A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

Patrick J. McNamara, Ph.D.

George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st Century Church* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

No one doubts the need for deep reform in the Church, but few agree on how to go about it. George Weigel, one of our foremost Catholic intellectuals, offers a comprehensive reform proposal transcending the liberal and conservative labels that have obscured Catholic thought for decades. While Weigel calls this program "Evangelical Catholicism," he notes that it's not *his* program, but *the Church's*. The book is divided into two parts. The first presents the Evangelical Catholic vision in full, while the second gives details for actual reform.

Some might find the title a bit misleading. It has nothing whatever to do with Evangelical Protestantism, but it has much to do with the "New Evangelization" called for by Popes Blessed John Paul II and Benedict XVI, which seeks to re-Christianize a secularized world. Evangelical Catholicism is a new term denoting an ancient task: as St. Pius X put it, "to restore all things in Christ." The two pillars of Evangelical Catholicism are Word and Sacrament, and its criteria are Truth (with a capital "T") and Mission (with a capital "M").

Today Christianity risks being reduced to "a private lifestyle of no political consequence." Weigel cites "soft totalitarianism": the state's attempt to redefine the basic meaning of both humanity and marriage, undermining "the social and cultural foundations of democracy." In Canada, for example, "human rights commissions" and "human rights tribunals" fine pastors invoking the biblical understanding of marriage. The "gay marriage" movement, Weigel writes, is "nothing less than an effort to redefine human nature through the use of state power, if necessary."

Neither “progressive” nor “traditionalist” Catholicism, Weigel contends, are equipped to meet this challenge. Faced with religious relativism, the former sees Catholicism “as one possible story—one possible truth—in a pluralistic world of truths and ‘narratives,’ none of which can claim the mantle of certainty.” The latter “denies the reality of the conditions under which the Gospel must be proclaimed in the twenty-first century—and thus renders itself evangelically sterile…” In short, one group wants to tighten up the rules; the other wants to loosen them.

Both are caught up in an outdated model, that of the Counter-Reformation. Based on a catechetical-devotional approach, this model worked well in the aftermath of the Reformation, but fell apart under what Weigel calls the “acids of modernity.” Today believers face what one Jewish legal scholar terms “Christophobia.” What is needed, Weigel suggests, is a bold, fresh approach providing the tools to evangelize, to begin a dialogue with modernity that doesn’t water down essential Catholic truths.

Vatican II called for that dialogue, along with a “radical reorientation of the Church to the Gospel.” The council was no radical break with the past. Weigel reassesses the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878- 1903) and his influence on the council. In his attempt to bring a Catholic voice to bear in all areas of modern life, from the social to the intellectual, Leo and his successors actually paved the way for Vatican II.

When Pope Blessed Pius IX died, Weigel writes, “many European statesmen and intellectuals imagined the papacy, and by extension, the Catholic Church—to be finished as a force in human affairs.” One of the keynotes of Pius’ later years was a “blanket, antimodern rejectionism” of the secular world, as seen in his 1864 *Syllabus of Errors*, which had condemned the notion that “The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with, progress, liberalism and modern civilization.”

Leo aimed to build “a distinctive Catholic intellectual engagement with modernity.” He made Aquinas the cornerstone for Catholic intellectual life; he encouraged Biblical studies at a time when modern scholarship was eliminating the faith factor; he laid the foundation for modern Catholic social thought with *Rerum Novarum* (1891). As a professional diplomat he kept the lines of communication open with France’s Third Republic rather than simply condemn its anticlerical tendencies. Weigel sees Leo’s approach memorialized in the statue above his tomb:

“[T]he statue of Leo XIII depicts the Pope standing upright, right arm extended and foot thrust forward, as if inviting the world into a serious conversation about the human prospect—as if leading the Church out of the past and into a new, confident, evangelical future.”

This task involves the entire Body of Christ. It begins by encountering the person of Jesus Christ in the Gospel and growing in His friendship. Weigel adds: “You are not a Catholic in the full sense of the term because your grandmother was born in County Cork or Palermo or Guadalajara… You are a Catholic because you have met the Lord Jesus and entered into a mature friendship with Him.”

Evangelical Catholicism calls for, as St. Paul says, a “more excellent way” than a concessionary, nostalgic or lukewarm approach. “The lay vocation,” Weigel writes, “is evangelism: of the family, the workplace, and the neighborhood, and thus of culture, economics, and politics.” Evangelical Catholicism, in short, is a culture that “seeks to be a culture-forming counterculture for the sake of the world, its healing, and its conversion.”

In discussing specific reform measures, Weigel is always idealistic but never impractical. In his chapter on episcopal reform, he calls for a greater balance in implementing the bishop’s office of teaching, sanctifying and governing. Too

often, he contends, the teaching aspect has been underemphasized. While the Vatican has moved quickly on bishops who have created “financial shambles” in their dioceses, he asks, “But what of doctrinal shambles? What of disciplinary shambles?”

Weigel correctly notes that men who never should have been ordained priests “slipped through a seminary system that had, from the late 1960’s through the late 1980’s, looked more to psychology and psychiatry than to moral theology and sacramental theology in dealing with aberrant personalities and grave sins.” Fidelity and a deeper conversion to Christ the High Priest, he argues, are essential components of any clerical reform. A celibacy, albeit one bereft of clericalism, is more needed than ever to challenge the “self-absorption of post-modernity.”

With regard to liturgical reform, Weigel calls for a liturgy that “is not focused on itself,” and he suggests a literal reorientation of the priest and people *ad orientem* might help in this regard:

“Does the now conventional, but hardly traditional, priest-facing-people-over-the-altar orientation contribute, however unintentionally, to a loss of the congregation’s self-awareness as God’s people on pilgrimage through history toward the fulfillment of God’s promises?”

He calls for a greater focus on the church building as sacred space. He also calls for a “great cleansing of hymnals and missalettes,” taking for example a popular postconciliar hymn, “Love One Another.” “Who,” he asks, “is praying to whom?” Rather than calling for a return to the preconciliar Mass, Weigel argues for “a more dignified celebration of the Novus Ordo.”

For Weigel, a major aspect of deep reform has to include the religious orders, but he observes that many of them have

fallen into what he calls a “psychological schism.” While they didn’t formally leave the Church, they had “no affective connection to the institutional Church and its supreme authority.” While Rome’s approach seems to be “one of letting them die a natural death,” Weigel wonders if this approach isn’t a major impediment to the New Evangelization.

For a long time, religious were predominant in Catholic education, healthcare and charitable work. Today laypeople have taken over this work and in many cases have proven more faithful to preserving Catholic identity and mission. Whatever their field of work, they need to see themselves as missionaries; “Lay Catholics do not need anyone’s permission to be the evangelical witnesses they were called to be: to be an evangelist is a baptismal obligation, not a privilege conceded by ecclesiastical authority.” How they live should be “counter-cultural in the twenty-first century.”

An important part of Evangelical Catholic reform is in the Catholic intellectual life. Catholic higher education in particular must reject “the post-modern subjectivism that speaks only of ‘your truth’ and ‘my truth,’ confident in the conviction that every genuine search for truth eventually leads to the Truth who is God the Holy Trinity.” There’s also the question of how faithful to the Catholic intellectual mission some schools are:

“Catholic universities that sponsor productions of the Vagina Monologues and whose student-life offices encourage LGBTQ clubs, but which do not require their students to take courses in Augustine and Aquinas, or to read and absorb… key documents of Vatican II… have not begun to grasp the unique nature and mission of a Catholic institution of higher education.”

While Weigel praises the work being done at schools like the University of Dallas, still there may come a point where there’s little hope to reclaim Catholic identity. In this case, the local bishop may have to step in and declare that a

certain college or university is no longer Catholic.

The Church's role in public life is an urgent issue as modern society increasingly measures humans by their utility rather than their dignity. Nihilism, skepticism and moral relativism all serve to "erode the very foundation of the democratic project." Secularism has strongly affected the Church's work in this area, where, Weigel writes, "two generations of ineffective catechesis… have produced many Catholic politicians who are baptized pagans." Weigel suggests here an intensified focus on educating the Catholic people, a task more necessary than ever in an increasingly secularized age.

Today he sees a "far more evangelically assertive model of the papacy, a model in which the Bishop of Rome is, above all, the Church's first witness." Among the qualities he lists for a potential pope are resilience, good judgment, strategic vision, courage and pastoral experience. He also calls for a reassessment of the Curia's performance in the light of how they contribute to the Evangelical Catholic mission.

Catalyst readers will surely enjoy this highly readable work: bold and apologetic, but never apologizing.

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STATE OF RELIGION IN 2013

Bill Donohue

Frank Newport, *God is Alive and Well*, Gallup Press

Gallup has been probing the status of religion in America since the 1940s, and has done some of the finest work of any

survey house in the nation. This book is the work of Frank Newport, Gallup Editor-in-Chief. As readers of *Catalyst* know, I hold a Ph.D. in sociology from New York University; Newport's Ph.D. in sociology is from the University of Michigan. Unlike most sociologists, Newport writes with clarity.

There has been much talk in recent years about the increasing diversity of the American population. Indeed, we have an entire diversity industry in this country, one that spawns the private and public sectors. It's really a subset of the multicultural behemoth, and it comes with so many base assumptions that it takes on the trappings of religion itself. Many of those assumptions, it turns out, are wrong.

We may not be a "Christian nation" in any formal sense, but we are a nation that is still dominated by Christians. Indeed, 80 percent of Americans are Christian; 16 percent have no religious identification (more about this later). What about all those new religions we hear so much about from the diversity experts? They exist, but are inconsequential: fully 95 percent of those Americans who profess a religious affiliation are Christian.

Here's another way of looking at it. Of the five percent of those who have a religion and who are not Christian, 1.7 percent are Jews; 1.7 percent are Mormons; .5 percent are Muslims; the rest are other non-Christian. In terms of our religious beliefs, there has also been more constancy than we have been led to believe. While fewer Americans today believe in God as compared to the mid-1940s, the difference is small. Indeed, today only 6-8 percent say there is no God.

