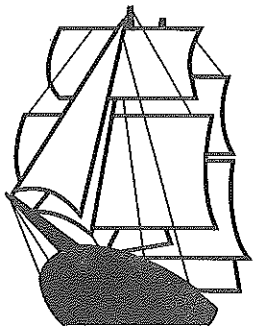

The MAST Journal

Violence and Nonviolence

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Dear Sisters, Associates, Companions and Friends of Mercy,

The theme of violence and nonviolence evokes a range of considerations. The 2005 Chapter in Laredo expressed a commitment of the Sisters of Mercy to resist all forms of violence and to cultivate peace making in a spirit of nonviolence.

Nonviolence is of special relevance to women. This is because women, as the United Nations has long noted, precisely because of their gender, are vulnerable to many forms of violence—physical, ethnic, political, and economic. Women and their children typically suffer as noncombatants in war, subjected to rape and famine and forced to flee their lands with no ability to defend themselves. In comparison to men, they are victimized more frequently by sexual abuse as children and by domestic violence as wives. Elder abuse is a crime that typically involves aging women, who live longer than men. Women also bear the burden in religious and cultural systems of proving the vitality of their faith tradition, and yet, as in Shariah, their own religious code denies them the rights it secures to men. Most religious legal systems burden women this way and so do violence to them in the name of God.

Crime statistics in the U.S. indicate that most women homicide victims are murdered, not by a stranger, but by a man they know. Women live with the risk of violence in their closest partnerships, in their homes and bedrooms, and in their places of work. The tragedy of the violence all women suffer fell upon Sister Margaret Ann Pahl, aged seventy-one, on April 5, 1980 at St. Mary's Hospital in Toledo Ohio. She was strangled and repeatedly stabbed to death by one of the chaplains, Fr. Gerald Robinson, on Holy Saturday morning in the hospital chapel sacristy. At trial twenty-six years later, he was found guilty by the jury in May, 2006, and was sentenced to fifteen years to life. Dean P. Mandros, the prosecutor, described the murderer's actions in his closing argument: "Everything that was done was done to mock her, to degrade her, to humiliate her."

There was a similarly brutal and violent end to the lives of Sr. Dorothy Kazel, O.S.U., Sister Ita Ford, M.M., Jean Donovan and Sister Maura Clarke, M.M., who were tortured, raped, and executed on December 2, 1980 in El Salvador, only a few months later. As the website www.ursulinesisters.org.dorothy.htm says, as a result of these deaths, "all religious communities of women were inspired to action on behalf of women as victims of violence, and to see the connection between rape and war."

Twenty-four years after the murder of Sr. Margaret Ann, the case was authorized to be reopened by the prosecutor of Lucas County , Julia R. Bates. I am grateful for her immediate help when I contacted her office this year, her respect for all the Sisters involved, her continuing interest in the aftermath of this case, her vivid memory of the details and the humble, truthful testimony of the witnesses who were interviewed. The prosecution of Sr. Margaret Ann's murder was undertaken despite political risk to herself. She offered to make the closing argument available for publication in *The MAST Journal.*

I am grateful to the prosecutor of the trial, Dean P. Mandros, for providing the original texts of both his opening and closing arguments, and for his neighborly and candid conversation. Gratitude as well to staff assistant Angie Barchik who made sure all documents came through. Readers of the well-crafted arguments will share, I'm sure, a deep and lasting appreciation for the witnesses who came forward to testify, and for the experts who reported at trial so that some form of closure could be brought to this public, searing tragedy that had left many women numb, bewildered and afraid.

The January 19 2007 issue of *National Catholic Reporter* featured a story on p. 14a, "Nun counsels fellow abuse survivors." A Dominican Sister narrates her recovery of the memory of her sexual abuse as a child by her biological father, her flashbacks, her journey of recovery, and now her ministry to other survivors as a counselor. She says of her decision to share her story with others, "Once I knew I would have the inner strength to do it, I had to. It's a call. I would feel like I was abandoning the survivors if I didn't do it. People need healing companionship." This is the same motive that inspired "The Crystal Palace is No More: From Surviving to Thriving after Sexual Abuse," and the Sister of Mercy who

authored this piece likewise offers encouragement and assurance to survivors that they are not alone in dealing with this form of violence.

On the troublesome scriptural theme of "God's Wrath," Mary Daly reflects on the questions of whether the notion that God gets violently angry is a human projection, or a theological instinct that must attribute passionate care to God in relationship to a beloved people. She suggests a different cosmology: that disasters in the world are an inevitable outcome of disordered relationships in society, and our disharmony with nature and the earth.

The philosophy of nonviolence is timely because this last century has hardly known a decade that was not marred by a world war, a genocidal fury, or a regional armed conflict that split the loyalties and interests of international allies, ruined regional economies, and displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians as impoverished refugees.

Elizabeth Linehan, a philosopher, presents a multifaceted argument in "Violence of the Iraq War and Just War Theory." She makes a case supporting the use of just war theory, even as she shows the flaws in its application to justify the Iraq war, particularly in its effect on civilians. She considers the alternative of pacifism as an alternative stance, but notes the problem of its practical appropriation at an international level.

Ruth Lautt, O.P., a lawyer and National Director of *Christians for Fair Witness on the Middle East*, outlines the elements of just war theory. She cites the Catholic bishops' guideline, "The just-war tradition is not a weapon to be used to justify a political conclusion." She then critiques the departure from fair use of just-war theory by the Jesuits' *America* magazine in its articles on the Arab-Israeli conflict, suggesting that misuse of the theory fosters violence in readers' minds.

In "Catherine McAuley and Nonviolence," Janet Ruffing cites examples from the foundress's life that illustrate "her nonviolent relational ability." Taking selections from the Rule's section on Union and Charity, as found in Mary C. Sullivan's *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy*, she highlights practices, attitudes, values and virtues that foster kindly relations, and the quality of heartfelt love for Sisters expressed "in tender concern and regard." She also reviews counsels in the *Retreat Instructions*.

