

WELCOME, ARCHBISHOP DOLAN

The following is an excerpt from an article that Bill Donohue wrote for the op-ed page of the New York Daily News on April 17:

In the fall of 2007, I had an opportunity to work with Archbishop Dolan. The Miller Brewing Company, headquartered in Milwaukee, was a major sponsor of a vile anti-Catholic gay event in San Francisco, the Folsom Street Fair. Six weeks after the Catholic League orchestrated a major PR campaign against the company, and a boycott of Miller beer, we succeeded in extracting four apologies for four specific anti-Catholic incidents. The input that Milwaukee Archbishop Dolan offered—conveying a sense of Catholic outrage to Miller officials—was critical.

Dolan's tough skin will soon be tested again. Thanks to Gov. Paterson, New York is now considering a bill legalizing gay marriage. This has set in motion a collision course with people of many faiths, all but insuring a role for New York's archbishop.

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) is the most sweeping and radical piece of abortion-rights legislation ever written: it would repeal every abortion restriction put in place in all 50 states. Moreover, it arguably could force Catholic hospitals to perform abortions as a condition of receiving federal funds. In other words, it may result in the closing of Catholic hospitals. Rep. Jerry Nadler and Sen. Barbara Boxer have said they will reintroduce the bill, and President Obama has pledged to sign it.

New York State is currently considering two bills addressing the sexual abuse of minors. One would suspend the statute of limitations for one year so that those who were allegedly abused in a Catholic school a generation ago could now sue;

incredibly, this same bill would do nothing to undo the current protections scripted into law affecting the public schools (e.g., an abused student has 90 days to file a claim). Archbishop Dolan can be expected to support a bill by Assemblyman Vito Lopez that treats private and public schools equally.

No one expects the New York Archbishop to be the great moral elixir: he has many important tasks in front of him that have nothing to do with joining the culture war. But given the tenor of the times, and the kind of person he is, it is only natural that Archbishop Dolan will be called upon to act. He will need all the support he can get from lay Catholics.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART'S EASTER PRESENT

During Holy Week, New York City's Museum of Modern Art featured the film, "The Pope's Toilet." Filmed in Spanish with English subtitles, the movie revolves around a visit by Pope John Paul II to the poor town of Melo, Uruguay near the Brazilian border. Anticipating the arrival of the pope, townspeople become vendors hawking food and drinks. One of them decides to cash in on the food consumption and sets up a pay public restroom. The film is the work of two Uruguayans: writer Enrique Fernández and cinematographer César Charlone.

This movie wouldn't have caught our attention except for its venue and timing. The movie, which debuted two years ago, was deliberately shown during Holy Week and ended on Easter Monday. Also, it's not as if it was being shown at some run-down theatre, it was showcased at the Museum of Modern Art.

The *New York Times* said the film takes an “oblique dig at a church that, the movie suggests, may have failed its most disadvantaged followers.” When it was shown at a Toronto Film Festival, it was described as blending “the sacred and profane.” Which explains why V.A. Musetto of the *New York Post*—who has never found a Catholic-bashing flick he didn’t love—gave it three stars.

The person responsible for all of this is Laurence Kardish, senior curator in the Department of Film at the Museum of Modern Art. He didn’t choose this film without deliberation. Indeed, he admits to previewing “more films than there are hours in the year.” And “The Pope’s Toilet” beat out all competitors. We checked to see what Muslims were treated to at Ramadan and found that “Hollywood on the Hudson: Filmmaking in New York, 1920-39” was featured then. When Jews celebrated Yom Kippur, a movie about African patriarchy was shown, “Delwende.” Which makes his choice of “The Pope’s Toilet” at Eastertime take on greater meaning.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

Recently, there have been quite a few books published that may be of interest to Catholic League members. In many cases, the publishing house is not big and it is therefore easy to overlook them. That is why we decided to give the following books a push: all deserve more attention than they have received thus far.

The New Ecumenism: How the Catholic Church after Vatican II Took Over the Leadership of the World Ecumenical Movement by Kenneth D. Whitehead, published by St. Paul/Alba House:

Ken Whitehead is a prolific author and former Assistant

Secretary of Education under President Reagan; he is also a member of the Catholic League's board of directors.

Whitehead traces how Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have pioneered ecumenical relations with fellow Christians. Following the mandate from Vatican II to do exactly this, both popes have done more than most Catholics and Protestants realize in fostering Christian unity. Whitehead makes such encyclicals as *Ut Unum Sint* ("That They May Be One") and *Dominus Iesus* ("The Lord Jesus") accessible to the general reader, thus making his own contribution to evangelization.

Whitehead, a convert to Catholicism, is nothing if not orthodox: "This book starts with the basic premise that the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church—described in the Nicene Creed still professed by Catholics on Sundays and holy days and taught by the popes and the bishops in union with him—is the true Church of Christ, and that those who believe in Christ ought therefore to be part of this Church in fulfillment of Christ's prayers."