For us Catholics, the biggest change has been the large increase in the Hispanic population; Mexicans account for much of it. "An astounding 45% of Catholics younger than 30 are Hispanic," Newport observes. He is right to say that the Catholic Church would be in trouble today were it not for the

Hispanic surge: we've lost a large percentage of cradle Catholics.

Switching religions is not uncommon, and this is especially true among Protestants. More important is the loss of numbers recorded by the mainline denominations; Methodists and Presbyterians have lost half their members since 1967. Overall, we've never had fewer Protestants as a portion of the country (they are just over half the nation's population). Moreover, the term itself is losing traction: fewer Americans who are non-Catholic Christians identify themselves as Protestant.

Jews are mostly non-observant; only a third adhere to their faith. Blacks are the most religious, and they are also culturally conservative. The Republican Party is stacked with churchgoers, and the Democrats are more closely aligned with those of a secularist orientation (blacks being a noticeable exception). Jews and Episcopalians are at the top of the education and income ladder; Baptists, Pentecostals, and Assemblies of God members are at the bottom; Catholics are in between. One in three Jews makes $90,000 a year or more, which is double the national average. Mormons are more likely to be college graduates than are Protestants or Catholics.

The most religious states are in the South (Mississippi is number one); the least religious are in the Northeast and the West (the residents of Vermont are the least likely to attend church). The states with the highest "no religion" percentages are Oregon, Vermont, Washington, Alaska, Maine, Hawaii, and Colorado. Highly religious states are gaining population, led by Texas, Utah and Georgia.

Newport does a fine job exploring social issues that are impacted by age. As expected, the older we get, the more likely we are to be religious. Whether this will hold true for baby boomers (they are more secular than previous generations), remains to be seen.

The problem with young people has less to do with religion than with marriage. To wit: Fewer young people are marrying and birth rates are declining. This does not bode well for the future, and there appears to be little national discussion of this issue. Not only do public office holders shun the subject, even the clergy have been reluctant to mention it. It is a tribute to the reigning narcissism of our age that children are often seen as an impediment to happiness (dogs are more welcome with young urbanites than children).

Women are more religious than men, and this is something that has been true for an awfully long time. This is not just a sweeping generalization. As Newport demonstrates, "The overall gender gap in religiousness appears in *all* major race and ethnic groups in the U.S." (His italic.) Meaning that white, black, Hispanic and Asian women are more religious than men in their respective racial or ethnic group. Interestingly, this phenomenon is true in other countries as well.

As with other sociological phenomenon, there is a divide between single women and married women, especially married women with children. Women with children are clearly more religious than women without children, and this has nothing to do with age. "When a woman has a child," Newport writes, "the maternal instinct and the religion that goes with it may be accelerated." He then notes as a "confounding fact" that men with a child in the home are more religious than men without a child in the home.

However, the "children's gap" that Newport pinpoints may easily be understood as stemming from the same source: for most men and women, achieving the status of parent is transformative, both psychologically and sociologically. Fathers and mothers surely express their protectiveness in different ways, but one way they come together is in their newly forged interest in the alembic qualities of religion for their offspring. To put it differently, parenting is an inherently protective enterprise for both men and women.

After detailing that women are more religious than men, Newport opines that the increasing role of women clergy in the mainline Protestant denominations, and the absence of female priests in Catholic and conservative Protestant faiths, suggests that the latter may find themselves with increasing tensions. But it is precisely in the mainline churches that fewer and fewer *women as well as men* are attending services. We know from many studies that the more conservative the religion, the lower the dropout rate; conversely, the more a religion's teachings mirror the secular ideas of the dominant culture, the more members it loses. If religions with women clergy are the key to success, then the Episcopalians should be booming. In fact, they are in a deep descent.

There has been much chatter about the "nones," the category of Americans who claim no religious affiliation. Celebrating this phenomenon have been activists in the atheist community, as well as many religion reporters. It is a credit to Newport that he carefully examines the spike in the "nones" population.

Contrary to what many secular pundits have said, it is not true that the 16 percent of Americans who have no religious identification are atheists or anti-religionists. Indeed, roughly half of them profess a belief in God. Newport suspects, with good reason, that the large increase in the "nones" may mask something else: it may very well be that in the 1950s, for example, that those who lacked a religious affiliation were less likely to identify themselves as such (there is comparatively little social pressure today exerted on those who are not religious to claim affiliation).

Does it matter whether someone is religious or not? Most decisively, and not just for individuals—it matters for society. The most religious among us are also happier and healthier than the least religious. Healthier not just physically, but emotionally: those who are "very religious" are the least likely to suffer depression, and the least

likely to experience stress. In short, the overall wellbeing score sorts out this way: at the top are the “very religious”; in the middle are the “moderately religious”; at the bottom are the “nonreligious.”

Newport’s explanation makes good sense. The “very religious” are more likely to take care of themselves, more likely to find solace in their religion in times of need, and more likely to experience a strong sense of community with their co-believers. This holds true across religions.

What is perhaps the most controversial part of the book, and also the most fun to read, is Newport’s discussion on how the business community and government might tap into the strongly positive role that religion has on wellbeing. He is correct to note that business and government are quick to recommend that we stop smoking, start exercising more, eat a more healthy diet, and the like. Should they not be just as vociferous in offering incentives for employees to become more religious? I would take it further: If those of us who take our religion seriously are less likely to be a healthcare burden on others, should we not be rewarded in some way?

The idea is sound, but finding a way to implement it is not easy. Corporate America may find itself in a pickle trying to negotiate a workable proposal, and the problems for government include serious First Amendment issues. But we could have a combined PR campaign: If the captains of industry and leaders in government were to use the bully pulpit exhorting Americans to take religion more seriously, it could pay huge dividends. At the very least, it would make us a more religion-friendly nation, something we badly need.

Although it is not a subject Newport addresses, related to his analysis of the “very religious” is the role these men and women play in serving the dispossessed. We know from the work of Arthur C. Brooks, as well as Robert Putman and David Campbell, that those who are religious give more in terms of

their time and money to the needy than secularists do. The 2012 survey by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* also underscored this vital point. It cannot be said too often that those who holler the loudest about the horrors of poverty do the least about it. Their idea of helping the poor means picking the pocket of the taxpayer, not coughing up their own dough.

So if we take Newport's evidence of the social benefits that the "very religious" offer, and splice it to the data on their charitable giving, what we have is a strong case for promoting religion throughout our society. In other words, the hostility to religion as expressed by many cultural elites is not only offensive, it is socially injurious.

Anyone interested in this subject will find much to savor in Newport's well-written, and highly authoritative, account.

BEARING WITNESS TO THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Candace de Russy

Colleen Carroll Campbell,
***My Sisters the Saints: A Spiritual Memoir*, Image.**

At a time in our culture of rampant secularism, anomie, and hedonic self-absorption, Colleen Carroll Campbell's *My Sisters the Saints* is a rarity, insofar as it concerns her quest to find and fulfill her identity as a Christian woman, or what Blessed John Paul II called the "feminine genius."

How bracing to encounter so countercultural a memoir. Audaciously, one might say, Campbell, an author, journalist,

and former speechwriter, blends a personal, earth-bound account of painful crises in her life over a 15-year period with a much loftier narrative, namely, the transcendent and mystical story of her gradually developing awareness of the living reality of the communion of saints.

Catholics profess this scripturally rooted, ethereally communitarian belief in the Apostles' Creed in connection with "the holy catholic Church." The affirmation has two intimately connected meanings, according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: communion in holy goods (*sancta*) and among holy people (*sancti*).

That is, the communion of saints is the Church, with Christ at its head communicating His riches to all the members. Some of these members are still wayfarers on earth, while others have died and are being purified. Yet others, such as the saints with whom the author communes, already gloriously contemplate in the afterlife the triune God Himself.

Dwelling in closer and holier unity with Christ in heaven than we earthly pilgrims, these saints are better able to intercede unceasingly, fraternally, and to our immense benefit, with the Father. In the words of Pope Paul VI, "we believe that in this communion [of all the faithful in Christ], the merciful love of God and his saints is always [attentive] to our prayers."

The communion of saints, Campbell's overriding theme, is thus closely bound to the main insight of Christian and Jewish eschatologies, immortality. This insight, as scholar Carol Zaleski explains in her marvelous essay, "In Defense of Immortality," is founded on two premises. To paraphrase her, we humans are creatures, amalgams of dust and the Creator's life-giving breath, and we are created in His image and likeness with a royal destiny that transcends our finite condition.

We hope to see God, not through any worthiness on our part,

but because, in making us, He has imprinted on us His immortal image. To be immortal– to arrive finally at what Campbell calls "our eternal home"–is thus to be a mortal who has been given the pure gift of sharing in God's immortality.

Moreover, Zaleski adds, "immortality is the life of the world to come, already partially realized in the communion of saints, both living and dead…In Saint Paul's words, the activity of the Holy Spirit in this life is the first installment of immortality…Its effects are not confined to a circle of illuminati orbiting the divine throne, but spill over to all souls both living and dead …."

In *My Sisters the Saints*, Campbell poignantly recounts how she found answers to her anguished prayers at critical points in her life through spiritual "sisterhood" with six great women saints–*illuminatae* already sharing in God's immortality. As a result of studying their lives and seeking their intercession, she bears witness to having been heard and aided by them. In the process, she attests to having found the real meaning of liberation in service to others.

The author's spiritual odyssey began with chancing upon her devout father's copy of a biography of St. Teresa of Ávila, after a period in a Milwaukee college when she nearly abandoned God, living the drunken and sexually uninhibited life of a "liberated" party girl. Experiencing a profound sense of desolation, she increasingly questioned extremist feminist orthodoxy, in particular, its perverse attitudes toward women and men, motherhood, and God. Turning in prayer "as a friend" to the bold mystic and reformer Teresa, Campbell came to identify intensely with and admire her faith, femininity, and passionate nature. With this encounter, an intense desire for divine intimacy awakened within her.