Marilyn Sunderman's essay, "Thomas Merton's Ethic of Nonviolence" is a wonderful synthesis of contemporary nonviolent theory and theology, focused on the primary texts of Thomas Merton, who centered the spirit of nonviolence in contemplative awareness. She shows Merton's analysis of racism as a particularly virulent form of violence and his admiration for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolence. Merton opposed war making, espoused pacifism, and was alarmed by the implications of Hiroshima, the Vietnam War and the possibility of nuclear annihilation.

Discussion questions are provided to encourage conversation and reflection on these compellingly personal and compellingly public issues.

Yours,

Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M.

Eloise M. Rosenblatt, R.S.M.
Editor, *The MAST Journal*

State of Ohio vs. Gerald Robinson
Opening and Closing Arguments in the Trial for the Murder of Sister Margaret Ann Pahl, R.S.M.

Dean P. Mandros

Opening Argument

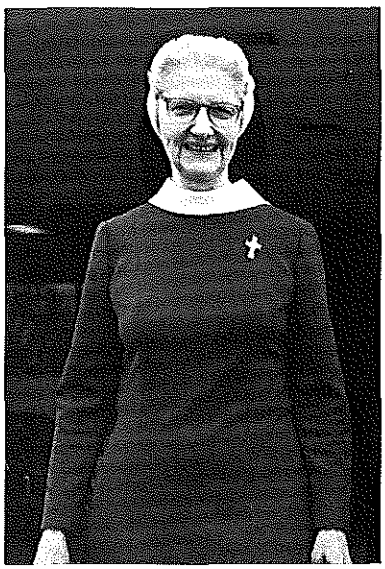
At the front of most Catholic churches and chapels is a small room called the sacristy. It is usually off to the side from the main altar. It is a place where the priest puts on his vestments and it is used for keeping items of the church. But over Easter, the sacristy is transformed.

This is because the Eucharist, also called the Blessed Sacrament, which is the consecrated wafer that Catholics believe to be the very body of Jesus Christ, is removed from the chapel on Good Friday and kept in the sacristy until Holy Saturday night. Thus, the sacristy becomes the most sacred space in the chapel.

And it is in the sacristy located in the chapel of Mercy Hospital, this holiest of places, where Sister Margaret Ann Pahl was brutally murdered on Holy Saturday morning, in 1980.

Someone choked Sister Margaret Ann around her neck to the very edge of death.

And then this person stabbed her some thirty-one times. The coroner ruled the cause of death to be a combination of both strangulation and multiple stab wounds.



This is Sister Margaret Ann Pahl. Sister Margaret Ann Pahl was a Catholic nun with the order of the Sisters of Mercy. She entered the nunnery at age nineteen in 1927. She became a registered nurse and, because her order owned and operated hospitals, she worked in them, ultimately becoming the administrator of Mercy Hospital, Tiffin, and St. Charles Hospital, Toledo. As CEO of two hospitals, she set budgets, set policies and she hired and fired.

Fellow nuns will describe her as quiet, likeable, hard of hearing, devout, and a very traditional Catholic nun. She was a very accomplished woman who semiretired to the convent located on the seventh floor of Mercy Hospital here in Toledo where she worked in patient care and was in charge of keeping the hospital chapel in proper order

This is Gerald Robinson, age forty-two, in 1980 at the time of Sister's death, a Catholic priest.

Sister Margaret Ann Pahl was a Catholic nun with the order of the Sisters of Mercy. She entered the nunnery at age nineteen in 1927. She became a registered nurse and, because her order owned and operated hospitals, she worked in them, ultimately becoming the administrator of Mercy Hospital, Tiffin, and St. Charles Hospital, Toledo.

(Photo of Robinson shown to jury)

He, too, lived and worked at Mercy Hospital. He had been assigned to Mercy Hospital for seven years where he, along with another priest, Father Swiatecki, said Mass, heard confessions and gave last rites to patients of the hospital. Gerald Robinson will be described as unhappy, with an inferiority complex, a loner, one who tended to avoid others. Even after seven years, no one at the hospital felt they were his friend or really even knew him.

Now, as I said during jury selection, we are not going to try to prove what Sister's killer was thinking the morning of April 5, 1980. We are not required to, nor are we going to try to explain the killer's motivation. You may hear evidence that may suggest a possible motive. You may hear evidence that rules out potential motives, but the state is not going to attempt to prove to you, beyond a reasonable doubt, the "why" of this case.

And it is in the sacristy, that small room off to the side of the altar where she is choked to the floor. Choked so hard that two bones in her neck are fractured. Choked so hard that blood vessels in her eyes burst. Choked to the verge of death—but not quite.

We are, however, going to tell you about the last hours of Sister Margaret Ann's life.

We are going to prove to you the whereabouts of Sister Margaret Ann. We will prove to you the whereabouts of Gerald Robinson. And you will learn how the defendant and the nun were together that morning in the chapel of Mercy Hospital and that one of them died a humiliating death.

This is what we know as fact about the last hours of Sister Margaret Ann's life. Sister Margaret Ann, like all the nuns, was an early riser. She was used to attending 6:00 AM Mass each day. There is no morning Mass on Holy Saturday. It is one of only three days of the year when there is no morning Mass.

But Sister was a creature of habit. She had two alarm clocks. Police discovered that one had been set for 5:00 AM, and the other for 5:30 AM. We know Sister left her room on the seventh floor of the convent and was first seen by a cafeteria worker at about 6:15 AM On April 5, 1980,

Sister leaves the cafeteria but returns shortly thereafter to have breakfast. Sister Margaret Ann leaves the cafeteria once again about 6:45 AM.

Sister is next seen by Jerry Tressler, an ambulance driver, who says hello to her at about 6:50 AM on the ground floor of the hospital. We know it takes approximately four minutes to walk from this location to the chapel. At approximately 6:59, a security guard on duty sees that one of the two chapel doors is propped open.

Now Rose Byers was a shift supervisor for nursing at Mercy Hospital for more than nineteen years.

Every morning, at the end of her shift, which was from 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM, Rose was required to leave the night patients' status reports on the administrator's desk before she left work.

The administrator's office was right next to the chapel. Like many employees at this Catholic hospital, Rose was and is a devout Catholic. And every morning after work, for nineteen years, Rose would go to the chapel to pray before going home. Every morning, but not on April 5, 1980.