The Truth Will Set You Free: Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Death of Pope Pius XII by Sister Margherita Marchione, published by Paulist Press:

Sister Margherita has done it again—she has produced another excellent book on Pius XII. In this slim volume, she begins with an historical overview of the pope's confrontation with the Nazis, making a vigorous defense of his actions. She also addresses the cause for canonization, directly taking on the pope's most vociferous critics in the media. The book also contains a chapter on some newly discovered documents.

In his Foreword, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone writes, "How profoundly unjust it is to judge the work of Pius XII during the war with the veil of prejudice, forgetting not only the historical context but also the enormous work of charity that the pope promoted, opening the doors of seminaries and

religious institutes, welcoming refugees and persecuted people, helping all who were in need.”

Pope John Paul II: Confronting the Language Empowering the Culture of Death by William Brennan, published by Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University:

William Brennan is a professor at St. Louis University School of Social Service. He specializes in analyzing the linguistic terms that have historically been used to justify oppression. His previous work, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable: When Word Games Take Lives*, was favorably reviewed in *Catalyst* for charting the terms and rationales used by those who have enslaved or otherwise persecuted men and women who were summarily denied the status of a human being. In this volume, Brennan brings his keen eye to bear on those who are responsible for the culture of death.

What makes this book so special is Brennan’s examination of the powerful way in which Pope John Paul II dissected the language of the death merchants. The Holy Father saw right through the verbiage employed by those lawyers and doctors who made a career out of smoothing over the rough edges of the language of death. “What is needed,” the pope said, “is the courage to speak the truth clearly, candidly and boldly, but never with hatred or disrespect for persons.”

Brennan has a splendid chapter on the “Ideological Foundations of Verbal Duplicity” and another on “The Universal Appeal of John Paul II’s Message.”

Who Do You Say That I Am?—120 Questions and Answers About Jesus Christ by James J. Drummey, published by C.R. Publications:

Readers of the *Wanderer* know Jim Drummey as the Q&A man on Catholic issues, and readers of *Catalyst* may remember that we previously flagged his books, *Catholic Replies* and *Catholic Replies 2*; we use those two reference books a lot at the

Catholic League.

This time Drummey has set his sights on Jesus. He offers 120 questions about the life and teachings of Jesus, drawing on the Gospel accounts and other sources. His answers are authoritative, clear and concise. From questions like, "How do we know that Jesus is a real historical figure?," to "How do we to understand Jesus' statement about His coming to earth to spread not peace but division among families?," the reader gets a quick education in answers that are easy to digest. This is a book that practicing Catholics, as well as Catholics who have fallen away from the Church, will benefit from enormously.

Patrick Madrid gets it just right when he says that "In this book you will encounter a wide and illuminating array of scriptural truths about who Jesus Christ really is, the testimony of the early Church Fathers, the teachings of the popes and councils and saints over the centuries."

What Your Money Means (And How to Use it Well) by Frank J. Hanna, published by Crossroad:

In some Catholic circles, wealth is scorned and those who have made a lot of money are treated as if they were all greedy individuals. While obviously there are legions of affluent persons who fit this description, there are many who have used their fortunes responsibly. One such person is Frank Hanna, a Catholic entrepreneur and philanthropist.

Hanna has two parts to his intriguing book. The first part discusses such things as "How much is enough?" and "The fundamentals and non-essential wealth." The second part covers such issues as virtue, wealth creation and giving, what Hanna calls the "three vocations of those with money."

Hanna's style is light, yet informed. His book is a primer on the responsible use of money, complete with ten tips to donors on how to decide which causes to support. No wonder his book

has been endorsed by people like Ray Arroyo, Father Robert Sirico and Tom Monaghan—there is much to chew on and it is a great read.

Moments of Grace: Inspiring Stories From Well-Known Catholics by Al Kresta and Nick Thomm, published by Servant Books:

Al Kresta is president and CEO of Ave Maria Radio and a prolific author; Nick Thomm is the executive producer of Al's radio show. Their book contains short stories by more than two dozen Catholics in public life, all of whom share some personal experiences that are of interest to the Catholic community.

There is a striking interview with Norma McCorvey, the woman in the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision. She explains why she got involved in this case and how and why she eventually turned to God; she is now a Catholic.

Others who share some personal moments include Ralph Martin, Patrick Madrid, Russell Shaw, Bob Lockwood, Father Frank Pavone and Regis Martin; Bill Donohue has an entry as well. It's the kind of book anyone can pick up at any point and learn something they never knew before about some Catholics who have made their mark on our society. All of the contributions are inspiring, in one way or another.