Warily, she then read a biography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Expecting to find the holy Carmelite's "little way" childish and cloying, the author discovered instead its powerful and

mature, yet gloriously childlike, confidence in God, and her spirituality founded on secret and unheralded acts of sacrifice and love. With her beloved father suffering from Alzheimer's disease, Campbell discovered that Thérèse's father had similarly fallen victim to dementia. The saint's insight that the "little ones" among us are channels of grace, not encumbrances or humiliations, changed the course of the author's professional life. With Thérèse as her "patroness," she became in her writings and activism ardently pro-life as well as dedicated to the protection of the sick and vulnerable in the end-of-life controversy.

In love with a devout medical student, Campbell then struggled with the fear of submerging her own ambitious career plans in the demands inherent in being a doctor's wife. Her decision to opt for marriage, which required her to leave a prestigious job as a valued speechwriter for President George W. Bush, was deeply influenced by her reading of the diary of Saint Maria Faustina. This simple, uneducated Polish saint, who spent much of her life doing menial labor, had many mystical experiences, which included a vision of Jesus with radiant rays streaming from his chest. According to Faustina's journal, Jesus asked her to paint his image with these words beneath it: "Jesus, I trust in you." She also created a new, Eucharistic, internationally prayed rosary prayer that came to be known as the Divine Mercy chaplet. Faustina's focus on trust in Jesus touched Campbell deeply. In imitation of the saint's humility and bottomless trust, she gave up her work at the very center of world power and unreservedly committed to marital union.

For Campbell, an agonizing period of infertility and yearning to have children ensued. She sought counsel in the faith-based philosophy of St. Edith Stein, the eminent Jewish-born philosopher and Catholic convert; the Carmelite nun died in Auschwitz after publicly denouncing Nazism.

Both Campbell and Edith's spiritual quest began with reading the life of Teresa of Ávila. After reading Teresa, Edith

pronounced, “This is the truth.” The key to Campbell’s identification with the self-proclaimed feminist Edith lies in the saint’s understanding of “feminine singularity”: the distinct differences with which women naturally relate to their bodies, motherhood, the world, and God. According to Stein, their inclination to openness, maternal nurturing, courageous defense of the vulnerable, and generosity propel them to a loving and passionate union with God and, in Edith’s words, an “exceptional receptivity for [His] work in the soul.” Most epiphanic for Campbell was the saint’s conception of spiritual maternity, the notion that women need not bear children to exercise their maternal giftedness. So it was that Campbell resolved to exercise spiritual maternity in her own life, especially by more actively caring for her father and integrating faith more fully in her writing.

Struggling to come to terms with her difficulty in conceiving and her father’s rapidly darkening mind, Campbell, in preparing to lead a conference on the legacy of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, read *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*. Therein, this saint of the destitute and dying of Calcutta’s slums, revealed her excruciating, prolonged sense of having been abandoned by God. This was interpreted by her spiritual director as a “reparatory darkness” intended not to expunge sin from the one who endures it, but to permit that soul to suffer for those who reject God and thereby, as Teresa stated it, “light the light of those in darkness on earth.” In a stirring expression of her ability to see Christ in suffering humanity, she exhorted the sisters in the Missionaries of Charity, the order she founded on His bidding in a vision, to see themselves as “contemplatives in the heart of the world. For we are touching the body of Christ 24 hours.” With unshaken faith in the saint, Campbell writes of “the light Mother Teresa’s example could cast into my own darkness.” In imitation of Teresa, she lovingly assisted her father in death. Racked with grief at his burial, she took the unexpected appearance of a bevy of

cheerfully consoling Missionaries of Charity, swathed in blue-and-white saris, as a God-given sign that Teresa herself was present and interceding for her and her father.

At age thirty-four Campbell at last conceived, in a pregnancy fraught with complications that threatened the lives of her unborn twins. In agonized prayer she turned to Church teaching about Mary of Nazareth, enabling her to discern her most exalted place in the communion of saints. Reading *Daughter Zion* by Pope Benedict XVI, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, she was struck by his characterization of Mary's Assumption into heaven as "the highest degree of canonization," that is, the fruit of her attainment of "the totality of grace" and, thus, "the totality of salvation." Campbell also recognized the influence that Mary has exerted in leading the rest of the faithful to heaven. From a sentimental, near magic-driven perception of Mary, Campbell writes of having progressed gradually to having a deep admiration and affection for her as well as a desire to imitate her virtues. Entrusting her "nightmarish" sorrow regarding her high-risk pregnancy to Mary, she came to feel the Mother of Jesus to be as real a mother to her as her own earthly one. With the entry of her healthy twins in the world, she marveled and gave thanks for what one physician called a "miracle" birth.

In a final, fitting, and full-throated affirmation of her two sublime preoccupations—her friends in the communion of saints and our royal destiny in ecstatic union with God—Campbell joyously recalls the Baptism, on the Feast of All Saints, of her children. The litany to friends the saints, sung during the rite, ended with this exhortation: "All you holy men and women, pray for us." In declaring her desire that her children "live to be saints," she further affirms, with near palpable certainty, that "the eternal embrace of Love…awaits us at our destination."

The author's ringing testament of faith, hope, and charity stands in stark contrast to today's often reflexive skepticism

and entrapment in this-worldliness. As Zaleski notes, people "are starved for transcendence, hungry for miracles, and sure of only one thing: if life is to be truly meaningful, death must not be allowed to have the last word."

Campbell's spiritual journey could well serve to move many to rethink what immortality and heaven might mean.

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WELCOME NEW HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Kenneth D. Whitehead

James Hitchcock, *History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium*, Ignatius Press.

This is a book that we have needed for a good while now: it is a one-volume history of the Catholic Church which goes back to the very beginning and brings everything up to date. We need to know the true facts about the very beginning of the Church—that she was indeed founded by Jesus Christ upon the apostles—if we are truly to be able to understand what she is and what she does today. This is essential in an era when so many try to deny that Christ really founded any Church at all—and when the stock reaction of many who encounter the existing Church is too often to reject her claims out of hand and even to oppose and attack her.

We further need to bring her history up to date if we are truly to realize and appreciate that it is the very same Church founded by Jesus Christ that is still very much in

business today, two thousand years later, carrying on with what Christ originally commanded the apostles to do, namely, “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that [Christ] commanded…” (Mt 28: 19).

The Catholic Church is a unique institution. There is nothing else like the Church in the whole world. In numbers she is the largest single organized religious institution in the world, with more than a billion adherents. In years she is the oldest continuously existing organized religious institution in the world (or perhaps continuously existing institution of any kind). In area she is the farthest-flung and most extended of all the world’s diverse institutions, with members in virtually every part of the world today (if only in small numbers in some places).

No more fascinating story exists than the story of how what Christ started so long ago by sending out the apostles has resulted in today’s vast worldwide Church functioning on every continent under the leadership of the pope and the Catholic bishops in communion with him. Not less fascinating are the varied and multitudinous events that have occurred along the way in the course of the Church’s long history. In this book Saint Louis University historian James Hitchcock has undertaken to tell this story in less than six hundred pages. Such an undertaking could never have been anything less than a formidable challenge, but readers will find, as this reviewer has found, that Professor Hitchcock has acquitted himself very creditably. He has produced a smoothly flowing, readable, and accurate narrative that is exactly what the book’s title advertises itself to be, that is: a full-fledged history of the Catholic Church.

Such an up-to-date history of the Church (that people will actually read) has been needed for some time, particularly in view of the tumultuous events that have characterized the Church’s life in the post-Vatican-II era, our era. Rarely has

the Church known such sustained and continuous unrest, and even assaults from both within and without, as has been the case in the past half century since the Council. Professor Hitchcock's treatment of precisely this era in his final chapter is one of his best. He shows that the Church's life has almost never been entirely tranquil; but in our day the outcome of a Council that was supposed to renew the faith, but instead became the occasion of determined attempts by dissident and disloyal elements to transform her belief and practice in accordance with their own alien agendas, created an entirely novel situation. Combined with the assaults from without by an increasingly aggressive secularism, this situation has been urgently in need of the kind of understanding and explanations that Hitchcock has now largely been able to provide.

For this author is well known from his writing and speaking as an articulate exponent and defender of authentic Catholicism. He is the author of a major work on religion in the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, of what remains one of the very best contemporary books on the sacred liturgy, and of numerous other works in both book and article form. But he is also a professional historian and it shows in this welcome new *History of the Catholic Church*. He has evidently consulted the main historical sources for the major historical periods, and he provides a clear, balanced, and reliable narrative that also not infrequently conveys the *excitement* of so much that is exciting in the Church's long history.

However, the book is not just another chronicle of popes and kings and their interactions. Popes and kings are naturally included because they are an essential part of the whole story; but in this history Professor Hitchcock has given relatively greater attention to broad Church developments and movements, and, especially, to important individual figures—theologians, philosophers, saints, and the like—than you will usually find in a general history. Prominent in this narrative

along with the popes and kings are sketches of important figures such as, for example, Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Pascal, and Newman. The same thing is true of the great saints and founders of religious orders such as a Benedict, Bernard, or Loyola; or a Catherine of Siena, a Teresa of Avila, or a Joan of Arc.

If, by the way, you think that a particular pope or saint or theologian is sometimes being short-changed, read on, because the author sometimes treats of major historical Church figures on more than one occasion as he proceeds.

Also in this book, relatively more attention is given to Christian art and architecture, and even to music and literature, than you will often find in general histories. This kind of emphasis is surely quite proper, after all, since these things figure among the *glories* of the Catholic Church. Even though the Church's basic aim is the sanctification and salvation of souls, the salutary influence she has also had on human culture, particularly in the West, cannot and should not be minimized, and it is not minimized here.