And it wasn't because she forgot. And it wasn't that she didn't have time. She certainly wanted to, this day between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. But she couldn't. Couldn't because for the first time ever, at minutes past 7:00 AM, the chapel door was locked. So Rose went home without her usual morning prayers.

These doors were locked because something unspeakable was about to take place. The chapel is locked, but two people are inside it. One is Sister Margaret Ann who is in the chapel doing her work changing the altar for Easter service.

And it is in the sacristy, that small room off to the side of the altar where she is choked to the floor. Choked so hard that two bones in her neck are fractured. Choked so hard that blood vessels in her eyes burst. Choked to the verge of death—but not quite. The coroner will tell you it takes one to two minutes to strangle someone to the edge of

death. She was close to death , but not quite, because this killing is just starting.

The killer then lays Sister out on the sacristy floor. He covers Sister with an altar cloth and stabs her over the heart nine times—nine piercings of her flesh, in the shape of an inverted cross.

He then removes the alter cloth and stabs her twenty-two more times. And then anoints her forehead with blood.

After taking the time to do all this, he does still more. He carefully folds her dress up to her chest and pulls her girdle, her panties and her hose down to her ankles, and then leaves her exposed, naked, stretched flat, as if in a coffin. And only then does the killer leave. It is now well after 7:00 AM.

This building is called the Professional Building. It houses mainly the school of nursing and class rooms. And on April 5, this building is essentially empty because most of the nursing students who live there are gone for the Easter holiday. But hospitals never close, and work goes on every day of the week, even the Saturday before Easter. Not only patient care, but building maintenance. At the main entrance to the Professional Building is a lobby open from the ground floor to the second floor, which has an open balcony.

And about 7:35, a worker on the ground floor hears the sound of running footsteps on the floor above, running from the hallway that leads to the chapel, around the balcony down this hallway where the footsteps stop at the end of the hallway. On April 5, 1980, Gerald Robinson lived at the end of this hallway. His bed was in this room, his desk right here.

By now the rest of the nuns are pretty much up and about, and Sister Madelyn Marie goes to the cafeteria and has breakfast with the other priest, Father Swiatecki, and other nuns at some time around 7:15. After breakfast, the Sisters began going to the chapel for their morning prayers.

There were other nuns in the chapel when Sister Madelyn Marie arrives after 7:45 AM.

Sister Madelyn Marie was the organist and she was to prepare the music for that day's service.

At about 8:20, Sister Madelyn Marie had a question for Gerald Robinson about the music selection. So she went to the sacristy to call him on the telephone that was located inside the sacristy. Sister Madelyn Marie unlocked the sacristy door

The killer then lays Sister out on the sacristy floor. He covers Sister with an altar cloth and stabs her over the heart nine times—nine piercings of her flesh, in the shape of an inverted cross.

with her key, entered, and let out a scream heard throughout the building.

She screamed because she found Sister Margaret Ann Pahl stretched out straight on the floor.

Her dress up exposing her chest. Her undergarments down around her ankles.

Other nuns come running to her aid and the emergency code was sounded. They called for "Mr. Swift to the sacristy," which meant there was a medical emergency, and doctors and nurses came running. But Sister Margaret Ann Pahl was dead. There was nothing the doctors could do. This seventy-one-year old nun had been murdered in the chapel sacristy this day before Easter, the day before her seventy-second birthday.

Of course, the police were called, and naturally, a nun murdered in a hospital chapel was a high priority case. Police investigative procedure required that the police first assess the crime scene for physical evidence that might lead to an indication of the killer's motive or identity. Next, they interview witnesses to discover what may have been seen, and to develop other leads. By the very next day, Easter Sunday, robbery had been determined to be an unlikely motive because nothing of value was taken from the sacristy. Not the gold chalice, not the gold plates, not the victim's purse. The only item possibly missing was an inexpensive watch sometimes worn by Sister.

By April 7, the coroner's office indicated that there was no substantial evidence of rape. These factors along with the hands-on nature of this homicide—the strangulation and the multiple stabbings— lead investigators to believe the killer was someone who knew the victim. Strangers don't

typically have the emotional anger to stab someone thirty-plus times.

The police interviewed employees, attempted to place workers as to their whereabouts that morning, and to identify nonworkers seen in the vicinity of the chapel. By the ninth of April, detectives discovered that the victim had been very upset on Good Friday afternoon—upset to the point of tears, upset over how Good Friday services had been conducted by the priest.

On the thirteenth and fourteenth, police spoke with the maintenance man who heard the footsteps that ran to the defendant's very doorstep.

By now, it was time to interview the defendant, and so the police did on April 18. And during this interview, the defendant makes statements that were not true—about his whereabouts and about not having a key to the sacristy. He even claimed that the real killer had confessed to him, only to later admit that this confession never occurred and he made this story up. After the interview on April 18, the police receive defendant's consent to search his room and do so.

The defendant makes statements that were not true—about his whereabouts and about not having a key to the sacristy. He even claimed that the real killer had confessed to him, only to later admit that this confession never occurred.

And when they do, they recover a sword-shaped, heavy, metal letter opener. When it is examined by the crime lab, the police found that the letter opener presented nothing of evidentiary value—no finger prints, no glue residue, no dust. It was clean. In fact, too clean. It was so clean that the examiner said it looked like it had been almost sterilized.

On April 23 1980, Josh Franks, the evidence examiner who had described this letter opener as being sterilized, pried a small medallion off the handle of the letter opener and saw a small spot of something. Franks swabbed the spot with a chemical called phenolthalein.

Now the chemical phenolthalein can react with other certain chemicals and enzymes, and when it does, it turns the color pink. One substance it reacts with is blood. If it turns pink, you have what is called a presumptive finding for blood. And under the medallion of this very clean letter opener taken from Defendant's room was a spot of something, and when coated with phenolthalein, it turned pink.

So by the end of April, the police took their case to the Lucas County prosecutor's office to see if charges could be filed. But the answer was "No." They were told they needed more evidence—a stronger case. So the investigation continued, but ultimately led nowhere. Though they continued to investigate, they had done all the tests that 1980 technology allowed. Police could not develop any more evidence against the defendant that would justify bringing charges against Robinson or anyone else.

So the case lay dormant and years went by and Sister Pahl's killer was not prosecuted.

