity as a dynamic participation in the life of the Church. According to Paul, our gifts bind us together as “Church,” as “the Body of Christ,” in the Spirit of God Who Is Love. If our habit of using two terms like clergy and laity suggests a divisive split, then that terminology runs counter to God’s intention that we enter into a communion of our diversities. Every part of a body plays a vital function that cannot be cut off without a loss or even an injury

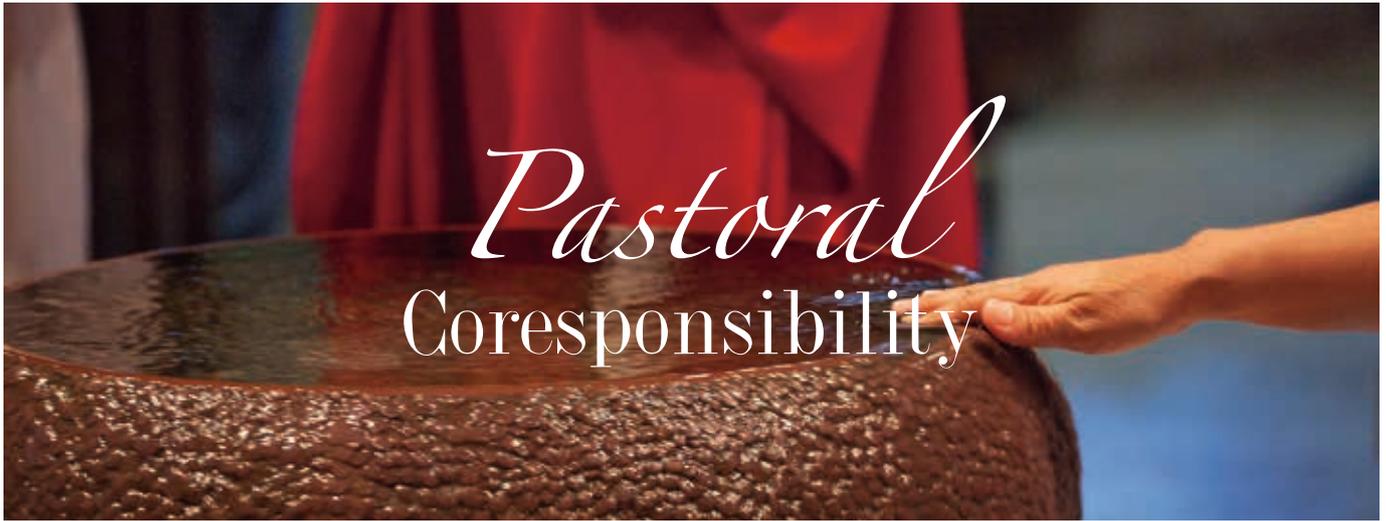
to the whole. The Council Fathers recognized that the Church has limited influence in the world if the laity sit passively on the sidelines; but everyone can benefit from the specialized gifts that all people bring to the Church, as understood in this renewed use of Paul’s theology of charisms.

Each of us finds our role, our function within the Church, when we find the places where our gifts best contribute to the flourishing of the whole. Some will be called to formal service in the Church community. Each of us is called to live out our occupations, our relationships, and our daily encounters with others while being open to the Spirit’s gift-giving: to be the hands of God where no one else can be. This vision of Church invites each of us to discern the extraordinary way in which God might make use of us in our ordinary life roles and circumstances.

So to return to our question, there is no single “role of the laity.” Instead, there are a vast number of roles, which are best discerned as a Church community, open to the grace of God, and drawing upon the resources, leadership, and wisdom found throughout the whole Body of Christ. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 21: © MIKE SLACK, [www.mike-slack.com](http://www.mike-slack.com)



# Pastoral Coresponsibility

Trusting in the grace of the Spirit which the risen Christ guaranteed to us, we must continue on our way with renewed energy. What paths can we take? In the first place we must renew our efforts for a formation which is more attentive and focused on the vision of the Church, of which I spoke, and this should be both on the part of priests as well as of religious and lay people to understand ever better what this Church is, this People of God in the Body of Christ. At the same time, it is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the coresponsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in

mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as “collaborators” of the clergy but truly recognized as “coresponsible,” for the Church’s being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity. This common awareness of being Church of all the baptized in no way diminishes the responsibility of parish priests. It is precisely [the priests’] task to nurture the spiritual and apostolic growth of those who are already committed to working hard in the parishes. ■

*Pope Benedict XVI at the opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome, May 26, 2009*

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 23: Photo courtesy of Office of Marketing Communications

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## CO-WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

All of the baptized are called to work toward the transformation of the world. Most do this by working in the secular realm; some do this by working in the Church and focusing on the building of ecclesial communion, which has among its purposes the transformation of the world. Working in the Church is a path of Christian discipleship to be encouraged by the hierarchy. The possibility that lay persons undertake Church ministries can be grounded in Scripture and the teachings of the Church, from St. Paul to the Second Vatican Council and in more recent documents. “Sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet, and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the church. Their activity within the church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect” (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 10).

Today in parishes, schools, Church institutions, and diocesan agencies, laity serve in various “ministries, offices, and roles” that do not require sacramental ordination but rather “find their foundation in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, indeed, for a good many of them, in the Sacrament of Matrimony” (*Christifideles Laici*, n. 23). What Pope Paul VI said of the laity 30 years ago—and what the Catechism of the Catholic Church specifically repeats—has now become an important, welcomed reality throughout our dioceses: “The laity can also feel called, or in fact be called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them.”

In parishes especially, but also in other Church institutions and communities, lay women and men generously and extensively “cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community.” This is a sign of the Holy Spirit’s movement in the lives of our sisters and brothers. ■

From the U.S. Bishops’ 2005 document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*.

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# WHO is CALLED to PREACH?