Even though the author typically likes to pay particular attention to individual popes or kings, saints or scholars, he does not neglect larger events, tendencies, movements, heresies, and the like—e.g., Arianism, Donatism, the great Christological councils, conciliarism, Jansenism, Modernism, and such. I thought his brief but lucid account of the causes and consequences of the Protestant Reformation was one of the best I have ever encountered. I would have preferred greater attention to the Church's relationship with Eastern Orthodoxy, but the author obviously had to make choices to stay within the limits of his study.

The author's basic method is to present a smooth continuous narrative into which he then introduces the various events and people he is treating in a given chapter. The book's fourteen chapters are not broken up into sections or sub-chapters;

rather, the author helpfully includes in the margin throughout the book a brief descriptive title (usually one word) for each paragraph. (In the helpfulness department, he also provides in parentheses a translation of the Latin titles of the many Church documents he mentions.)

The successive chapters in the book are divided into historical periods that are more or less conventional in Church history; they bear such titles as Chapter 1's "Beginning at Jerusalem," Chapter 7's "East and West," or Chapter 9's "Reform and Counter Reform." This book excels over many other histories, however, in its inclusion of a Chapter 12 entitled "To the Ends of the Earth," which tells the marvelous story of the great missionary expansion of the Catholic Church—how she got to be the unique worldwide institution she has become. Also interesting and helpful for English-speaking readers is a Chapter 13 entitled, "The New Nations," which is specifically about the formerly non-Catholic areas of Britain, North America, and Australia—areas which have become increasingly significant in Church terms only in recent times.

Chapter 14, the final chapter, entitled "Joy and Hope, Grief and Anguish," takes its title from the first line of Vatican Council II's Pastoral Constitution on the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. It will be noted that Professor Hitchcock includes here not only the first words from that conciliar text, "Joy and Hope," but also those that immediately follow in the same text, namely, "Grief and Anguish"—thus restoring the proper balance that so many liberal interpreters of the Council have so often left out. As already mentioned, this chapter dealing with the post-Vatican-II era presents a perceptive but concise account that explains how things got out of hand following the Council as well as you will find it explained anywhere.

Only now, fifty years later, have things gotten stabilized in such a way that it can perhaps finally be said that some of

what was always the promise of Vatican II has now actually been achieved. Professor Hitchcock gives great credit for this to the leadership of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, themselves both men of the Council, who continued against no little opposition to insist on its proper interpretation in the course of their pontificates. Remarkably, Hitchcock speaks of the present pontiff, Benedict XVI, as "the greatest theologian ever to serve as pope"—who succeeded on the chair of Peter the pope our author describes as "the greatest philosopher ever to do so," Blessed Pope John Paul II. At least it cannot be said that the Church has lacked for leadership in the midst of her post-conciliar tribulations!

In conclusion, what must finally be mentioned about this book is the *honesty* it consistently exhibits. Professor Hitchcock amply shows that he is not engaged in a white-washing or sugar-coating of the Church's record. Whether he is writing about such deplorable incidents as the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre carried out by the French Catholic party in 1572, or the failure of the Catholic bishops in our own day to deal adequately with the homosexual-oriented clerical sexual abuse crisis, he is unsparing in his respect for the truth. The same thing is true in his treatment of the "bad popes." On the other hand, where the Church's reputation has been blackened by exaggerated and even unjust accusations, as, for instance, in the Galileo case or in that of the Inquisition, he brings out and puts on the record the true facts of the matter.

All in all, it remains the case that the Catholic Church's story is truly one of the most amazing stories in the entire history of the world, and in this book it is retold in a way that today's Catholics can profitably read, refer to, and rely on. Ignatius Press is to be commended for commissioning it and James Hitchcock for writing it.

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THE EVOLVING AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

Joseph A. Varacalli, Ph.D.

Stephen M. Krason, *The Transformation of the American Democratic Republic.* Transaction Publishers, 2012. To order visit www.transactionpub.com or call 1-888-999-6778.

American civilization is in the midst of a cultural and political crisis of unprecedented proportions. The crisis is multi-faceted with all its aspects interrelated and mutually shaping. One facet involves the expansion of government, the movement toward statism, and the rise of a gnostic-like class of social engineers.

Another is a radical reconstructionism in the country's constitutional foundations indicative of the spread of subjectivism, a self-centered hyper-individualism , judicial activism, and the replacement of truth with naked power. Another aspect of the crisis is the spread of materialism as the answer to the question of what constitutes the ends of life with the unleashing of sexual constraint as one indicator and with a utilitarian calculus accepted as legitimate means to acquire such ends. There is also the rejection on the part of too many of the concepts of honor, duty, responsibility, hard work, and the idea that the intact family is the basic cell of a successful civilization. And, among yet other considerations, there is the increasing secularization of American society along with the institutionalization of cultural, moral, and religious relativism.

In *The Transformation of the American Democratic Republic*, Stephen M. Krason, the distinguished political scientist from

Franciscan University and the President of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists, argues that American civilization has been radically altered from the outlines laid out by the Founding Fathers over two hundred years ago. He traces this transformation through eight historical periods, from 1789 through to the present. They are: 1789-1817, "The Formative Years, the Federalist Party Era, and Jeffersonianism"; 1817-1840, "The Era of Good Feeling and Jacksonian Democracy"; 1840-1877, "Expansion, Sectionalism, the Civil War, and Reconstruction"; 1877-1920, "The Gilded Age, the Progressive Era, and World War I"; 1920-1945, "The 'Roaring Twenties,' the Great Depression, and World War II"; 1945-1960, "Post-World War II America and the Cold War"; 1960-1980, "The Welfare State, Cultural Upheaval, and the Reign and Decline of Liberalism"; and 1980-present, "The Upsurge of Conservatism, Economic Transformation, and Post-Cold War America."

In each stage, Krason addresses two key questions. The first is "to what degree are the principles of the Founding Fathers either maintained or changed?" And the second is "to what degree does the surrounding culture either support or oppose the original vision?"

In large part, the author sees the original political and cultural stance of the Founding as salutary and exceptional. It serves, for Krason, as the baseline for analyzing, both cognitively and normatively, subsequent social change in the civilization. The American democratic republic, as both envisioned and constructed by the Founding Fathers, is one where "the consent of the governed…is at the heart of the American political order, but its force is mitigated by the restraints of representative institutions, the rule of law, and social, cultural, and moral influences." The intent was one in which "the majority's will is not only not abusive…(and)…also that the common good of the political order will be promoted."

A democratic republic can be sustained by certain 1)

institutional arrangements, 2) democratic principles and practices, and 3) social conditions. Examples of the first are to be found in a system featuring a separation of powers, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and federalism. Examples of the second are popular sovereignty, a limitation of the franchise to those who demonstrate some permanent attachment to the nation, ordered liberty, political liberty, respect for private property, and the guarantee of various political and legal rights in the areas of speech, the press, religion, assembly, trial by jury, among others. Examples of the third include a vital presence of religion, education, family life, morality, respect for the law, respect for meritocratic achievement, and a general economic condition of at least moderate prosperity with a middle-class base.

Overall, regarding his evaluation of the Founding period of the American democratic republic, Krason concludes that "it is difficult to say that its principles and ideas for the structuring of a free government were anything but magnificent and had reverberating effects for the entire world over time. It is also difficult to say that the convictions and practices of its culture were, on balance, anything but exemplary in matters of social morality, community, and personal and interpersonal norms."

However, the author by no means views the original vision and reality of the Republic as flawless. Krason is "aware of the shortcomings of that era and like any period and place in human history, it had them, and one of the most evident ones was the existence of slavery." Furthermore, he notes some limitations of the Founding Protestant and Enlightenment vision that contributed to unfavorable political and cultural changes further down the path of American history. Included as a secondary concern in the author's analysis is that the Founding Protestant and Enlightenment influences could profitably incorporate certain features and emphases of the Catholic heritage as correctives.

One would be a philosophically articulate natural law based public philosophy to support the maintenance of the original American political-institutional arrangements that together comprise the American democratic republic. Another involves a more positive, as compared to constraining, vision of government as an agent to promote the common good. A third entails a more spiritual and less commercial understanding as ultimately definitive of the American experiment. A fourth, following the principle of subsidiarity, would be a greater attention to the development of intermediary institutions in the civil sphere as a check to developments in the American polity. A fifth would involve some provision for an informal consideration of the corpus of Catholic magisterial thought; it doesn't surprise Krason that, given this absence, a secularized Supreme Court would emerge as the ultimate arbiter of social morality in America.

Krason's analysis admits of changes in each era, both positive and deleterious. The engines for that change include, among others, "political, constitutional, and legal developments; economic and technological developments; the role of government and relations among the three branches of the federal government and between the federal government and the states; popular movements; socio-cultural (including religious) developments; demographic developments and relations among social groups; war, foreign affairs, and territorial expansion ; and philosophical perspectives and currents in socio-political thought."

Basically he argues that the most significant transformation away from the basically positive vision of the Founding Era occurred during the periods of 1817-1840; 1877-1920; 1920-1945, and, especially during the 1960s-1970s. A not insignificant (but woefully inadequate) sliver of the author's overall and impressive argument is that Jacksonian democracy eventually weakened the republican character of America with the latter's focus on a "natural aristocracy" promoting

societal welfare. This was followed by the corruption and excesses of democracy fueled by a philosophy of materialism and scientism which arose during the Progressive Era. This, in turn, set the stage for a decisive change in American society starting in the 1930s but sharply accelerating in the 1960s with the growth of a central administrative state.

The contemporary period, in many respects, for the author, has institutionalized even further the degenerative movements of the 1960s-1970s while at the same time evincing signs of an attempt to reverse the historical damage inflicted upon the democratic republic. One nascent indication of the latter, for the author, is the contemporary Tea Party movement, which bears watching regarding its long-term development and impact. Krason is aware that the degeneration of American political and cultural life took many decades to develop and, as such, any solutions are necessarily partial and equally as long term.