Fast forward to 1997. Julia Bates is elected Lucas County prosecutor. One of the first things she does is create a Cold Case Homicide Unit to look into unsolved murders. There are, unfortunately, many unsolved homicide cases for this unit to work on.

But in late 2003, their attention was turned to the case of Sister Margaret Ann Pahl. The first thing they do in an old case is to reexamine the physical evidence, which they do. They reexamine the letter opener, the clothing, and the autopsy photos. They study the shape of the blade of the letter opener, which is unique. It has four sides. They study the shape of the holes in the victim's clothing and the altar cloth. They note a peculiar shape, not a slit like a flat knife would make, but an irregular, distinctive shape. They study the shape of the wounds to the nun's flesh and note a similar odd shape.

Of significance was a blood pattern on the altar cloth, not really noted in 1980. Police send her clothing to a nationally-renowned expert on blood transfer patterns, to compare the letter opener to blood patterns present on the altar cloth that had covered Sister Pahl.

From all this, the State will prove to you that undeniably, Gerald Robinson's letter opener taken from his room by the police in April of 1980 was used in the murder of Sister Margaret Ann Pahl.

Having uncovered this unknown evidence, the investigators speak to Robinson in April of 2004, and defendant told the Cold Case investigators that he never left his room that Holy Saturday morning until called and told of Sister Pahl's death. This is the same story he told the police in April of 1980, and that statement, Ladies and Gentlemen, cannot be true.

And it isn't true because the State will produce witnesses who saw the defendant at the chapel doors exactly at the time period that we know the murder to have taken place.

Ladies and Gentlemen, only the murderer would have reason to lie about his whereabouts on Holy Saturday morning.

In a perfect world, everyone would be held accountable for their criminal conduct. In a perfect world, this would happen sooner rather than later. But later is better than never. It may have taken twenty-six years to gather enough evidence to solve this case. But it has now been solved. And during the next two weeks, our evidence will convince you that Gerald Robinson savagely murdered Sister Margaret Ann Pahl on Holy Saturday, 1980.

Closing Argument

This is not a case that can be tried without talking about God and religion. Not with a priest as a defendant and a nun as a victim. So whether you believe in God, or providence, or fate, or destiny, this is a case that had to wait twenty-six years to be tried. In the year 1980, there would have been no way we could have seated twelve jurors like yourselves who would all say, "Yes, I believe a Roman Catholic priest can kill." But we have all learned over the past twenty-six years that the men who wear that white collar are just that—men. Human beings. Subject to the same emotions, feelings, and temptations as every other human being. So perhaps it was just meant to be that this case had to wait twenty-six years for you, this very jury.

Twenty-six years is a long time. Some things get better with age. I just heard a piece on the radio describing how they believe that violins made by Stradivarius sound better now than when they were made more than two hundred years ago because of how the lacquers have blended into the wood.

Some things don't improve with age. Memories are one such thing. Memories fade. That is a fact. But all of you agreed that all of you can recall events from long ago, events significant to you. Maybe your first prom, getting your first car, the birth of a child. Does anyone think they wouldn't recall the day that the nun was murdered at your place of work? Maybe not every detail, but the important ones?

Some things aren't affected by the passage of time. The evidence that brings this case to court in 2006 has not been affected by time. This letter opener—it's exactly the same as it was twenty-six years ago when it was put into the police property room. It still glowed when tested for blood. This altar cloth—the holes are still the same and the stains are still the same. The autopsy photographs of her injuries, still the same. The coroner's report is still the same.

In the year 1980, there would have been no way we could have seated twelve jurors like yourselves who would all say, "Yes, I believe a Roman Catholic priest can kill." But we have all learned over the past twenty-six years that the men who wear that white collar are just that—men.

Your job is to decide the disputed questions of fact. Not every fact in this case is in dispute. There is no disagreement about where this occurred—or that Sister was killed—or that it was a purposeful, intentional act. There is only one issue for you to decide: Who is Sister's killer? So in reviewing the testimony, you need to separate the expected natural inconsistencies of little import from those that truly matter.

Additionally, this has been referred to as a circumstantial case because there is no eyewitness to

the stabbing. But as we discussed, the law permits and encourages the use of natural and reasonable inferences from other proven facts. Just as we already discussed three weeks ago during jury selection. The example was of that freshly poured concrete driveway, where a boy is on one side with his bike and ball glove, and he is next seen on the other side of drive way. There are bike tracks on the driveway, his glove in the middle of driveway, and there is concrete on his tires. You were asked, Can you can be convinced from that evidence that the boy rode across the driveway, even if no one saw him? The judge will instruct you that the law permits this type of proof. The law allows for reasonable inferences. Otherwise, murderers go free if they kill any and all witnesses.

Blade and Blood Transfer Pattern

It needs to be stressed that despite the anticipated criticism of what the police did or did not do in 1980, this trial is about the cold case, not the old case. So the starting point for your analysis should begin with this letter opener. Was this blade used in Sister's murder? Clearly the answer is "Yes." Is the answer Yes because of the uniquely shaped holes in the altar cloth that evidence technician Terry Cousino described? Maybe not. Is it because of the uniquely shaped punctures to Sister's flesh? Maybe not. But how about those diamond-shaped punctures to Sister's bones described by Dr. Scala-Barnett and forensic anthropologist Julie Saul?

Dr. Scala-Barnett, who has performed more than 6,800 autopsies; Julie Saul, who has been flown to New York City to identify remains of 9/11 victims. What did these women, the only ones to put blade to puncture say? "It was a perfect fit."

But did the cold case team stop there? No. They went to a different type of expert, one who uses an entirely different technique, Dr. Steve Symes. We said, "See if you can exclude this blade. If you can exclude it, maybe we are wrong." Dr. Symes makes model casts. He casts the mandible. He casts the blade. And what does he conclude? "An impressive fit." Even the plastic casts. So Dr. Scala-Barnett's opinion remains unchallenged.

We looked at the blood transfers during the cold case. We showed the altar cloth to two of the five worldwide experts in blood transfer patterns. Both testify about something very unique—this pattern of this medallion found on the letter opener. See the curved dome. See the rectangle of the building. Dr. Lee spoke of the zigzag edging, and Paulette Sutton testified that if this is not the murder weapon, then it was one exactly like it. If the defendant's claim that scissors were the murder weapon, then they had to have had an imprint of the U.S. Capitol Building on them.