Mary Catherine Hilkert

The question of whether women or other lay persons who are gifted with a charism to preach and adequately trained theologically should preach in the liturgical context cannot be separated from the larger questions of who is called to preach in the broader life of the Church and what constitutes the preaching ministry of the Church. Without dismissing the fundamental importance of explicit liturgical proclamation by women, the churches need to claim the many ways in which women and men preach the Gospel today. The preaching of Jesus is the paradigm for all Christian proclamation, and Jesus announced the reign of God in his person and actions as well as in his words. As a lay man in his own religious tradition, Jesus announced the reign of God in ways that were not limited to events of public teaching or preaching, and his preaching rarely took place in a liturgical setting.

So, too, in our day it is important to recognize that all of the activities in which the baptized promote the reign of God are part of “the preaching of the Church.” Preaching the good news of salvation requires that the Christian community make the experience of salvation more of a concrete reality in our world. Women in prison ministries, women caring for battered women and abused children, women providing shelter for the homeless, women keeping vigil at the bedside of the sick and the dying, and women involved in legal advocacy or political lobbying on behalf of the poor are all participating in the action on behalf of justice that is a “constitutive part of preaching the Gospel.”

Equally important, however, is naming the power and source of that experience of salvation the power of God. Women are also involved in this explicit naming of the power of salvation in our world. In a variety of ministries of the word spiritual direction, teaching, theologizing, pastoral

counseling, the pastoral leadership of parishes women are involved in discerning and naming the experience of God in the midst of human struggle. Even in the Catholic Church, an increasing number of women from a variety of age groups, backgrounds, and styles of life are now involved in ministries explicitly identified as preaching the Gospel: They are full-time missionaries, members of itinerant preaching teams, pastoral associates, leaders of Scripture-sharing groups, and so on. Women preach in a number of contexts of prayer and spirituality: directing retreats and days of recollection, presiding at morning and evening prayer and at services of the word, forming the faith of the Church as catechists

involved with the Rites of Christian Initiation, and proclaiming the word in a variety of forms of worship in both Catholic and ecumenical contexts.

As women have embraced the commission to “spread the good news,” sought out opportunities to preach, and engaged in the process of creative imagination, new avenues and modes of preaching the Gospel have emerged. There is a real danger in restricting our understanding of preaching to the pulpit or the liturgical

context. Most of the people in our world who hunger for the good news of salvation or liberation are not to be found in churches. If preaching is a matter of making connections between concrete human experience and God’s word that enables people to hear the Gospel as good news *for them*, then the Gospel preachers have to meet people where they are. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 24: Holy Women at the Sepulchre from the Armadio degli Argenti Painting Series by Fra Angelico. © Arte & Immagini srl/Corbis





# Truth in Action

*Larry Snyder*

Two thousand years ago, a Jewish carpenter told his friends and followers stories and parables that set forth a call to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, and be the voice of justice. Our Lord made it clear that serving the poor and marginalized is not optional.

**T**he world has watched in equal parts amazement and admiration the first months of Pope Francis's papacy. His humility, simplicity, compassion, and solidarity with the poor have struck a chord with both Catholics and non-Catholics alike. In addition to his personal example, his words and teachings have also highlighted the Church's theological belief in the "preferential option for the poor."

It is this "preferential option" that inspires the work of Catholic Charities agencies; the work we do is not ancillary to the Church's mission, but at its core. Our work with the poor is not doing good out of a desire to be nice; it is the very heart of our identity as Catholic Christians in action.

Pope Francis himself has made this clear: In a recent speech, he said

that charitable work grounded in our authentic Catholic identity is "an essential part of the Church." Simply put, to be Catholic is to serve as our brother's and sister's keeper through acts of charity and seeing the face of Christ in everyone we encounter.

In communities throughout America, Catholic Charities agencies live this vital mission by responding to the unique needs of their neighbors and providing programs and services that help those in need build a brighter future. Front-line staff and volunteers provide nutrition services, financial education, long-term disaster recovery efforts, and parenting support classes. Last year, Catholic Charities provided services to over 10 million people, serving nearly one out of every four Americans living below the poverty line. It is not well known that the

Catholic Charities network is the largest faith-based network of social service providers in the United States.

Taken together, service and justice sit at the core of our identity as an authentically Catholic institution, and inspire us in our mission to serve our Lord by serving the least among us (see Matthew 25:40). With tens of thousands of staff and volunteers offering a personal face of hope and love in a broken world every day, Catholic Charities is an essential way that the Church lives out the Gospel. ■

FR. LARRY SNYDER is president of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), the national office of more than 160 local Catholic Charities agencies nationwide.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 25: © Catholic Charities USA

# So that they may ALL BE ONE...

Julia and Michael James

The Focolare Movement, officially known as Work of Mary, began in 1943 and currently has about 2 million adherents (most of whom are Catholics) in 182 countries.

Thirteen years ago, we attended an event called “Faith Communities Together” that featured Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, leader of the Muslim American Society, and Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement, an ecclesial movement in the Catholic Church. In this assembly of 6,000 people, Imam Mohammed and Chiara Lubich interacted with each other in a way that seemed to embody what Jesus meant when he said that people would recognize his disciples by their love for one another. Chiara said, “Our love serves to bring different people together, as you can see today between us: Muslims and Christians.” And, calling Chiara a “spiritual mother,” Imam Mohammed encouraged his own followers, saying, “I confirm everything that Chiara has said. I see her as a leader for all of us.” Witnessing this moved us to want to learn more about the Focolare.

We decided to spend time among people who practiced the spirituality of the Focolare. We met children, consecrated religious, bishops, lay people, Protestants, Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, and people of no faith tradition at all. We began reading the Word of Life, a short meditation on a biblical verse that people all over the

world try to “put into practice” in their daily lives. We were inspired to realize that all these people could be “living” phrases of Scripture.

## WHAT IS AN ECCLESIAL MOVEMENT?

Ecclesial movements are communities that are *united* in a way of life adhering to unique charisms, *committed* to living the Gospel anew, often *inspired* by a founder, and *bound* by explicit faithfulness to the Catholic Church.