For Krason, these piecemeal but very doable solutions involve the strengthening of individual character and moral development with a greater involvement of an educated citizenry into the affairs of everyday political, civil, and religious life. Krason understands well that a healthy civilization requires a citizenry capable of making prudent and courageous decisions aimed at the common good. A just and well-functioning political system presupposes a healthy culture that undergirds it.

Krason admits that “the evidence mustered and the argument made is clear and troubling and all concerned about the American Founding, Our Constitution, and the future course of our political life should examine and ponder it.” However, he concludes with the conviction that “it is not inevitable that it remain in its current condition and that the possibility of restoration is foreclosed.” The recently emerged Tea Party is but one example of what sociologists would call a “revitalization movement” trying to right the American ship.

The question remains as to whether this and other possible attempts are “too little and too late” for the civilization to escape a “fall and decline” scenario and whether the citizenry still has enough moral and cultural character to sufficiently reform the civilization and, perhaps even further, redress any foundational deficiencies.

In *The Transformation of the American Democratic Republic*, Krason demonstrates a masterly command of the facts of American history and of many complementary academic disciplines used to interpret that empirical reality. Like the good Catholic and natural law scholar that he is, his approach is synthetic and integrative, including, and alternating between, both normative and cognitive analysis. While the volume is thoroughly interspersed with his prudential judgments, the author doesn’t confuse his own value orientation or interpretation with historical reality; Krason is a scholar not an ideologue. His accounting of American history is presented as objectively as humanly possible and the educated reader can easily disentangle interpretation from the mere facts of the matter.

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BOGUS CHARGES AGAINST PRIESTS ABOUND

Rev. Michael P. Orsi

Catholic Priests Falsely Accused: The Facts, The Fraud, The

***Stories* by David F. Pierre, Jr., Mattapoisett, Massachusetts: www.TheMediaReport.com**

David Pierre is one of the country's leading observers of the Catholic Church abuse narrative. In *Catholic Priests Falsely Accused: The Facts, the Fraud, the Stories*, he presents case studies backed by hard data which clearly demonstrates some of the injustices foisted on Catholic priests and the Church.

The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) is identified by Pierre as a major culprit in advancing the destruction of innocent priests. He outlines the methods used by the group to manipulate clergy abuse charges and how they play the media. The organization, he says, provides talking points and staging tips for accusers and their attorneys at the workshops they hold at their yearly conference. SNAP's tactics, he says, have grossly exaggerated the clergy abuse problem in the Church. He contends, that with data garnered by expert crime investigators, it is not unreasonable for an observer to deduce that "approximately *one third*" of all accusations against Catholic priests are entirely false or greatly exaggerated.

It is important for Church officials to challenge and, if need be, litigate every accusation. The results of these investigations should be publicized. And, if the allegations prove to be false, the name of the accuser, if an adult, should be made public. Not to do so lets the lies live on and continue to undermine the Body of Christ. "According to a sworn declaration submitted to the Los Angeles County Superior Court in November of 2010," Pierre writes, "attorney Donald Steier claimed, 'One retired F.B.I. agent who worked with me to investigate many claims in the Clergy Cases told me, in his opinion, about ONE-Half of the claims made in the Clergy Cases were either entirely false [or] greatly exaggerated.'"

Other culprits identified by Pierre adding to the abuse frenzy are plaintiffs' attorneys and Church insurance carriers.

Attorney fees, which are usually up to forty percent on a settlement have made pursuing allegations, even false ones, very lucrative for this new breed of ambulance chasers. These attorneys realize that many claims will be settled out of court because insurers and the Church would rather pay out "large scale blanket settlements" than go to trial where litigation costs will be exorbitant. They also fear losing a case due to a jury prejudiced against the Church or sympathetic to those claiming victim status. This may, in fact, incur greater putative and compensatory damages.

Dubious claims of the widely discredited psychological theory of "repressed memories," have been used to put priests at a significant disadvantage in obtaining justice. In these cases, individuals claim that a priest molested them years earlier and assert that they repressed the memory due to the trauma. The alleged incident is often recalled, Pierre says, "through the suggestive questioning of an unprincipled therapist and, often under hypnosis." Naturally, hypnosis leaves people open to the power of suggestion. Many experts believe that repressed memory is simply bogus. Dr. James McGaugh, from the University of California, Irvine, an expert in the area of memory, states, "I do not believe there is such a thing as a repressed memory… And there's absolutely no proof that it can happen. Zero. None. Niente." Dr. Richard J. McNally, Director of Clinical Training in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University claims, repressed memory therapy is "the worst catastrophe to befall the mental health field since the lobotomy era."

Regarding Diocesan Review Boards, Pierre says, "they are very often composed of individuals who have profound sympathy for victims of abuse. These panels consist of child welfare advocates, social workers, therapists, child psychologists," as well as "individuals who were actual victims of clergy abuse." Perhaps this is why these boards tend to be less than sympathetic to accused priests. Another reason for these

review boards' bias may be the "credible" evidence standard that they use when determining whether a priest should be put on Administrative Leave. "When an accuser comes forward to allege abuse from decades earlier," Pierre writes, "one can deem the accusation 'credible' simply because the accuser can show that he or she lived at a given time in the same general geographical area of a priest."

Media bias needs to be met with the facts. For example, Pierre says, a book by Marci A. Hamilton—a professor at the Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, in New York City—entitled, *Justice Denied: What America Must do to Protect Its Children* (2008), excoriates the Catholic Church for its handling of the abuse crisis and accuses the Catholic leaders of orchestrating the sexual abuse of children. Yet, according to legal experts, the book contains "a number of outright falsehoods and misleading passages." For instance, when attorney L. Martin Nussbaum and his wife, Melissa, reviewed Hamilton's book for *First Things* in an article entitled, "MarciWorld" they noted that "Hamilton claimed, that in some states, a child abused at age seven would have only until the age of nine to sue the abuser. That is simply false in all 50 states and the District of Columbia."

Pierre notes that, "Hamilton has represented SNAP and has done extensive legal work for the organization." She is also, according to Pierre, closely associated with the Philadelphia district Attorney's Office, which Pierre shows to have a particular animus toward the Church. He says, "the Philadelphia D.A.'s Office has not targeted any other organization for its past abuses with the same prosecutorial zeal." Pierre then cites statistics that show public school teachers have a much higher rate of abuse than Catholic priests. Yet, they have escaped the same kind of scrutiny by Hamilton.

Hamilton is a strong advocate of dropping the "statute of limitations" for private institutions under the auspice of

“protecting children.” However, Pierre claims, “Hamilton has made it her crusade to lobby state legislatures to remove the statute of limitations in order to inflict maximum financial and institutional damage to the Catholic Church.” Alarmingly, Pierre points out that, “public schools have a special immunity from being sued.” As a government entity, they are shielded by the doctrine of “sovereign immunity,” which only allows an accuser a limited window to make an accusation and limits lawsuit damages, making claims less profitable for attorneys and their clients.

It is important, Pierre believes, to aggressively market the fact that the Catholic Church now has the safest environment in the world for protecting children. Data collected from The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) indicates allegations of abuse of minors to be on average less than 10 per year since 2005 nationwide. The Church’s safeguards and accomplishments need to be widely disseminated by Her authorities and related organizations.

The most troublesome accusations are those leveled against dead priests. Pierre reports that, according to CARA, 43% of all priests accused of abuse in 2010 were deceased. How can the dead defend themselves? The simple solution in many cases for a diocese is to simply pay out. And, unfortunately in some dioceses, the deceased priest’s name is added to a diocesan website listing him as a pedophile or accused of being one. The intangible losses in doing this far exceed the monetary costs. The ruination of a priest’s reputation along with the sorrow that it causes to his family and those whom he had served who have fond memories of him— giving them their First Holy Communion, presiding over their marriage, or offering them advice and consolation in times of need— is a source of great discouragement among the faithful.

There is an old cliché, “the best defense is a good offense.” Church officials have been too reluctant to expose the lies about priests, the obvious anti-Catholic bias in the media,

the greed and the anti-Catholicism of some in public office which feeds the abuse crisis. This has caused a decline in clergy morale and vocations to the priesthood. Large monetary settlements have hindered Catholic evangelization and charitable work and have led to the bankruptcy of some dioceses. But, worst of all, it has also caused a loss of confidence by many Catholics in the institutional Church.

A sure way to ameliorate the injustices perpetrated against priests and to rehabilitate the reputation of the Church would be to re-examine the cases of those priests found guilty due to false or dubious abuse claims filed against them. The widely reported case of Fr. Gordon MacRae, of the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire, would be a good place to start. Pierre outlines it in his book. It is quite obvious that Fr. MacRae did not receive a fair trial according to the facts cited in a piece published in *The Wall Street Journal*. MacRae's accuser, a fifteen year old boy, had a lengthy juvenile record and presented doubtful evidence in trial testimony. The judge even went so far as to order the jury to "disregard inconsistencies in Mr. Grover's (his accuser) testimony." Father MacRae, protesting his innocence, refused a plea bargain deal of two years in prison. Now he is serving a 67 year sentence. His own, now retired, bishop believes him to be innocent. What a moral boost this would be for the nation's priests and for the Catholic laity if the Church in New Hampshire began a petition drive to have this case reopened!

In a chapter entitled, "Kathy Told a Story," Pierre chronicles the tale of an Irish woman, Kathy O'Beirne, who wrote of the abuse she sustained at one of Ireland's institutions that cared for young women, the Magdalene Home. She reports being severely abused by nuns and having been raped by a priest. "Her chronicle," says Pierre, "enthralled readers." It received rave reviews and achieved bestseller status. Except, the woman's siblings claim "Our sister was not in the Magdalene Home… Our sister has a self-admitted psychiatric and

criminal history, and her perception of reality has always been flawed." A further investigation revealed Kathy's book to be a fraud. Nevertheless, this book continues to secure five star reviews in Amazon.com's U.K. site and has respectable sales in England and Ireland.

If the late Paul Harvey were able to comment on this book, he would have certainly said, "And now the rest of the story." This book is concise, easy to read, filled with verifiable data, and points out the problems with both the ecclesiastical and civil responses to the clergy abuse crisis.