The Seal: A Priest's Story by Timothy J. Mockaitis, published by Xlibris:

Lawyers have their clients, psychologists have their patients, journalists have their sources and priests have their penitents. Confidentiality is a crucial criterion to all of these working relationships, and that is why it is rarely compromised. But something happened in 1996 that threatened to change all that, at least with regard to the priest-penitent relationship.

When inmate Conan Wayne Hale in Lane County Jail in Eugene, Oregon, asked to see a priest, Father Timothy Mockaitis went to the jail as he often did to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Little did either man know that D.A. Doug Harclerod had obtained a court order to tape the confession.

Father Mockaitis offers in grand detail exactly what happened and why, providing an account that has historical, theological, legal and sociological ramifications. Some of what he endured is mind-boggling. When this occurred, the Catholic League conducted a major public relations campaign against Harclerod. At first the D.A. was obstinate, but eventually he apologized and pledged never to record a priest in the confessional again.

Francis Cardinal George wrote a Foreword to the book. Anyone who likes first-hand accounts of what it is like to be a priest in a hostile environment won't be able to put the book down. This was the first time the seal of confession was violated in a capital case in the U.S.

Book Orders

The New Ecumenism sells for \$19.95 and can be ordered by calling 800-343-2522.

The Truth Will Set You Free sells for \$16.95 and can be ordered by calling 1-800-218-1903.

Pope John Paul II sells for \$22.95 and can be ordered by calling 888-343-8607.

What Do You Say That I Am?—120 Questions and Answers About Jesus Christ sells for \$10.95 and can be ordered by calling 877-730-8877.

What Your Money Means (And How to Use it Well) sells for \$21.95 and can be ordered by calling 800-888-4741.

Moments of Grace sells for \$14.99 and can be ordered by

calling 800-488-0488.

The Seal sells for \$19.99 and can be ordered by calling 888-795-4274.

ENGAGING AN ALIEN WORLD

Kathryn Jean Lopez

***American Babylon: Notes of a Christian Exile* by Richard John Neuhaus (New York: Basic Books, 2009) To order call 1-800-343-4499 or order online at www.perseusbooksgroup.com**

In the late Father Richard John Neuhaus's *American Babylon*, the author cites his friend, the late Avery Cardinal Dulles, whose funeral at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fr. Neuhaus, suffering his last battle with cancer, barely made in December. The Dulles story was about the cardinal once speaking at a Catholic parish which had a huge banner outside that read "God Is Other People." Cardinal Dulles had wished he had a black marker because he very much wanted to add a comma after "Other."

Someone at that Catholic church was "mistaking the creature for the Creator," Fr. Neuhaus explains. God, for them, "is *useful* for achieving other purposes." (The good news is that even with more than a few bestselling atheist tracts, there is a lot of religiosity in the air. The bad news is it's not always all quite right.)

I don't know if that banner is still up there but I do know that these men of truth are now gone. They're not the only ones we've lost. And they won't be the only ones.

We're left without these wise men to call for advice,

whatever's going on in the news today. But, this is, of course, exactly what's supposed to happen. They weren't living to be in this world forever. They were living for Someone and somewhere else. With His truth.

That's what *American Babylon: Notes of a Christian Exile* is all about. It's an acknowledgement that we live in a flawed world. But it's a world to be actively engaged in, on our road to eternal salvation. We won't spend perpetuity here, but we have work here before we go.

Neuhaus belonged in this world for his 72 years, always with another destination in mind. (Friends tell how, in his last days, if he couldn't do much, praying the Office would be his priority; when a mutual friend told me he would wake up in the morning and read, among other things, *National Review Online*, another friend, a priest, quickly corrected my pride: Fr. Neuhaus's breviary was his beginning and end.) And it is fitting then that Fr. Neuhaus's parting work is written for those who belong; "for those who accept, and accept with gratitude, their creaturely existence within the scandal of particularity that is their place in a world far short of the best of all possible worlds. This world, for all its well-earned dissatisfactions, is worthy of our love and allegiance. It is a self-flattering conceit to think we deserve a better world. What's wrong with this one begins with us. And yet we are dissatisfied. Our restless discontent takes the form not of a complaint but of hope. There is a promise not yet fulfilled. One lives in discontented gratitude for the promise, which is to say one lives in hope."

That, of course, is a "hope" of another world, not that which we hear so much about in the political sphere.

American Babylon—and living with that hope—is about "a way of being in a world that is not yet the world for which we hope. This means exploring the possibilities and temptations one confronts as a citizen of a country that is prone to mistaking

itself for the destination. It means also a cultivated skepticism about the idea of historical progress, especially moral progress, when that idea defies or denies the limits of history upon which our humanity depends." It also means not moving into a ghetto. Engagement is a crucial ingredient in this world; "engagement with some of the more troublesome, and more interesting, citizens of this present Babylon."