Time of Murder

Now we called a number of witnesses to establish a general time frame for this murder because establishing when it occurred helps to understand who was not involved and, of course, who could have been involved.

You heard from Audrey Garraway, the dining room worker, and Jerry Tressler who were the last two people to see Sister alive other than her killer. So we know the crime didn't happen before 6:45-ish and 6:50-ish.

You heard from Security Officer Bob Wodarski who says that some time around 7:00 he goes by the chapel and the door was open. He didn't give us an exact time. We don't expect an exact time. After all, this was twenty-six years ago. He gives us a range.

As does Rose Byers, who says that sometime around 7:00 AM, that for the first and only time in her nineteen years, the chapel door is locked and she could not say her morning prayer.

Thereafter, Sister Madelyn Marie testifies that, after her breakfast, she goes to the chapel, estimating the time to have been around 7:45. Leslie Kerner testified she ran to the chapel at 8:10 after hearing screams. As such, we have a very good idea of when this horrible killing took place.

This allows us to eliminate other possible suspects. Jimmy Harris who had the scissors which that tracing was made of. He was always with Wardell Langston that morning and was seen by Margaret Warren with Langston at 7:35 when those first footsteps were heard. Father Swiatecki was in the dining room having breakfast from before 7:00, which is verified by Sister Patricia Ann. He leaves the dining room with Sister Madelyn, as she testified.

All the other Sisters' whereabouts were confirmed by their fellow nuns. All the people with the religious background to do the things that Father

Grob testified to—to understand the significance of the way Sister was killed and left to be discovered are all accounted for—everyone—everyone—save for one single soul.

If you do not believe that the defendant committed this murder then you believe in a series of coincidences that are mind-boggling:

- You must believe that it's just a coincidence that he is the only person with religious training that can't be accounted for.
- That, coincidentally, the footsteps on the first floor of the professional building where only he lived were made by someone else.
- That it is a coincidence that the victim, being upset to the point of tears over something that the priests did during the Good Friday service, less than eighteen hours before her death, had nothing to do with this murder.
- That it's just a coincidence that three people testified that they saw the defendant out of his room, which is in direct conflict with his claim made to the police.

Not in His Room

Let's speak of those last witnesses the State called. Leslie Kerner, who had seen the defendant hundreds of times, saw him by the chapel door around 7:00 AM. Whether going in, or going out, is unimportant. Point is, she saw him at a time he claimed to police to be in his room.

Grace Jones, who testified that some time after 7:00, some time after John Peen, her coworker, left from his 11:00 to 7:00 shift, saw the defendant come out of the chapel and walked right by her—maybe out the Madison St. doors. Her testimony is confirmed by Detective Ulysses Howard.

Finally Dr. Jack Baron, who felt so strongly about what he had seen that morning, that twenty-four years later he called a reporter in an effort to find out who to speak with about what he had seen. Dr. Baron left his medical practice in Florida to come up here and tell you that as he answered the Mr. Swift call, he passed a white male—age thirty-five to forty-five. Five feet, eight inches tall. Medium build. Wearing priestly garb and a white collar, and it was not Father Swiatecki.

Interestingly, when Grace Jones had seen him, she said he was wearing a long black robe. Dr. Baron said when he passed him in the hall—no robe. What might have been on that robe to cause him to take it off?

These witnesses plus Mr. Richard Kerner establish that Defendant was not in his room as he wanted the police to believe. Should you believe these five people? Consider this carefully because, if you do believe them, then you know who walked into that chapel around 7:00 AM. If you believe them, then you know who killed Sister.

There are only three ways that a witness can testify: 1) They can tell the truth to the best of their ability; 2) They can make an honest mistake—"I saw the car speed by. It was black," when it was really navy blue; or 3) They can lie. Witnesses can come into court and lie.

Just Coincidences?

Talk about coincidence. Have all these people made the same honest mistake in saying they saw the defendant out by the chapel when he says he remained in his room? Did they all have the same dream or hallucination? Did they all just imagine this and their testimony is a coincidental mistake? Or are they all lying? Did Dr. Baron fly up from Florida, Leslie Kerner fly in from Missouri, Mr. Kerner fly in from Texas, and all meet at Grace Jones' house and conspire to frame him for this crime?

Or maybe, just maybe, they are all just telling the truth to the best of their ability. The truth that Defendant wasn't in his residence. The truth that he was in that chapel. The truth that he murdered Sister.

If you aren't convinced of this man's guilt, then perhaps you don't think this letter opener is the murder weapon. That it is just a coincidence that this blood stain of this knob appears on the altar cloth, that this blood stain of the ribbing on the handle appears on the altar cloth, and that this stain of the U.S. capitol appears on this cloth.

Is it just a coincidence that this letter opener tested positive—not just once with Josh Franks, not just twice with Terry Cousino, but a third time with Casey Agosti—all using three different chemical tests?

Or maybe you think that this is the murder weapon, but someone else used it. Well, in our office we use a logic technique to help analyze certain issues that you folks can use. We ask if what the

defense says is true, what else must logically, reasonably be true as well.

Well, if this is the murder weapon and the defendant did not use it to kill Sister, many, many other things must be true.

For one, someone else had to get into his room. Now despite defendant's feeble attempt to claim to Detective Tom Ross that he didn't lock his room, I'm sure you all remember that long pause when Detective Ross asked him very simply whether he kept his residence locked? I think Detective Ross was generous when he estimated that pause as about five seconds long. Was that a difficult question? Play the video tape for yourselves. Ultimately he admitted he did keep his room locked—just as housekeeper Valerie Berning testified.

Now all that testimony about master keys and grand master keys and 781 keys—were we trying to prove that only the defendant had such a key? No. The point is that these keys weren't just floating around. That they were controlled. There was limited access. So if it were someone else who got this blade, he first would have had to get a key, then turn invisible to get into defendant's room that morning—because Defendant claims to have always been in his residence—and then steal this letter opener.

And why, why would someone else feel the need to use this letter opener to kill Sister, and then go through the same difficult process to return it? Why?