Father Orsi is Chaplain and Research Fellow in Law and Religion at Ave Maria School of Law.

DISCERNING THE LAY VOCATION

Deacon Keith Fournier

Living the Call: An Introduction to the Lay Vocation by Michael Novak and William Simon, Jr., Encounter Books.

Blessed John Paul II used the parable of the workers in the vineyard as the framework within which to address the nature of a lay vocation. "The gospel parable sets before our eyes the Lord's vast vineyard and the multitude of persons," he wrote, "both women and men, who are called and sent forth by him to labor in it." He was speaking of Matthew (13:38): "The vineyard is the whole world."

The Holy Father made clear that "A new state of affairs today, both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful. If lack of commitment is always

unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so. It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle."

Over many years, and through seasons of service, the conviction that we are all called into the vineyard has directed my life choices. In 1996, I discerned a call to say "yes" to an invitation of the Lord. On the Feast of the Body and Blood of the Lord, I was called to Holy Orders as a Catholic Deacon. Deacons are a bridge from the lay faithful in the world to the rest of the hierarchy (Bishops and Priests) and from the hierarchy to the lay faithful. We have a special role in assisting the lay faithful to both understand and live out their own vocation.

For years I have searched for material which helps lay Catholics come to understand the dignity and implications of their vocation. So, when my friend Bill Donohue asked me to review a book entitled, *Living the Call: An Introduction to the Lay Vocation,* written by Michael Novak and William E. Simon Jr., I assented.

I am glad I did. I have finally found the book for which I have been searching all these years. I have not stopped recommending it since. It is a must read for every Catholic.

After inspiring introductions from the two lay authors, the first half of the book introduces the reader to the lay vocation. It does so through a solid explanation of its theological ground. However, and even more importantly, we are then introduced to nine lay men and women who live out the vocation sacrificially. These real life stories put legs on the theology by giving us a glimpse into the various portions of the vineyard in which the lay vocation is lived.

In education we meet Elias Josue who teaches at St. Rose in Denver and shows us that "Catholic schools are the way we bring people into the Church." Then, former Principal Mary Baier shows us that Catholic education is "not a job; it's a

ministry.” Finally, we meet one of my personal heroes, Peter Flanigan, the champion of the school choice movement, who understands and lives the teaching of the Church on solidarity.

In parish life we meet Cambria Smith, a parish life director; Mike Witka, who turned “an avocation into a vocation” overseeing business affairs and personnel; and Kathelle Kichline, a Pastoral Associate. Each offers a compelling story of faith and response. However, in this section, the distinction between the ministerial priesthood, and the priesthood of the faithful, was not as clearly explained as I wish it had been.

Next we are introduced to the array of lay ministries flourishing in the Catholic Church. We meet a lay Jesuit volunteer, Nicholas Collura, who recognizes Christ in the needy. Next, Marcie Moran, whose ministry to the dying and the grieving and work in marriage preparation and counseling is heartfelt. Finally, Ansel Augustine, whose vibrant vision of youth ministry provides a window into one of the most important parts of the growing lay involvement in the ministry of the Church.

However, the second part of the book, entitled “The Search Within,” does more than put legs on the lay vocation: it uncovers the heart of every Christian vocation, a deep interior life. One of my favorite theologians of the early Church, a monk named Evagrius of Pontus, once wrote that a theologian is one who rests his head on the breast of Christ. The image evokes the beloved disciple John.

It points to the common element in the stories told in the first half of the book. Each of the men and women we met has a deep, abiding and personal relationship with the Lord. That relationship comes from living in the Lord by living in the communion of the Church which is His Body.

The first part of the second half of the book provides one of the most beautiful expositions on the interior life I have read. Using short quotes from great classics in the Catholic Tradition, the authors open the reader to further pursuit by increasing our thirst for more. The material increases the spiritual hunger at the core of contemplation.

It offers a lay spirituality rooted in love, nourished by the Eucharist, sustained by spiritual reading, kept alive by intimate prayer and sustained by the Sacraments and the Word of God. I sincerely encourage the authors to expand the material in this half of the book into another complete book.

If they were to choose do so, it could become a classic for generations to come. Their explanation of the Incarnation and the nature of the Church was exquisite. This kind of theology, faithful as well as accessible, is desperately needed in this hour.

The second part of the second half discusses oblates and associations. However, it does not mention the ecclesial movements which have sprung up in the Church since the Council and have been praised by recent Popes. They provide a base of support for many lay men and women who live the message of this book, the universal call to holiness and the missionary calling of every Baptized Christian.

Chapter nine provides a summary of the single life and marriage through the lens of vocation. The exposition of married life is one of the finest summaries of what is referred to in shorthand as the “theology of the body” which I have read. Blessed John Paul II preferred that his body of expository writing in this area be called “Human Love in the Divine Plan,” and the author’s insights show why that is a much more apropos shorthand title.

The last two chapters, “Teach all Nations,” and “To Rebuild all Things in Christ,” were the only unsatisfying part of this

otherwise wonderful book. I say unsatisfying because they were simply too short. I am convinced the authors could write Volume Two of *Living the Call* in which they explain—through examples and accessible teaching—how lay men and women play a vital role in the ongoing teaching and social justice work of the whole Church. I hope they do just that.

Deacon Keith Fournier is the editor of Catholic Online and serves on the Catholic League's board of advisors. A constitutional lawyer, he was appointed the first executive director of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), a public interest law firm founded by Rev. Pat Robertson. Fournier is currently pursuing a doctorate at the Catholic University of America.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE RECONSIDERED

Church, State, and Original Intent by Donald L. Drakeman. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Donald L. Drakeman's *Church, State, and Original Intent* is certainly one of the most exhaustive studies of the First Amendment's establishment clause in print. Drakeman is well qualified to undertake this study. He is a prominent church-state attorney, lecturer in Princeton University's Department of Politics, and Chairman of the Advisory Council of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton (which is headed by the eminent Catholic scholar Robert P. George). The book joins the substantial amount of scholarly literature of the last several decades showing that the U.S. Supreme Court's strict separationist interpretation

of the establishment clause is a gross historical error. Unlike much of that critical writing, however, it convincingly argues that we cannot reasonably turn to the original intent of the Founding Fathers and the framers of the First Amendment and their era to discern the clause's meaning because they did not make it clear and, in fact, did not even devote a lot of discussion to it. All that we can say conclusively is that they understood that it forbade Congress's establishing of a national church.

He says that the historical evidence does not even justify the conclusion that the establishment clause mandated religious nonpreferentialism—i.e., that if government aided one religious sect it would have to be willing to aid others as well—and there was certainly no effort by the federal government in this regard "to be inclusive of other religions [besides Protestantism] or of the nonreligious." Similarly, "there is no reason to believe that anyone imagined" the establishment clause "would ever affect church-state relations in the various states," some of which still had established churches at the time of its enactment. By the same token, unlike what some critics of the Court in recent years have said, there is also no evidence that the clause was actually *intended* to protect those state establishments (what has been called the "enhanced federalism" interpretation of the clause). Indeed, the term "religious establishment" was probably used in multiple ways at the time the First Amendment went into force—although none of them pertained to the necessity of a strictly secular state as advocated by contemporary separationists.

Drakeman affirms that there is certainly no question at all that the enactment of the First Amendment signaled that the American people of that time had changed their view—so well expressed in President George Washington's Farewell Address—that religion and morality were crucial for good government.

If all one can say about the intended constraints of the establishment clause was that it precluded a national church—that it did not even mandate nonpreferentialism—it makes the Court's post-World War II embracing of strict separationism appear even more preposterous than previous critics thought.

Drakeman catalogues, as other writers have, the ways in which government in the U.S.—at all levels—for much of our history gave aid to religion. If government was supposed to be neutral as between belief and unbelief—which the Supreme Court has said is constitutionally mandated—it certainly did not act that way. In fact, Drakeman says, until the late 1940s there was not a single instance where the establishment clause was invoked to stop the federal government—to say nothing of the states—from getting involved in the realm of religion. He makes the astute observation that such forays were typically seen as satisfying government needs in some way, as when it financially supported Christian missions to Indian tribes in the hopes that it would stop the wars with them that were costly to carry out. Even where arguments were made against government aiding religion—as in the century-long controversy about U.S. Mail delivery on Sundays—it was not on constitutional grounds, but due to clashing views among different Christian denominations about the proper relationship between church and state and whether state involvement would hurt religion. The concern in these debates, then, was what stance of government would best insure that religion would thrive. This underscored how much earlier America was a Christian culture.

So, while Drakeman says that the contemporary division of separationists and nonpreferentialists was foreshadowed in these earlier debates these initial separationist claims were not at all grounded in a secular perspective until the short-lived secularist National Liberal Party in the late 19th century. That was the time when the first stirrings of

secularism in the American public arena were seen.

Drakeman contends that an increasingly secular, liberal intelligentsia was the force behind the Supreme Court's post-World War II jurisprudence that constitutionally mandated a secular state. This was first seen with the Court's uncritical acceptance of the historical writing about the First Amendment. The groundwork was laid in the late nineteenth century when in the Mormon polygamy case (*Reynolds v. U.S.*) it was influenced by Harvard's George Bancroft, who also gained prominence as a Secretary of the Navy and diplomat, to believe that Thomas Jefferson was the key source to turn to on American church-state relations. Later, when deciding the 1947 *Everson v. Board of Education* case and inaugurating its new strict separationist jurisprudence, the Court's thinking was shaped by journalist Irving Brant's noted multi-volume biography of James Madison. Brant characterized Madison as a strict separationist and the ultimate authority on the meaning of the First Amendment religion clauses. As a result, the Court came to view Jefferson and Madison as the only sources to turn to in understanding the establishment clause and paid attention only to the side of them that suggested they were separationists.