The Pontifical Council for the Laity has recognized the statutes of and provides concise descriptions for 122 ecclesial movements, such as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Communion and Liberation, the Cursillo, Emmanuel, Foyer de Charité, L’Arche, Legion of Mary, the Neocatechumenal Way, Regnum Christi, and Sant’Egidio.

We had grown up in Roman Catholic families. We attended Catholic schools, taught religious education, served as lectors and Eucharistic ministers, and played

liturgical music in our parishes. We traveled and lived in other countries and prayed in other languages. We attended events of other ecclesial movements and participated in the lives and worship of monks and nuns.

Focolare felt different. It complemented *all* of these things. It seemed to us to be a lived experience of the intercessory prayers on Good Friday when we pray for the Church and the Pope...for the unity of the Christians...for those who do not believe in God...essentially, for everyone.

When our eldest daughter came home from her first Focolare meeting with other young children, she brought us the *Cube of Love*. She had colored the pictures herself and taped all the sides of the cube together. Each side of the cube expressed a particular way we could live the Gospel: (1) Be the first to love; (2) Love your enemies; (3) Share the other’s hurt or joy; (4) Love one another; (5) Love everyone; (6) Love Jesus in the other.

These points of the “art of loving” express the essence of the Focolare: *charity*. They offer practical ways to love others as Jesus loved us. We learned that we could practice this “art of loving” with simplicity and without expecting others to reciprocate. A child can be the first to love by trying a new



Participants of the Genfest international youth meeting lift their scarves up crowding the Chain Bridge during their Let's Bridge' rally in Budapest, Hungary, September 2012.

food at dinner. Or, she can offer part of her saved-up allowance to pay for a family trip. A mom can love her enemy even if the “enemy” just woke her up at 3 a.m. (again). We can all share the hurt of someone who failed at work or school or the joy of scoring a goal in a soccer game. Most importantly, we learned quickly that when we forget to love, we need to try again.

Charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit. Chiara’s charism was *unity*—the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer to the Father that all would be one. Scholars who examine this charism consistently identify it as “new” because of its communitarian and its Marian aspects. John Paul II expressed the necessity of this spirituality for the new millennium and the new evangelization, calling it “the spirituality of communion” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 43-45). This newness is not the work of particular people; the charism of unity is a work of God. But particular people must embody it since communion exists not as an idea but in a lived reality *among* the Body of Christ.

The Focolare conveys *harmony*

because, like the Church, its mission is charity—to build communion across the world. The Focolare spirituality provides intellectual resources and concrete practices for living what it means to be “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.” This charism has given our family tools for living harmoniously—tools for loving one another and those around us, mirroring the love of the Trinity.

As a married couple, it helps us see our daily struggles as opportunities to learn to love one another. And as a family, we became closer when we talked about what it means to love. When our children asked questions like: *Why can't I make my First Communion NOW? Why do I have to go to Mass? Why did God let this bad thing happen?*, we could remind them of what they had already learned through practicing the art of loving... Waiting to have First Communion together with everyone is a way to share joy with the others... Going to Mass is a way to love one another and to love everyone... Suffering with someone is a way of loving Jesus in that person.

Unity is a constitutive dimension of the Church, but it is hard to realize. Jesus prayed for it. And he suffered the abandonment, ensuring that we would never be alone in the disunity we experience every day. Loving each neighbor as Jesus loved us—to the point of feeling abandoned, emptied of ourselves—roots our family in the unity for which Jesus prayed. Loving in this way transforms everything we do and inspires us to turn outward in each moment to love the person in front of us ... so that all may be one. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 27: © LAJOS SOOS/epa/Corbis



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# Recognizing *Young Adults* as Gifts in the Church

*Kevin Ahern*

**T**his past year I had the privilege of teaching Exploring Catholicism, one of the courses offered to undergraduate students at Boston College to meet their core requirements in theology. As part of the course, I asked the students to go to Mass at a local Catholic parish and write a short reflection paper on their experience. For a number of the students, this was the first time they had ever been to Catholic Mass. For others, it was their first visit since their confirmation. In reading their thoughtful reflections, I was struck by two themes that inform the Church's relationship to young adults.

First, most of the student papers reflected a deep desire on the part of students to learn more about religion and spiritual practices. Even for those students who, like many of their peers in the millennial generation, do not identify themselves with any religious tradition there was a real sense of curiosity and interest in Catholic spiritual practices.

A second theme present in many of the papers was a desire to be welcomed and recognized. Interestingly, most of the student papers commented on how they were made to feel welcome (or unwelcome) in the parishes they visited. For some, simple gestures such as the smile of another person, a personal greeting by the priest, or a free doughnut after Mass made a big difference.

Among many of my own friends who are a few years older than my students, I can also see these two themes present as we struggle to live out our lives as young adult Catholics. On the one hand, there is a yearning for spirituality and a deeper relationship with God. On the other, there is a desire to find an engaging community that welcomes us as young adults. At times, the search for spirituality and belonging can lead many of us to feel spiritually homeless as we go from one parish to another in hopes of finding a meaningful liturgy and welcoming community.

Thankfully, there are many good examples of effective youth and young adult ministry around the world. Often these efforts are characterized by what can be described as "four marks" of effective young adult ministry and evangelization.

## **EMPOWERING**

First, effective young adult ministry and evangelization needs to involve them as active agents and not simply passive recipients. At a practical level, this means inviting millennial and Generation X Catholics to participate in leadership and advisory roles in our parishes, dioceses, and other Church organizations. This can be beneficial for the Church in several ways. While we may not always have the "treasure" to contribute to the Church as older Catholics, young adults often have time and talents that can benefit the life of any church organization. Having their peers in visible leadership and ministry positions can go a long way to make young adults feel welcome.

## **ENGAGING**

Second, effective young adult evangelization, like any evangelization for that matter, ought to be engaging. Essentially this means meeting young adults where they are; listening to them; getting to know their hopes and struggles; and using culture and technology in such a way that speaks to them. In teaching my Exploring Catholicism course, I often showed clips of Fr. James Martin, SJ, who is best known for his role as the chaplain of the *Colbert Report*. Martin's dynamic mix of humor, passion, and humility was very appealing to my students.