At the same time, Neuhaus is an avowed fan of both his adopted country (he was born in Canada) and city (he confesses to "being something of a chauvinist about" New York City, something this New York native can appreciate!). "America," he says, "is the most successful political experiment in human history." It's "our homeland, and, as the prophet Jeremiah says, in its welfare is our welfare. America is also—and history testifies that this is too easily forgotten—a foreign country." The U.S. is "for better and worse, the place of our pilgrimage through time toward home." Just remember, "it is still for the time being."

So how do we live as Christian Americans, never forgetting while we're full citizens of one, we're aiming for another? For one, "through our tears, sing the songs of Zion in a foreign land." Because there will be tears.

Neuhaus warns: "We should at least be open to the possibility that we are today witnessing not moral progress but a dramatic moral regression. While, as we have seen, practitioners in the hard sciences express a new humility about the limits of their knowledge and control, many who work in the field of ethical theory and practice exhibit an extraordinary self-confidence, bordering on and sometimes crossing the line into the vice of hubris."

By hubris he means, for instance, Peter Singer, the infanticide defender on the faculty of Princeton University. The most important thing to realize about Singer—and Neuhaus reminds us of this—is that he is "no marginal figure in our

intellectual culture.” For one thing, he authored the main piece on the history of ethics—15 pages worth of “ethics” (scare quotes are mine not Father’s)—in the 15th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Neuhaus writes, “From Confucius and Aristotle, to Maimonides and Aquinas, through David Hume and Kant to Peter Singer, the article traces the liberation of moral theory and practice from any truths that pose an obstacle to our will to power and control. The gist of it is caught in the title of Singer’s 1995 book, *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics*.” Singer welcomes the collapse and the Brave New World he’s rushing us toward, one impressionable young mind at a time.

Considering Fr. Neuhaus died not long after Christmas, the timing of the book is perfect for us. He demonstrates some prescience, writing: “Among the most glaring indications that we are in exile is the necessity of contending for the most basic truth of the dignity of the human person. If we don’t get that right, we are unlikely to get right many other questions....”

His book was released around the same time that President Barack Obama lifted the ban on federal funding of embryo-destroying stem-cell research. And here we are, in the month of President Barack Obama’s commencement address at the University of Notre Dame. Notre Dame struggles with the “American Babylon” dilemma as much as any individual. The nation’s most prominent Catholic university should consider itself a South Bend exile, a training ground in being good citizens on the road to the City of God. Instead, they’re flirting with becoming just any other institution, one where truth is a debate, rather than a reality.

Notre Dame should exist to live in communion with the truth. That’s “the life of the Church,” living “in communion with Christ, who says of himself, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.’” There, “we experience a foretaste, a prolepsis, of the community that is to be.” The Eucharist is the key to that, in

which “we experience the genuinely ‘new politics’ of the new polis that is the City of God. But, still surrounded by “the ruins of Babel,” that is “only a foretaste that whets our appetite for, and sacramentally sustains us on the way toward, that final destination.”

The solution to the Notre Dame problem is in *American Babylon*. They have the Eucharist. “As Christians and as Americans, in this our awkward duality of citizenship, we seek to be faithful in a time not of our choosing but of our testing...never tiring in proposing to the world a more excellent way...[as] through our laughter and tears, we see and hail from afar the New Jerusalem and know that it is all time toward home.”

As dual citizens, we aspire to excellence, but not at the expense of the most excellent. At the end of the semester, Notre Dame must ask itself, “what is our final destination?” Is it White House affirmation or the New Jerusalem? There’s nothing wrong with the former, but it can never be at the expense of our quest for the latter.

Shortly after *American Babylon* hit bookshelves, New York’s new archbishop, Timothy Dolan, was installed. An Associated Press write-up of an interview declared that Dolan “will challenge the idea that the Roman Catholic Church is unenlightened because it opposes gay marriage and abortion.” He, in other words, won’t change his values because of what a court, party, or even consensus has decided is their truth. To these developments, believers must remain firm. As Neuhaus puts it, “There is considerable truth in the observation that politics is primarily a function of culture, that at the heart of culture is morality, and that at the heart of morality are those commanding truths typically associated with religion. I expect it is true in every society, but it is certainly true in this society, that politics and religion can be distinguished but never separated.”

Or, as Dolan put it to the Associated Press: “Periodically, we Catholics have to stand up and say, ‘Enough,’” he said. “The church as a whole still calls out to what is noble in us.”

One imagines Fr. Neuhaus, a former Lutheran pastor who came to love the Catholic Church, warmly greeting Archbishop Dolan, offering him a drink, and applauding his call to humble nobility. It’s the call Neuhaus answered in his journey through this world. Neuhaus can’t offer the new archbishop a drink, but the existence of *American Babylon* will make Dolan’s job just a little bit easier.

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