In fairness, Drakeman says that the Court looked to the only historical writing—even though there were reasons to question its objectivity—that then existed about the establishment clause in coming to its conclusion. The Court did not have at its disposal the later writing that gave a far different picture of both the meaning of establishment, the validity of relying just on Jefferson and Madison, and the mixed and complex views and actions of these two Founders about church-state relations.

Lest one be too indulgent of the Court, however, Drakeman also argues that it allowed itself to be influenced by the general church-state outlook of liberal post-World War II intellectuals. They saw a secular state as an imperative for

freedom and were driven by a fear of the Catholic Church, which they saw as antagonistic to the democratic way of life. (I give an even more precise focus to this in one chapter of my book, *The Public Order and the Sacred Order*, where I suggested that the influence of the organized secularist humanist movement is seen in many of the Court's establishment clause opinions from the 1940s until the 1980s.) Drakeman also notes how predisposed certain of the justices on the Court were to believing the claim that the Church was a threat. He discusses the well-known anti-Catholic Church attitudes of Justice Hugo Black, who authored the Everson opinion. He also mentions how Justice Wiley Rutledge, who also figured prominently in the Everson case, grew up in a strikingly anti-Catholic family in the mid-South.

It should not be surprising that anti-Catholicism was likely an element in the background of the Court's new establishment clause jurisprudence. Drakeman notes that many of the post-Civil War American church-state controversies were Catholic-Protestant struggles or were motivated by concerns about checking the supposed enhancement of Catholic power (he could have added the pre-Civil War conflicts as well, such as the New York Public School Controversy and Kensington Riots in Philadelphia in the 1840s). In sum, Drakeman contends that "much of the modern doctrine of separation of church and state grew out of Protestant-Catholic conflict."

He also discusses the unsuccessful effort in the 1870s to enact the separationist-oriented Blaine Amendment to the Constitution as a prominent part of this. The very attempt to do this was further evidence of the falsity of the claim that the First Amendment mandated a strict separationism.

Church, State, and Original Intent is not the kind of book most people would pick up for bedtime reading or a relaxing Sunday afternoon. It is a scholarly book, chock full of carefully researched facts, arguments, and conclusions. Like many other critiques of the Court's establishment clause

jurisprudence over the last sixty years, it contains much valuable historical information and is a very good reference source on this topic. It makes an important contribution by focusing squarely on the problem of making the "original intent" of the framers of the clause the grounds to determine what it means and how we should understand it. While it is clear that the Court and the separationists have had it wrong, this book makes it doubtful that continuing to pursue original intent is a worthwhile way to deal with establishment questions. Drakeman's failure to explicitly provide any other approach for courts to use in these matters seems to be a troubling omission. His argument perhaps suggests that it does not make any difference, however. His emphasizing that church-state questions were dealt with by the political branches and not even considered by courts for most of our history—and were not even viewed as constitutional issues—perhaps implicitly points to his alternative approach. The kinds of issues that the Court has wrestled with since its entry into this thicket in the post-World War II era literally cry out for compromise and accommodation.

The rigidity, unreasonableness, and even unreality of the strict separation doctrine have created constitutional turmoil. It is a prime example of how our "Platonic guardians" on the High Court have tried to remove from the realm of politics an essentially political problem. An assumption motivating them has been that any governmental support for religion inevitably breeds divisiveness. So, they have taken it upon themselves to fashion a secular state—a "naked public square," to use the term of the late Fr. Richard Neuhaus—and have created divisiveness anyway. Moreover, they have tried to justify themselves by promulgating the fantasy that the establishment clause requires it. One wonders how long the Court will keep up the charade.

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RECONSIDERING THE DALLAS CHARTER

Fr. Michael P. Orsi

The following recounts what happened to an innocent priest from New Jersey in the wake of the bishops' conference that took place in 2002. Just a few months after it was exposed that the Boston Archdiocese was deeply involved in a cover-up of priestly sexual abuse, the bishops assembled in Dallas. The June meeting was held in a hostile environment: calls for quick and lasting reforms were made from many quarters, and the media had a field day with it. While much good came out of the meeting, it is clear now that on some very important matters, there was a rush to judgment. Nothing was more hastily considered than the due process rights of accused priests. One of those victims was Msgr. Bill McCarthy.

Justice demands that the guilty pay, but it also demands that the innocent not suffer. On June 15-18, the bishops will meet in Seattle, and one of the items they are expected to address is the issue of accused priests and fairness in dealing with them. It is only fitting that the documented case of Msgr. McCarthy be given due consideration. Sadly, he is not alone.

Bill Donohue

Monsignor William McCarthy is a retired priest from the Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey. After a stellar, four-decade pastoral career, he is a priest in good standing. However, for almost five years he wasn't. In *The Conspiracy: An Innocent*

Priest, A True Story, McCarthy recounts the ordeal that resulted from a false accusation that he abused two young girls.

A 2003 complaint—made anonymously some 23 years after the incidents were alleged to have occurred—subjected McCarthy to the provisions of the *Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, enacted by the United States bishops in 2002 to address the highly publicized and damaging reports of child abuse. He is straightforward in his negative assessment of this draconian measure. He also criticizes the ineptitude of some bishops, the unchecked bureaucracy of diocesan chancery offices, the vendettas carried on by some of the laity against priests, the corruption of some law enforcement officers, and the arduous process and long wait faced by priests seeking justice from the Church.hop to laicize him immediately. Instead, the future pope ordered a canonical trial at which McCarthy was completely exonerated.

Some of the situations addressed in this book are chilling. About the vindictive nature of some people who have a gripe (real or imagined) against a priest, McCarthy writes:

“Leaders of even simple ordinary positions such as pastors of local churches are not without their adversaries who will go to any extent to hurt them. During the ‘pedophile’ eruption in the USA, the media was inundated with countless accusations of priests. People were bombarded with this phenomena, it was in the ‘air’ as it were. Consequently, anyone with a grudge against a priest was motivated to seize the opportunity to make a hit.”

The motive of an accuser (or a purported witness) should be thoroughly investigated as part of the inquiry process whenever an allegation arises. Yet, this is rarely considered a top priority. Instead, ever since the Boston debacle caused by Cardinal Bernard Law’s mismanagement put the issue of recidivist abusers in the nation’s headlines, accused priests

are automatically presumed guilty by their bishops, with very little scrutiny of those making the accusations.

The judgment of guilt is generally affirmed in the court of public opinion, since the priest has already been removed from his ministry. Out-of-court payoffs to plaintiffs, which have become a common practice, exacerbate the problem. People assume that the exchange of money automatically proves there was something wrong, creating a no-win situation even for a priest who is ultimately found to be innocent.

Therefore, unless incontrovertible evidence can be shown that abuse occurred, each case should be litigated aggressively by the priest's diocese (this is as true in the case of dead priests). The system, as it stands now, encourages false accusations, has led to bankruptcy in many dioceses, and left the Church, its bishops and priests more vulnerable than ever.

McCarthy paints a dreary portrait of his former bishop and chancery staff that is, unfortunately, all too common. Instead of an organization guided by Christian principle, we see a group of confused and desperate people whose behavior illustrates such key insights from business management as, "Personnel is policy," and "Like brings on like." Concerned only with self-protection, they are only too willing to throw a priest "under the bus." As McCarthy explains:

"In my case, my former bishop writes an official letter to the Pope demanding my immediate laicization, ex officio; this time not even a trial or personal discussion of any kind. No recourse of any sort was allowed me. No communication was possible—I was shunned by the diocese and my brother priests. My name erased from the official records. My life was essentially evaporated."

Infuriating as it may be, Canon Law enables bishops to act as little potentates in their dioceses. Inadequate bishops, fearful of public opinion, tend to isolate themselves from

those who think differently than they do, and confront issues in a dictatorial manner. Bishops who allowed known serial pedophiles to continue in the priesthood should have been removed. So too those who sacrificed innocent priests for expediency, hiding behind the non-binding *Dallas Charter*. But the Vatican has no mechanism for removing them (even for evaluating them), unless immoral behavior, heresy, or financial mismanagement can be proven. And so, many of them continue to exercise their office in good standing. No wonder the outrage!

It seems to be part of our psychological make-up to trust law enforcement personnel and think of them as good people. We also tend to believe that telling the truth will clear us of an allegation. McCarthy jarringly demonstrates that this trust is misplaced. He chronicles the emotional abuse suffered at the hands of a police detective, and discusses the use of such dubious investigative practices as a rigged lie detector test and proposing "suppressed memories" to alleged victims. He recounts the testimony given by a police detective at his canonical trial:

"Then [the detective] testified—the one who began this whole shamble. The one who convinced the girls that 'Father McCarthy molested you when you were children,' even though they denied having any memories whatsoever of such a thing happening. He invoked the technique prevalent in the seventies called 'suppressed memory.' He had said to them, 'You don't remember it because it was so painful and awful that you just buried it…but he did molest you.' After several intense barrages at them, they allowed themselves to become convinced those awful things actually happened to them."

McCarthy rightly advises any priest facing a sexual abuse charge to get a civil and canon lawyer before answering any questions, either from the bishop or from the police—especially the police. He notes how the conviction of an abusive priest is viewed as a feather in a police officer's

cap—career-wise.

So much is said about abuse victims—and rightly so—but little is said about the priests falsely accused, either those living or those who have died. Least discussed of all is the truth that, in some cases, Satan is acting on the minds and imaginations of those people who lend themselves to the task of destroying an innocent priest. The Evil One knows that to cripple the priesthood is to strike at the heart of the Church. That's why every effort must be made to protect the innocent, for their good and for the good of the Body of Christ.

McCarthy shows his readers the entire process, civil and canonical, which he endured. His story is an invaluable education for those not familiar with the usual course of events involved in these cases. He says:

"Unquestionably there needs to be positive meaningful change to the ecclesiastical tribunal system. They have never been truly challenged. It is time for priests around the world to speak out for major reform. It needs to change so that innocent priests like me can get a fair shake—and I'm going to keep fighting until it is done. If I don't keep up the struggle, my life's work will be in vain."