Being engaging, however, also means being adaptive to particular social and cultural contexts. Forms of evangelization that work at a Jesuit college in New England may not work very well in a parish setting in Texas or at a religious retreat center in Oregon.

## **EUCCHARISTIC**

Third, effective young adult ministry must be eucharistic. In other words, evangelization needs to be centered on the sacraments and the community of faith in Jesus Christ. Evangelization calls us to create eucharistic communities whereby young adults can encounter and celebrate the presence of Christ throughout their lives. For the past several years, my wife and I have been blessed to be a part of a weekly faith-sharing group.

Together with other graduate students and recent graduate students, we have met weekly to pray together, reflect on the lectionary readings for the following Sunday, and accompany one another on our faith journeys. Such small Christian communities are often effective spaces to help people reinterpret their lives in the light of Christ.

## ENCOMPASSING

Finally, the evangelization of young adults must be encompassing and reflective of both the breadth and the depth of the Catholic tradition. Bible studies, young adult liturgies, service trips, and occasional youth days are all important but, by themselves, they are not enough. A big challenge of evangelization today is to find effective ways to integrate faith, justice, community, Scripture, prayer, and tradition. Narrow approaches to ministry can often be alienating to those young adults who encounter Christ in other aspects of the tradition. For example, I know many young adults who have been deeply shaped by their experiences of service as college students or in postgraduate programs such as the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. For many of these talented women and men, it can difficult to integrate into a parish community where there is little to no focus on social justice or service.

The breadth of interests of young adult Catholics can also be seen in the wide range of topics that young adult theologians today are passionately investigating. Last year, for example, I helped to organize an international conference at Boston College for young or “emerging theologians” from around the world. Throughout the conversations, these young adults shared their “visions of



Fr. Jack Butler, S.J., vice president for university mission and ministry, preaches during 10:15 p.m. Sunday Mass at Boston College.

hope” on a wide range of issues from vocations and the involvement of people with intellectual disabilities in the sacraments to interreligious dialogue and peace building in Sudan. I remain deeply moved by the passion, faith, and hopes of my fellow theologians.

As we take stock of roles and relationships within the Church today and in the future, we are challenged to find ways to more effectively engage youth and young adult Catholics in the life of the Church. At the 2012 World Synod of Bishops, the bishops summarize this challenge well as they call upon the Church to recognize that “the youth are not only the future but also the present (and gift) in the Church.” ■

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PHOTO CREDITS: Page 28: © Stefano Costantino/Demotix/Corbis | Page 29: Photo courtesy of Office of Marketing Communications.

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## SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

### BOOKS

ROBERT WUTHNOW, *AFTER THE BABY BOOMERS: HOW TWENTY- AND THIRTY-SOMETHINGS ARE SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN RELIGION* (PRINCETON, 2010)

PATRICIA WITTEBERG, *BUILDING STRONG CHURCH COMMUNITIES: A SOCIOLOGICAL OVERVIEW* (PAULIST, 2012)

MARK MOSSA, *ALREADY THERE: LETTING GOD FIND YOU* (ST. ANTHONY MESSENGER, 2010)

MICHAEL HAYES, *GOOGLING GOD: THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF PEOPLE IN THEIR 20S AND 30S* (PAULIST, 2007)

KEVIN AHERN, *VISIONS OF HOPE: EMERGING THEOLOGICALS AND THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH* (ORBIS, 2013)

JAMES MARTIN, *THE JESUIT GUIDE TO (ALMOST) EVERYTHING: A SPIRITUALITY FOR REAL LIFE* (HARPERONE, 2012)

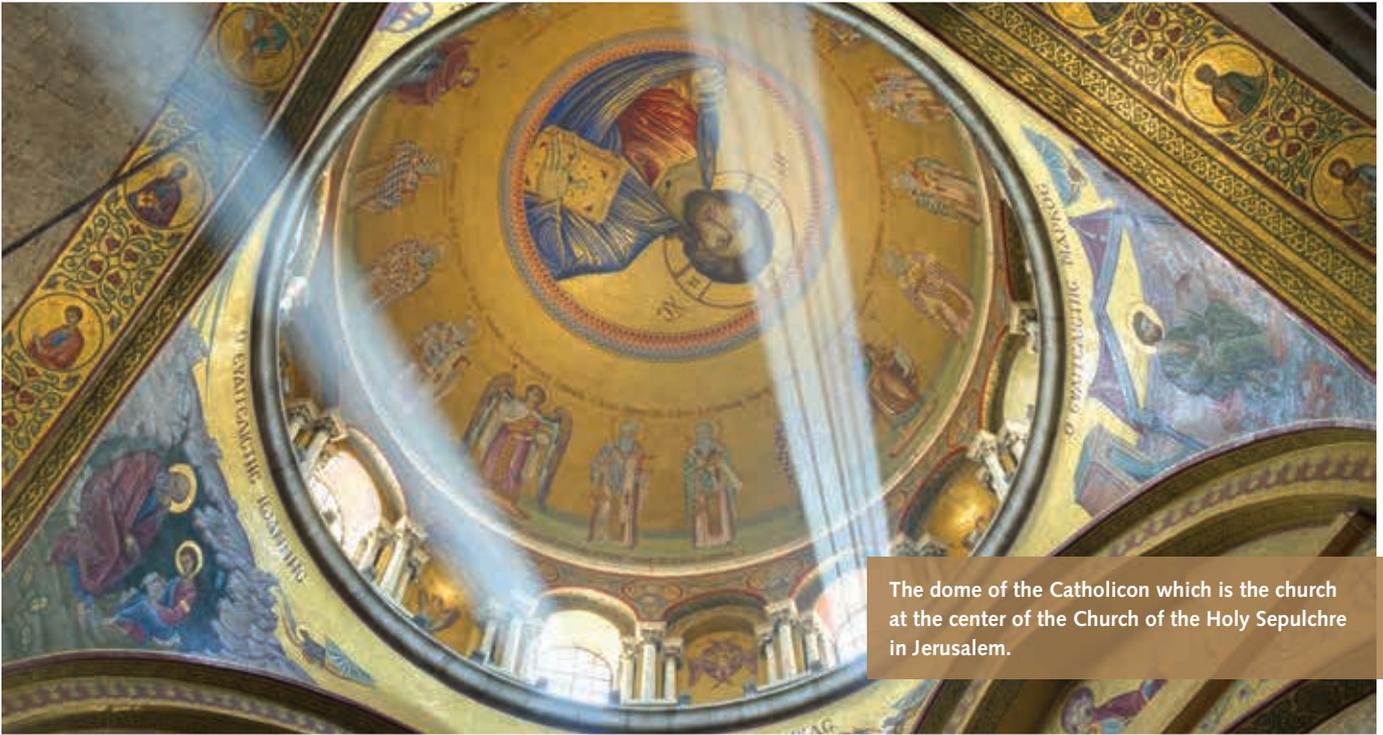
### YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT ORGANIZATIONS

NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY ASSOCIATION: [WWW.NCYAMA.ORG](http://WWW.NCYAMA.ORG)

NATIONAL CATHOLIC STUDENT COALITION: [WWW.CATHOLICSTUDENT.ORG](http://WWW.CATHOLICSTUDENT.ORG)

# Multiplicity of Encounters, UNITY OF FAITH

*Jaisy Joseph*



The dome of the Catholicon which is the church at the center of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

With a subtle smile, my aunt looked intently into my eyes as she pressed the small object into the palm of my hand. “Molay [dear child], keep this cross with you. This is who we are. This is the faith of our ancestors.” Not larger than a quarter, the golden pendant resembled the crosses that decorated the liturgical space of the SyroMalabar Catholic Church, which I attended every Sunday. As a young elementary school student, I simply accepted the gift from India as a kind gesture from my aunt. Only years later would I understand the historical significance of her words and the theological symbolism of this cross.

Known as the *Mar Thoma Sliba*, which in East Syriac means “the Cross of St. Thomas,” these symbols signify the extent to which the Christian faith was inculturated into the fifth-century

cultural milieu of the Malabar Coast (present day Kerala, India).<sup>1</sup> Tracing their origins to the apostolic work of St. Thomas the Apostle in 52 A.D., my ancestors were fortified in the faith by the Syrian missionaries of the fourth century and worshipped according to the East Syriac liturgy. A popular practice involved the widespread adoration of the *Mar Thoma Sliba*, which the Portuguese colonizers of the 16th century recorded as the only images permitted prior to their arrival.<sup>2</sup>

Summarizing the Christian mysteries through its symbolism, this cross proclaims “theological, Christological, pneumatological, and ecclesiological” beliefs as they had been received and developed within the Indian context by the fifth century.<sup>3</sup> As a dynamic symbol of the crucifixion and resurrection, the three steps at the foot of the cross signify the path to Mount

Calvary where Jesus was led to shed his blood. The empty cross, however, emulates the empty tomb of Christ, which eventually led to the resurrection experience that transformed the Apostles into witnesses of the faith. The blooming buds at the ends of the arms signify the new life that these Apostles experienced and the growth of the Church that is founded upon this encounter with the resurrected Lord. The descending dove not only signifies the Holy Spirit, but recalls the baptism of Jesus at the river Jordan as a symbol of the new life promised to those who follow Jesus as “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:16). Finally, the cross is erected upon a lotus flower. This element is crucial to understanding the inculturated faith. While it is common for many Indian deities to rest upon lotus flowers, the cross has replaced them as “the Way” to salvation.

Although growing up in a predominantly Roman Catholic environment as the child of immigrants to the United States, our active involvement in the SyroMalabar community in Dallas emphasized the plurality of traditions within the Catholic communion of churches. These diverse expressions of the Catholic faith are rooted not only in the diverse encounters of the Apostles with the resurrected Lord, but also the missionary impulse that spread the Gospel according to various, often parallel trajectories throughout the first centuries. Whereas Peter experienced the unmerited forgiveness of his triple betrayal when Christ made the triple request to feed His lambs (John 21:15), Thomas encountered the glorified wounds of our Lord in a way that not only removed all further doubt, but also led to his confession of Jesus as both Lord and God (John 20:28). While different in expression, both encounters mutually enrich each other and offer a fuller understanding of the transformative power of the person of Christ. Living in between the Roman Catholic and SyroMalabar Catholic expressions of the faith, I have similarly come to understand the beauty of how both mutually inform my understanding of who God is and who I am in relation to God and to others.

If we do not start from this place of transformative encounter expressed through multiple inculturated forms, we easily descend into an overemphasis on juridical conflicts, the maintenance of historical wounds, and identity politics. Pope John Paul II expressed similar sentiments in his apostolic letter *Oriente Lumen* (1995). In this letter, he appeals to Catholics particularly of the Latin tradition to “be fully acquainted with this treasure” of the Eastern Catholic traditions “so as to be nourished” by them. The necessity of this mutual nourishment is also emphasized by *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the conciliar document on Ecumenism, which states that in the study of revealed truth East and West have used

different methods and approaches in understanding and confessing divine things. It is hardly surprising, then, if sometimes one tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed them better. In such cases, these various theological formulations are often to be considered complementary rather than conflicting.