The only reason that makes any sense is to frame the defendant. This supposedly meek and mild man had an enemy so cunning and calculating that he would kill a nun to frame Gerald Robinson and kill in a manner dripping with religious symbolism.

But there is a little logic problem with this scenario as well. If you want to frame the defendant, why clean the blade off? Why return it in a state that criminalist Josh Franks said looked polished? Why remove the blood evidence that would tie it to the crime?

In fact, why return it at all? Why risk being caught going back into and out of his room? Wouldn't it make more sense to leave it at the sacristy covered with blood—this blade known by others to be Robinson's? Valerie Berning and the cleaning people had seen it on his desk. Why not use it, walk out of the exit door and your frame-up is complete?

So do you see why it makes no sense to argue that someone else took his letter opener, used it, and returned it? It's just not reasonable.

There are more coincidences. Let's look at what he told police.

- At times he claimed he was dripping wet right out of the shower when he got Sister Phyllis Ann's call about the murder, and yet he told Lt. Wiegand he was dressing, buttoning up his cassock when he got the call.
- He told Ross he had no key to the sacristy, yet Sister Phyllis Ann and Sister Madelyn Marie were incredulous that he would make this claim. That's the priest's dressing room, they said. Now why would the defendant want to make the police think he had no key to the sacristy?
- Three times he said he ran to the chapel. But when Detective Ross speaks to him about the others who heard running footsteps, he changes his story. He doesn't want the police to think he could have made those sounds.

Then of course we have the coincidence of his made-up story to Detective Marx that he knew who the real killer was, this painfully obvious attempt to deflect police attention from himself.

We don't expect priests to kill, do we? But likewise, don't we expect them not to make up stories to the police when questioned about a homicide?

Mr. Thebes also asked if such a lie might be understandable considering the hours of police interrogation. I think Mr. Thebes might have even referenced Simon Peter's three-fold denial of being one of Christ's disciples. Mr. Thebes urged that he said this under the stress of the moment.

Stress? This man dealt with stress every day. It was his job to calm the dying, soothe the pain of grieving families. Yet he admitted to taking Valium on the day of the murder.

We don't expect priests to kill, do we? But likewise, don't we expect them not to make up stories to the police when questioned about a homicide?

Yes, Mr. Thebes, people lie to the police when under stress. They sure do. Just as people commit murder when under stress. Do you believe that all these coincidences happened and he is not guilty? Or is there a more obvious conclusion?

Now way back during the jury selection I said, hopefully at least twenty times, that the State has no obligation to prove why this crime occurred. That Robinson's reasons and motivation may only be known to himself and the law recognizes this.

As such, the State is under no obligation to convince you beyond a reasonable doubt why he did this. Or what he was doing before he got to the sacristy or what he did after he left. Only that Gerald Robinson purposely caused the death of Sister Margaret Ann Pahl while in Lucas County Ohio.

Motive

But if you recall my opening statement, I said that the evidence may suggest a motive in this case. So I will tell you what this case is really about. If my explanation helps you in your deliberation process, wonderful. If you reject this explanation, so be it. It changes nothing in terms of what the State must convince you of. So is this case about some Satanic cult killing? No. No. Is this case about some ritualistic Black Mass? Sorry to disappoint.

This case is about perhaps the most common scenario there is for a murder. A man got very angry at a woman and the woman dies. The only unusual thing is their clothing. The man wore a white collar and the woman wore a habit.

Why did this occur? Well, the evidence gives us some insight.

What do we know about the defendant? Well, for one we know he didn't want to be at Mercy Hospital. At least twice, according to Sister Madelyn Marie's testimony, he had requested that the diocese transfer him out. He wanted to be a military chaplain, but he was refused.

And who could blame him for wanting out? For six years, he lived in those two small rooms, almost daily tending to the sick and dying, giving last rites five plus times a week, dealing with grieving families. How long could one keep doing this? The Catholic Church is about more than death and dying. it's about the living, too. There are weddings to perform, baptisms to conduct, first communions to give. There is daylight, but he was mostly around the darkness of death.

And so how did he feel about where he was working? "It was their hospital" he told Ross. He was "just working there." He just worked there and he wanted out. And how did he feel about Sister Margaret? Sister's peers described her as kind, quiet, and devoted. Those who worked under her called her strict, demanding, fussy.

This case is about perhaps the most common scenario there is for a murder. A man got very angry at a woman and the woman dies. The only unusual thing is their clothing. The man wore a white collar and the woman wore a habit.

So did Sister, this former head administrator of two hospitals, treat the defendant as her superior since he was a priest and she was "merely" a nun? Did she treat him as a peer? Or did she treat him as a subordinate?

Well, I think we know the answer straight from the defendant's lips. Do you recall the testimony of Lt. Wiegand, who interviewed the defendant on April 19, 1980? Wiegand testified to a description the defendant gave of Sister. Now, imagine all the adjectives one could use to describe a murdered nun and you are the prime suspect of her murder. You could say she was pleasant, or quiet, or devoted. But what did the defendant say? She was "dominant." She had a "dominant personality." Does that tell us what their relationship was like?

Now we turn to Good Friday, with Shirley Lucas saying that Sister was so upset that she was literally in tears about the Good Friday service, upset that "they cheated God out of what was his." Was Sister Pahl the type of person to hold back her opinions? Is it just another coincidence that less than eighteen hours after complaining about the priests, that she is found dead?

And what was the defendant's state of mind during this time period? He told Detective Ross on that tape you watched, so he told you as well. He said that during his work at the hospital he "took a lot" from those who worked there.

I suggest to you that on Saturday morning April 5, 1980, the defendant decided not to take anymore—nothing more—from the woman he called dominant. Nothing more from the woman who had been in tears eighteen hours earlier.

That he had had enough. That as a man he decided not to take anymore. That he had taken a lot. But no more. And so he knew exactly where she would be that Saturday morning. The others may sleep in but not Sister Margaret.

Everything that was done, was done to mock her, to degrade her, to humiliate her.

Saturday Morning

And he found her in that chapel shortly after 7:00 AM. And he locked those doors and he came upon Sister, didn't even need to sneak up. They knew each other. And from behind he choked her, with his arm as Dr. Barnett suggested, or with a ligature like that small altar cloth that was found. And choked her ever so close to death. He may have even thought that she was dead.