McCarthy acknowledges the importance of his lay friends and brother priests who supported him during his long ordeal. They were, he says, essential to his survival. He praises his new bishop for treating him with dignity and respect, and reports a reconciliation with his now-retired bishop and the Vicar-General who processed the case against him. McCarthy says he has forgiven all those involved in his crucifixion but, he says, he will never forget. Nor will anyone who reads McCarthy's account.

The Conspiracy is a combination diary, spiritual journal, and exercise in self-analysis, and it includes a bibliography of

other books McCarthy found helpful during his ordeal. It is self-published, and so doesn't have all the polish of a work edited and produced by a major publishing house. In a sense, that enhances its effectiveness. This is a raw account of one man's ordeal, capturing both the torment inflicted on an innocent priest and the joy of his vindication.

Despite the successful outcome of his case, the physical and psychological wounds McCarthy sustained have left permanent scars. Yet the depth of spiritual growth which he reports has enabled him to identify with the innocently crucified Lord. Perhaps that's the most important point the book makes.

This story should be read by every priest and every lay person, because the priest scandal is a sad episode in the history of the Church which effects everyone. McCarthy has performed an invaluable service by giving us his story in the form of an insightful memoir. His account puts the sensationalism surrounding the crisis in a different light, bringing into focus those priests who are being abused by an unjust system. And he offers words of hope to any of his fellows who may be experiencing the pain he endured:

"Finally, may I dare say, if there is one message I want to leave from this journal, it is if there is a priest out there who is falsely accused, I want you to know, that you are not alone, and with perseverance and hopefully with patient endurance, you can make it to the other side of darkness."

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“IT’S WHAT WE DO”

Bill Donohue

People often ask me how I got started with the Catholic League. That’s easy: it was due in large measure to Bishop Donald Wuerl, now Donald Cardinal Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington. When I was a professor at a local college in Pittsburgh, I knew him as my bishop, and he got to know me (so I assume) through my periodic columns in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the local newspaper.

In the early 1990s, Bishop Wuerl invited many prominent Catholics to meet with him at a club in downtown Pittsburgh, and to my surprise, I was included. I was even more surprised when I got there: a priest approached me and asked if I would join the bishop at his table. Why, I had no idea.

Prior to sitting down, I was cornered by the president of the Catholic League, a man of Indian descent. He asked if I would be interested in becoming the league’s new director of communications; the headquarters had moved from Milwaukee, home of the founder, Father Virgil Blum, to Bala Cynwyd, a suburb of Philadelphia, and they were planning a move to New York City. As a native New Yorker, this appealed to me. The Catholic League president had seen me on CNN’s “Crossfire” and thought I would be the right man for the job. Then I sat down to join the bishop.

No sooner had the meal begun when Bishop Wuerl said, “Bill, I would like you to start a new chapter of the Catholic League in Pittsburgh.” (He had no idea of my conversation with the president of the organization.) When he made the offer, he had a soup spoon in his hand, awaiting my reply. The problem was there were two Bill Donohues at the same table (the other Bill, whose surname is Donahue, hails from a great Catholic family in Pittsburgh). With Bishop Wuerl still holding his

spoon, I looked at the other Bill. But he just stared at me. Then I realized that everyone was staring at me. So I said, “Sure, I like to fight.” The bishop nodded approvingly.

As it turned out, the job as communications director was never tendered, and the contact I had had with the president was dismaying. Indeed, my experience with the Catholic League was so negative that I told Bishop Wuerl I wanted nothing to do with it. But I did pledge to start a national rival, operating out of Pittsburgh. Once Father Philip Eichner, the newly appointed chairman of the board of directors of the Catholic League got wind of that, he asked if I would consider applying for the opening as the new president of the Catholic League, which had just moved to New York. So that’s how it happened.

This is a long way of broaching my review of a new book, *The Mass: The Glory, the Mystery, The Tradition*. But it is only fitting as the book is the work of Cardinal Wuerl and Mike Aquilina. They have worked together for many years; Wuerl is a native of Pittsburgh and Aquilina still lives nearby. Mike is a wonderful person, an accomplished author and one of the Church’s most gifted laymen. Cardinal Wuerl is an expert on the Catechism, chancellor of the Catholic University of America and chairman of the board of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. He is a Catholic treasure.

In one sense, practicing Catholics may think they don’t need an introduction to the Mass. After all, as the authors say, going to Mass “is what we do.” Unfortunately, many practicing Catholics are so used to going to Mass that they treat it as a common exercise, much like getting dressed in the morning. Familiarity, in other words, can breed complacency, even indifference. What this book does, in effect, is throw water in our faces. Short and succinct, it brings the Mass alive by walking us through the liturgy. It is perfect for this Lenten season.

The authors demonstrate, with great felicity, the historical bases of the Mass. The connection between the Old and New Testaments, and the development of the Mass as recounted by the early Church fathers, is explained in a readable and authoritative manner. There is something for everyone, from beginners to veterans, as well as for those who have fallen away but have not shut the door completely. Non-Catholics interested in knowing about the heart and soul of our religion will also find it useful. They may even be motivated to jump ship. I say this pointedly: the absence of a meaningful liturgy in most Protestant churches is glaring.

The origins of the Mass date to the Last Supper, when Jesus gave us the "Paschal Mystery" that marks His suffering, death and Resurrection. The name for the mystery stems from its beginning at Passover (*Pesach* in Hebrew and *Pascha* in Latin). Just as the ancient Jews celebrated their ritual meal, the *seder*, as a testament to their status as the chosen people, Jesus established the Last Supper as a way to celebrate the remembrance of our salvation. In the Passover, the Jews "passed over" from slavery to freedom as they exited Egypt. For Christians, we experience through Holy Communion the new life that receiving Jesus affords.

Wuerl and Aquilina proudly proclaim the Mass as "the greatest event in history, the greatest event imaginable." And that is the whole point of the book—to validate their extraordinary, yet entirely warranted, claim.

At one level, the Mass is quite simple. It requires three properties: a priest, unleavened wheat bread, and wine. That's it. But it is not the priest who changes the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ—it is the Holy Spirit. "Without the power of the Holy Spirit," they write, "the Mass would not be the Mass."

The Eucharist, Greek for "thanksgiving," has been the focal point of the Mass from the beginning. According to St. Justin

Martyr, within fifty years of the death of the last apostle it was celebrated among every race the world over. Moreover, the Mass as we understand it today was essentially the same at that time. This is not a matter of idle speculation. The authors offer an astonishing quote from Justin, written in the mid-second century, that describes in great detail the Mass as it was celebrated. The parallels with what we experience are striking.

There is nothing arbitrary about the Mass; everything has meaning. Historically rooted, we learn that the procession at the start of Mass symbolizes our collective pilgrimage, a journey on the road to heaven. The Sign of the Cross is a ritual summation of our central belief in the Trinity. Because the Church prizes forgiveness, we admit our faults early in the Mass. When we say, "I confess," we make a personal statement: we accept individual responsibility—it is through "my fault." Thus do we pave the way for forgiveness.

God gave us the Old Testament to make way for the New Testament, and that is why the first reading comes from the former collection, and the second from those parts of the latter that are not part of the Gospel, e.g, the Pauline letters. Then it is time to appreciate the readings from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

After the homily comes the Creed. It is, of course, the definitive statement of belief for Catholics. While the Creed is ancient in origin, it developed over the centuries, amidst challenges and heresies. "Every word was chosen carefully, tested, contested, debated, and only then confirmed," they write. And at great cost: "Christians shed their blood and died in defense of subtle shades of meaning in the words chosen for the creeds." We are now closing in on the first part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word.

The second half, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, begins with the presentation of gifts. It is time for prayers, most especially

the *Eucharistic Prayer*, described as an offering. “It is the ‘holy sacrifice’ of the Mass,” the authors proclaim. “It is true that there is only one sacrifice—the self-giving of Jesus on the cross at Calvary.” It is the story of the Last Supper that we memorialize.

We are now ready for the consecration, the most profound aspect of the Mass. Then comes the “Our Father,” a prayer given by Jesus to the apostles when they asked, “Lord, teach us to pray.” After the Sign of Peace and a statement of our unworthiness, we are ready for Holy Communion. Because this is the centerpiece of the Mass, it effectively ends our participation; this explains why the Mass ends so abruptly.

Wuerl and Aquilina understand that to experience the Mass is to appreciate our collective identity as Catholics. When we say the “Our Father,” for example, we “recognize that we have responsibilities to each other as members of the same family.” This expresses the communitarian side of our religion. But Catholicism does not neglect the individual: we are responsible for our sins, just as we are empowered to affect our salvation.

The communitarian aspect of our religion is an effective rebuttal to the popular refrain, “I’m not against religion, it’s just organized religion I disdain.” How utterly vacuous. Anything worth saving demands that it be institutionalized, otherwise it cannot survive. Isn’t that the purpose of a diary? Our collective ancestral diary is the Bible, and the instructions found in the New Testament. Not to act on them is to dismiss them.

Moreover, there is something powerful when Catholics pray collectively, acknowledging their duties to each other. Sure, we can pray at home, but just as we can watch a game on TV, there is something special about experiencing it live, with others. That is why there is no substitute for the Mass. There are some things in life we just cannot do alone. Indeed, it is

the height of hubris to think otherwise.

When I was a professor, I was the faculty adviser to the basketball and baseball teams, working hard to see to it that the players did not neglect their studies. It was very rewarding. One day, two games into the season, the captains of the baseball team came to see me. They were forlorn: the coach had quit and they had no one to take his place. I did not let them down. But I had no idea what I was in for. I quickly learned how much about the game I took for granted, and how much I really didn't know.

Reading *The Mass* did for me what being a coach did: just as I never watched a baseball game the same way again, my participation in the Mass will never be the same. Do yourself a favor and read it. It will prove to be more than refreshing, it will open your eyes to things that were right in front of you all along, but somehow failed to see. Remember, going to Mass "is what we do." Why not do it right?