### Eastern Catholic Churches

*The Eastern Catholic churches are autonomous ecclesial bodies that are in communion with the Holy See*

Eastern Church	Population	%
Ukrainian	4,345,599	25
Syro-Malabar	3,893,334	23
Maronite	3,381,733	20
Melkite	1,651,500	10
Armenian	566,015	3
Chaldean	536,525	3
Romanian	535,171	3
Ruthenian	486,627	3
Syro-Malankara	438,387	3
Hungarian	327,200	2
Syrian	266,461	2
Slovak	233,386	1
Ethiopian	227,078	1
Coptic	165,923	<1
Other*	148,925	<1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,203,864</b>	

Source: *Annuario Pontificio 2013*

\* Italo-Albanian (61,814); Church of Former Yugoslavia (58,337); Bulgarian (10,000); Belarusian (9,000); Greek (6,025); Albanian (3,749); Russian (not provided)

*Note: The Roman Catholic Church has a population of over 1 billion people.*

In response to this conciliar insight, John Paul II affirms that “Eastern Christians have...an original way of living their relationship with the Savior.” *Oriente Lumen* encourages Catholics of the East and the West to progress from simple knowledge into an authentic encounter with one another. He reflects upon the significance of the Second Vatican Council, which,

by gathering all of the bishops of the Catholic Church, from East and West, enabled the Holy Spirit to reveal “deep truths about the nature of the Church” and inspire “an ever pressing invitation to unity.” Such reciprocal knowledge of one another, which has continued in the decades since the Council, convinced many about the seriousness of the sins of separation, colonization, and marginalization. Inspired by this encounter among bishops, John Paul II encourages the whole Church, particularly in the “lands of the diaspora” where many Eastern Christians live in mainly Latin environments, to enjoy fellowship with one another through interparish activities, joint pilgrimages, common study, and shared worship. His ardent hope was that through such encounters the whole Church may join him in a “passionate longing for the full manifestation of the Church’s catholicity,” which is not expressed “by a single tradition,” but through the complementarity of multiple encounters with the resurrected Lord and with each other. ■

JAISSY JOSEPH is a doctoral student in the Boston College Department of Theology.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 30: © SeanPavonePhoto/shutterstock.

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Vazhuthanappally, MST. “The Adoration of Mar Sliba among the Palaeo-Christians in India.” Ed. Andrews Mekkattukunnel. *Mar Thoma Margam: The Ecclesial Heritage of the St. Thomas Christians* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India Publications, 2012), 359.

<sup>2</sup>Antonio de Gouvea, *Journada de Alexis De Menesis: A Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*. ed. Pius Malekandathil. (Cochin: LRC Publications, 2003), 244-245.

<sup>3</sup>Vazhuthanappally, 366.

 Watch Khaled Anatolios, professor of historical theology at Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry, speak on the development and significance of icons in the Eastern Christian church.

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# Facing Change

## Today's Parishes Must Meet Modern Challenges

*Hosffman Ospino*

In the past 10 years, we have witnessed the acceleration of a profound demographic shift. Only five decades ago the vast majority of Catholics in the country shared a mostly European American background. Today the U.S. Catholic landscape looks quite different. Approximately 2.7 percent of U.S. Catholics are Asian and Pacific, 3.7 percent are African-American, and the fastest growing group is that of Hispanic Catholics, who already make up 40 percent (possibly more) of the total American Catholic population. It is estimated that in about 15 years half of all U.S. Catholics will be Hispanic.

Clearly the Church in the United States is undergoing rapid and profound changes that are already transforming the cultural, social, and religious identity of Catholics. While some are determined to replicate or to hold on to past models of being Church, such attempts will only prevent us from being creative in responding to the challenges of our times.

In today's Church I see three major transitions that require attention:

### 1. CULTURAL TRANSITION

As U.S. Catholicism is rapidly moving from a European American cultural experience to one that is largely Hispanic and multicultural, celebrating liturgies in two or more languages while integrating different cultural traditions has become increasingly common. However, similar to the nativist calls for "English only" policies in the larger society, this development has caused some parishioners to demand that Mass be celebrated in English—in what they define as the "traditional way."

Even if it is true that U.S.-born generations of Hispanics are already integrating into a commonly shared experience, this does not mean that they should have to abandon their cultural traditions and their families' languages. Different cultural practices, symbols, and languages can profoundly enrich the common Catholic liturgical experience, and we should be creative in integrating them.

In this cultural transition it is important for parishes to honor the religious practices that are central to the

spiritual life of each of their groups. European American Catholicism is very rich in its devotional traditions, and much more could be done to revitalize those practices.

Hispanic Catholics and other groups coming to parishes throughout the country bring the vibrancy and spontaneity of popular Catholicism. Expressions of popular Catholicism—such as *altarcitos* (little home altars), Passion reenactments, and Marian devotions—nourish and sustain the spiritual lives of millions of Catholics.

Pastoral leaders must learn what practices relate best to the experiences of the people they serve.

### 2. SOCIAL TRANSITION

In the middle of the 20th century U.S. Catholicism moved from neighborhood enclaves into mainstream society. Many Catholic families are now solidly middle class. But not all Catholics have "made it." Millions of them do not experience the middle-class benefits of education, professional achievement, and economic stability.

Most Catholic immigrants are not middle class and lack the social and economic stability of their fellow Catholics. Because they constitute the fastest-growing sector among Catholics in the country, the Church's social transition back to the barrio and the city is deeply reshaping the identity of the Catholic experience in this country.

The Church as a whole needs to reassess its priorities. Middle-class Catholicism is declining in numbers and influence in our society, while Catholicism as a whole continues to grow. It is tempting to switch to "survival mode" to save the little stability gained a few decades ago. It seems easier to cling to the securities already in hand than to venture into the difficult task of helping poor Catholics deal with their many needs. But I don't think these options reflect the way of Jesus.

U.S. Catholicism in the 21st century will thrive not by looking with nostalgia at a glorious past but by embracing the present and the future and by renewing our ministries to the poor and the marginalized.

Ministry in the large cities and the barrios requires Church leaders to learn about the reality of people living

in the margins of society. It requires them to learn the many languages with which Catholics articulate their faith experiences. And it requires the revision of “traditional” models of ministry, the setting aside of preconceived theories, and the impact of pastoral models and resources imported from other countries.

Understanding the current profound transition must lead us to question the allocation of resources assigned to serve the spiritual and social needs of Catholics living in barrios and poor neighborhoods. In many places they are the majority. But where are our pastoral centers located? What portion of our budgets is assigned to, for instance, Hispanic ministry? And why are dozens of inner-city Catholic schools being closed precisely at the time when Hispanic Catholics double and triple in numbers around them? Are there really no alternatives?