And then he did what he had done hundreds of times before. Gave her last rites. Oh, a bastardized version to be sure, but last rites none the less. He covered her with that blessed altar cloth and marked her with the sign of the cross. An upside down cross. Why? Well, a Roman Catholic priest took the stand and told us why. Father Grob told us why. Because everything that was done, was done to mock her, to degrade her, to humiliate her. That upside down cross doesn't mean he is a Satanist. It was meant to insult her. If she had been Jewish, he would have carved a swastika on her chest. That wouldn't make him a Nazi. It was meant to humiliate her—killed in front of the Eucharist, the very person of Christ to whom she was wed—to now meet the Lord branded with an upside down cross.

But there is still more to do. She must be anointed. What would be the best way, the most degrading way? With blood of course. Her own blood. Get her blood. Stab her. But the dead don't bleed. Stab her again and again, twenty-two times to get enough blood. Enough for what? To coat the entire length of this blade. He coats all of this. Why does it leave this complete transfer pattern? No matter how bloody a killing, this handle shouldn't be entirely coated with blood. Yet it is.

He does it to do this—to place it across her forehead, to anoint her with her own blood. More humiliation, certainly enough for one murder, don't you think? But no, it's not enough. His feelings run too deep. He has taken too much for too long. There is more he can do. Strip her. Strip her naked before the Blessed Sacrament.

Why? To perform one final insult, to penetrate her, which is what he does. We know this because after the struggle to pull that girdle down to her ankles, he didn't stop. He took it off that left leg. Why? Why would he do that? If her girdle remains around both her legs they can't be spread. He can't get the access he wants. So he struggles it off of her foot and bends her knee and induces the ultimate sacrilege to this virgin nun. He penetrates her and he leaves a scratch. Total degradation. He then stands up and straightens her out. Like Sister Phyllis Ann says, people just don't die straight like that.

And so he had left his message. Quite a message. A message to Sister Pahl to be sure. Perhaps a message to the diocese. Perhaps even a message to God himself. "Look, Lord, see how unhappy I am. See what you have made me do." Yes, this was a message. There really is no other explanation. He left her naked and marked for all to see, quite a statement.

After

But now it's late, too late perhaps. He has to go, and out the chapel he leaves, only to be seen by a woman, named of all things Grace. What to do? Run away around the corner or act like everything is all right? Which is the correct choice? They didn't teach about this in the seminary. He chooses the latter and on his way drops the cloth, the one Sister Madelyn Marie finds by Sister Phyllis Ann's door. And so he walks by

Grace. They nod and he turns around this corner and out to Madison Street . . . or does he come back in and double back . . . or go through this tunnel, and makes it back to that school of nursing . . . and runs, making those frantic footsteps heard by Wardell Langston at 7:35? He goes back to his room where he cleans off, wipes down that blade, and takes off that cassock. Cleans himself.

And now we have another decision to make. Stay in the room or go back out? Perhaps it's too odd not to be out by 8:10 – 8:15 AM. No one sleeps in that late. So it's better to be back out, maybe for breakfast. But the Mr. Swift code sounds. People come running from all directions. What to do? He passes Dr. Baron. And that look the Doctor sees, was that a look of panic? He hadn't taken his Valium yet. We don't do well under stress, so it's back to his room where he waits. And finally he is called. Called to the sacristy. Called to be with the body of Sister Margaret Ann Pahl.

And within—what?—ten to fifteen minutes of Sister's body being discovered, Roman Catholic priest Father Jerome Swiatecki says what to him, "Why? Why did you do this?" And the defendant's response is . . . Nothing. Apparently he didn't deny it. Never even confronted Swiatecki about it. How could an innocent man not stand up for himself in front of all those people? How could he not challenge that accusation? Deny it? Defend himself? How could an innocent man let that pass? No wonder he needed Valium. Within ten minutes, he was being accused of her murder. And he never denies it. In the law, that's called an adoptive admission.

Waiting

And so the days pass by. Plenty of time to polish that blade, clean it—almost clean, that is. Get rid of it? Why? It's clean now. It might be more suspicious if it is suddenly missing. Valerie Benning and the cleaning ladies have seen it. Clothes, shoes. Plenty of time to get them clean because the police don't come calling until almost two weeks later.

But they want you back tomorrow and it's another marathon session. But suddenly there's a knock on the door. It's the Monsignor, Monsignor Schmidt. He gets you out, out of that interview room, out of the police station.

But they finally do come to call. Asking hard questions, tough questions. And when the questioning gets tough, and he feels the stress of the questioning, he lies. He makes up a story. Now we don't expect a priest to kill, but we also don't expect a priest to lie while being questioned during a murder investigation.

Stress made him lie. Well, yes I suppose so. Too much stress can make us do the unexpected, from telling lies to killing a nun. So the questioning of April 18 comes to an end. But they want you back tomorrow and it's another marathon session. But suddenly there's a knock on the door. It's the Monsignor, Monsignor Schmidt. He gets you out, out of that interview room, out of the police station. You're outside and you can breathe again.

But then it's back to those two small rooms that you live in. And you sit and wait. Wait for the police to come back and knock. And so he waits. But there is no knock, and the days go by. The days turn into weeks, but there is still no knock. And the weeks turn into months and the months turn into years and still he sits waiting. He waits because he knows. He knows that—if that white collar he wears has any meaning to him—he has always known that one way or another he would have to answer for what he has done. And so for all these years he has been waiting. And now he sits waiting for you.

The Crystal Palace is No More
From Surviving to Thriving after Sexual Abuse

A Sister of Mercy

The journey of surviving sexual abuse and incest is not one I wanted to take. Now, I make the choice to do so on a consistent basis. The call to do so has been a call deep within my depths that I desperately needed to heed so that my healing could happen.

Coming to Awareness

Details are not as important as my reflections here. Not all survivors of sexual abuse have stories like mine. Some have experienced more severe symptoms like thoughts of suicide, memories of cult abuse, and long bouts of depression. Some have experienced fewer symptoms than I have. It has been my experience, however, that, among survivors, there are striking similarities. It is my hope that sharing some of my experiences may help other Sisters understand what this trauma is about and enable them to assist in the healing process of others, or perhaps their very own.