### 3. LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

The current transformation of the Church is a unique opportunity for all Catholic leaders to rethink current models of ministry that may not effectively respond to the challenges of working in culturally diverse contexts.

Some Church leaders seem to be placing all of their bets on assimilation into “mainstream” Catholicism. Yet Hispanic and other ethnic groups are forcing the Church to envision new ways of being Catholic that can integrate the richness of their many cultural experiences. Even Catholics of European backgrounds are increasingly reclaiming their cultural roots. This is great.

Other Church leaders feel more comfortable with models that segregate ethnic and language groups in their own communities. Unfortunately, this solution is both counterproductive to the common good of the Catholic



The congregation, with children and parishioners bearing copies of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help icon, approaches Fifth Avenue in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York, June 2013.

# *There is no one-size-fits-all approach to Hispanic ministry.*

community and limits the impact of minority leaders' contributions to the larger community.

As the number of Hispanic Catholics has been rapidly increasing in the pews, such growth is not equally reflected at all levels of leadership in the Church. In some sectors of our Church there has been a lack of clear commitment to fostering leadership among Hispanic Catholics. This has contributed to the unfortunate perception of the Hispanic presence as merely an addendum or secondary concern.

That inadequate attitude, often expressed in tokenism, translates into little or no consultation at the decisive stages of projects that affect the larger Church community, participation in the planning processes that look at the present and future of ministry, and attention to the plurality of voices and experiences that Hispanic Catholics bring to the table.

For all of us at times it has been tempting to impose our own ideas about what "should be," but working together as a team has led us to realize that Hispanic ministry always has to be shaped by the unique circumstances of Hispanics in this country as well as those of the larger Catholic community. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to Hispanic ministry.

## INTO THE FUTURE

Throughout the United States the Catholic Church today needs to seriously reflect on what it means to be

Catholic in the 21st century and respond to the challenges that are being posed by these three transitions in our parish communities. We are a culturally diverse body, and all models of ministry and theological reflection need to be responsive and responsible to this reality of diversity.

In the midst of these transitions, the idea of Hispanic ministry is also being transformed. In many places to speak of Hispanic ministry is to speak simply of ministry, and vice versa. U.S. Hispanic Catholics are in a unique position today to assume more responsibility in building communities and institutions that serve the needs of all groups in the Church.

We recognize that we need to work together with all other groups of Catholics. And in turn, all other sectors in the Church must recognize that Hispanic voices and contributions are essential and indispensable to the American Catholic experience today. ■

HOSFFMAN OSPINO is assistant professor of Hispanic ministry and religious education at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. Copyright 2010 *U.S. Catholic*. Reproduced by permission from the June 2010 issue of *U.S. Catholic*, [www.uscatholic.org](http://www.uscatholic.org).

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Watch Hosffman Ospino's video presentation: "American Catholics: Persisting and Changing." [www.bc.edu/c21roles](http://www.bc.edu/c21roles)

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# Theology

## Serving the Conversation

Amanda Osheim

When I try to capture my sense of the theological vocation, I am drawn to think about *whom* the theologian serves through the analogy of a *what*: “Love for the earth and love for you are having such a long conversation in my heart.” I envision the theologian serving the dialogue between God and the world.

The conversation is personal, and flows from my experience of God’s continual presence in my life. God invites and sends, cajoles and confronts, assuages and empowers me. I am no ideal conversation partner, “never a quick scholar,” all too easily distracted and caught up in maelstroms of my own making. I’ve often thought the theological vocation was God’s clever way of keeping my attention. Yet there are moments when I listen and learn how to receive and respond, when “I wake with a thirst for the goodness I do not have.”

Although this conversation is dialogical it is not narrow. It comes to me through the mediation of both the Church and world. These voices express in vivid forms the length and breadth of the conversation, of God’s continual sending of Christ to the world through the Holy Spirit and the ongoing incarnation of God’s kingdom that occurs when the Word is received and embodied.

Being baptized into the conversation entails a corresponding responsibility to it—and surely not a responsibility that is the theologian’s alone. Yet the theologian serves the conversation by facilitating it. My role is to hear the questions the world asks in a complex mix of longing, joy, anguish, and hope. The way to know these questions is to love the ones who ask, from the cradle-Catholic seeking further understanding of a familiar faith to the atheist for whom religion is literally incredible. These are the people to whom God speaks. In service to the conversation I have a responsibility to ensure their

### THIRST

Another morning and I wake with thirst for the goodness I do not have. I walk out to the pond and all the way God has given us such beautiful lessons. Oh Lord, I was never a quick scholar but sulked and hunched over my books past the hour and the bell; grant me, in your mercy, a little more time. Love for the earth and love for you are having such a long conversation in my heart. Who knows what will finally happen or where I will be sent, yet already I have given a great many things away, expecting to be told to pack nothing, except the prayers which, with this thirst, I am slowly learning.

– Mary Oliver

voices are heard, their realities addressed, and their gifts acknowledged.

I have a responsibility as well to the “other side” of the conversation, God’s revelation as it has been expressed through sacred Scripture and living tradition within the Church (itself a product of God’s dialogue with the world). That service is not simple. Rooted in the knowledge that arises from love of God and others, it also requires tools of the theological trade: attention to complex histories and sources; discernment of how past ideas, texts, and contexts are developed and received; a sense for how essential truths about God, human beings, and creation intertwine.

By serving both sides of the conversation I assist the coherent articulation and reception of God’s revelation. “Coherent” may seem a dry word, but to me it has two levels of meaning. First, it points to the centrality of critical reasoning for theology’s creative process, which attempts to describe mystery in meaningful ways. Second, coherence means “stickiness,” the glue that binds conversation partners together, allowing us to move from mutual understanding to shared vision and action. Coherent theology is potentially transformative for individuals and communities, and it transforms me as well.

While I think the theologian’s service is important, in the end it is one part of the conversation, a form of discipleship and service: “Who knows what will finally happen or where I will be sent, yet already I have given a great many things away, expecting to be told to pack nothing, except the prayers which, with this thirst, I am slowly learning.” ■

AMANDA OSHEIM is assistant professor of practical theology at Loras College in Dubuque, IA. Reprinted with permission. *DailyTheology.org*, October 18, 2011.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 35 Where Ocean Meets Sky. © PAUL SALE VERN HOFFMAN/Design Pics/Corbis

# Flowering in the BURREN

Colleen M. Griffith

There is a well-known and beautiful spot in County Clare, Ireland, known as the Burren. Occupying an area of some 135 square miles, it is a bleak and stony place. The exposed limestone of the Burren stretches for miles with no visible topsoil, presenting a flat but jagged surface. In the Burren, rainwater penetrates lines of weakness in the limestone, and gradually vertical cracks, known as grikes, form in the rocks. Ironically these cracks in the rocks give rise to some rare and amazing wildflowers. A variety of unusual alpine and Mediterranean plants are apparent, growing from the spaces between the rocks.

The Burren in County Clare proved to be a big surprise to archeologists, botanists, and ecologists. I suspect that our present ecclesial time will prove a surprise as well. There is, after all, much that is flourishing in our “grikes,” the cracks in the rocks of a bleak-looking ecclesial landscape. Our unmistakable sign of rich flowering remains the prophetic witness of

Catholic women, who in their prayers, praxis, and theological work remain committed to the vision of a Catholic Church at its best. The results of this commitment may seem incremental, but the prophetic power of such a stance cannot be missed.

The decision made by women to believe in and act out of hope for a future Church now is a decision made not for themselves alone. It is a stance taken for the sake of thousands of other women and men, one that serves as an inspiration in the present and becomes an important lead for those yet to come. It is time to recognize the richness of our own Burren landscape, to find hope and enjoyment in the flowers growing in our grikes. ■

COLLEEN M. GRIFFITH is associate professor of the practice of theology and faculty director of spirituality studies at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. Reprinted with permission. *Prophetic Witness: Catholic Women's Strategies*. [www.crossroadpublishing.com](http://www.crossroadpublishing.com).

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 36: Flowers in the Burren.  
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# C21 EVENTS

## Living Catholicism: Roles and Relationships for a Contemporary World

October 3, 2013 | Lecture

Presenter: Fr. Michael Himes (professor, Theology Department)

Location/Time: Gasson Hall, Room 100, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and Theology Department

## Women Deacons: Past, Present, Future

October 23, 2013 | Lecture

Presenter: Phyllis Zagano (senior research associate-in-residence and adjunct professor of religion, Hofstra University)

Location/Time: Brighton Campus, Cadigan Alumni Center Atrium, 6:00 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center

## The Francis Papacy: Reform, Renewal, and Resistance

October 30, 2013 | Lecture

Presenter: John L. Allen, Jr. (senior correspondent, *National Catholic Reporter*)

Location/Time: Robsham Theatre, 6:00 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and STM

## Collegiality in Church Leadership

November 7, 2013 | A Conversation

Presenters: Mary McAleese (former president of Ireland & canon lawyer) interviewed by Richard R. Gaillardetz (professor, Theology Department)

Location/Time: Brighton Campus, Cadigan Alumni Center Atrium, 6:00 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and Theology Department

## Women for a Contemporary Church: A Conversation

November 12, 2013 | Panel Discussion

Panel: Francine Cardman (professor, STM); M. Shawn Copeland (professor, Theology Department); Megan McCabe (doctoral student, Theology Department)

Moderator: Patricia DeLeeuw (Vice Provost for Faculties)

Location/Time: Gasson Hall, Room 100, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center, Women's Resource Center, STM, and Theology Department

## Christian Hope: Promise, Possibility, and Fulfillment

November 14, 2013 | Book Launch

Presenters: Rev. Richard Lennan and Nancy Pineda-Madrid (editors, professors, STM) with other faculty contributors

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 6:30 p.m.

Sponsors: STM, Paulist Press, and C21 Center



Webcast videos will be available within two weeks following each event on [bc.edu/c21](http://bc.edu/c21)

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STM: BC School of Theology and Ministry  
C21 Center: The Church in the 21st Century Center

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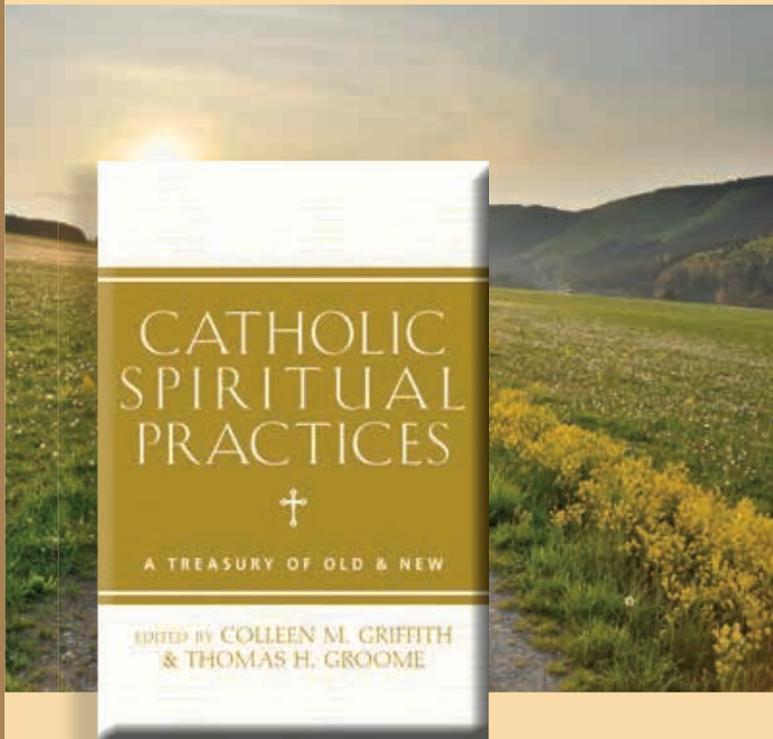
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