The experience of living with the awareness of such trauma for me was initially devastating. For decades, I had no idea this had happened to me. I had no sense that things for me were different from other people. As my life in community began to "unravel," it was suggested that I go to an Al Anon meeting. I did, and found after attending a few meetings that the people at these meetings were telling stories similar to mine. I discovered that many other people grew up surrounded by alcoholism and the effects that disease had on their lives. I began to realize I was not alone. It is not a coincidence that the first word in the First Step is "We"! Recovery is not done in isolation. In the context of my years of work in the codependency recovery program of Al Anon, I finally began to "work the steps." I worked with a sponsor and used an Al Anon booklet, "Survivors of Incest Anonymous," to do a Fourth Step inventory. My doing a Fifth Step followed the Fourth Step. The Fifth Step is: "Admitted to God, ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

To do the Fifth Step, I shared a summary list I made from this inventory booklet with my Al Anon sponsor. As I shared the list, my sponsor asked me a very simple question, "Did anyone ever hurt you?" In that instant, the whisper of God told me it was safe and I could utter that one word: "Yes." It was that Yes that shattered the crystal palace of my life at home. The tears that immediately gushed forth confirmed the reality of oh, so long ago. And thus, my journey had begun. With that "Yes," I began to find my voice and share my past. My sponsor, as God had provided, was also a survivor. My sponsor knew all too well what was ahead of me and walked with me for a very long time on my recovery journey.

I grew up being told not to talk about things or to feel anything. But soon after my Fifth Step, my emotions were the first sign to my Sisters in community that things were changing inside me. I found I cried for "no reason" and that I would become angry at the simplest things. I realized this needed to be worked on by seeing a counselor. My courageous act to ask if I could see one was a big step for me. Just getting the permission to go was

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such a loving act! My tears after being told I could go revealed to me that being really loved just might be possible!

Knowing I Was Not to Blame

The first thing I learned in therapy was that the abuse was not my fault. This was like the ancients being told the earth revolved around the sun. It was a total change from what I had believed all my life. My perpetrators told me just the opposite all the time. This new awareness helped me to get in touch with my anger quite quickly. Most of my anger work was done in therapy or within my Twelve Step support group. As I worked with my anger, I soon discovered that shame was everywhere within me. Shame was one of the first emotions, but also the most pervasive thing I had to deal with on a daily basis. This was a lengthy process that was not solved by reading books or going to meetings. It came from God's grace, believing in myself, and letting go of the past. As my therapist often said to me, "Then is not now." I had always been a writer and found in journaling a new way to heal and deal with this challenge. One survivor I know likened shame to a cloak and shared her healing this way:

I gently remove this cloak,
Letting it fall from my shoulders
Into God's loving arms.
Behold, I am!
I need no longer hide
but stand with pride.
Give me my cloak now to fashion
a new garment
a new creation
from my past at last!
My cloak and I awoke-
new deeds and fashion await!

Multiple Forms of Violence

Trust was also a major issue. Did you know that the word together can be read as "to get her"? Often, growing up, I thought that is what it meant. Whenever people were together, they seemed to pick on or blame me. I never trusted most of the adults in my life because many of these adults abused me or beat me. If I did dare to tell an adult I thought was

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safe about the abuse, I was not believed. Often, these adults betrayed my trust. I was desperate to escape the abuse so I learned how to dissociate. By dissociate, I mean I separated from my body in my mind. I used my imagination to transport me to other places where I was not abused. The only place I felt safe was in grammar school. Many of my teachers were the only safe adults I ever knew.

At home, I was taught to be silent and endure pain. I related deeply to the crucified figure of Christ. "Offering it up" became a daily action and saying for me. Physical and emotional pain were a regular part of my day. I thought suffering was a normal part of life.

I was also sent to my room without supper. This led to my scrounging for food and keeping it in my room. I ate soup out of a can huddled under my bed in fear. I eventually became overweight. The abuse damaged my relationship with food. I admit I hid behind that weight, hoping abusers would lose interest in me if I were fat. I want to stress here that all overweight people are not survivors, but survivors are often people who have food issues. I also had issues with my body. I still prefer to wear bigger, baggy clothes to hide myself.

As I healed, I slowly began to do physical exercise and started to care for myself in healthy ways, but this was not easy. I know survivors who now battle chronic diseases as a result of their abusive past. Today, I know our bodies are always teaching us about our need to heal and let go, and they don't betray us.

Challenges of Recovery

There are many concerns when you are a survivor, such as trust and boundaries, self-image, depression, and flashbacks.

My ability to trust other people was very damaged. I still prefer to sit in a room where I can see an open door. I need to see who comes into the room. I still cringe if someone comes up behind me or gives me a surprise hug. Even now, boundaries and touch are very linked. As I learned I had a voice, I learned to ask for what I needed. I still struggle with this because the tendency to be a martyr is so instilled within me.

Daily, I am more aware than others of boundaries, potential dangerous situations, and fear. Even textures or the smell of food can be a trigger sometimes. The simplest things could trigger a memory . . . To explain how this works to my Sisters in community is almost impossible.

I recall an example in my life in community that revealed the boundary issue quite clearly. One very hot summer evening, the Sister who lived in the room across from me wanted to know why my door was closed. She wanted me to sleep with my door open due to the heat and need for a breeze. I told her I couldn't do that. She was not happy with my response and not happy with me. My trying to explain why was not successful. She did not understand that if I did this, anyone could walk right into my room. She never knew that I dared not sleep with the window open and slept with a sheet over me even on the hottest nights of the year. Someone could crawl up the fire escape outside my window and come in. This also happened during a time when my flashbacks were happening almost daily, which prevented me from sleeping more than a few hours at a time

Due to my memories of the abuse, I had a poor self-image. I rarely believed in myself and in my ability to accomplish things I attempted to do. I found failure to be very familiar for me and often doubted my abilities. This was similar to how I felt growing up and it led me in and out of bouts of depression. Once I began to believe in myself and have hope that the flashbacks would stop and I would be believed when I spoke, these bouts became less frequent. I was taught that if I gave into these feelings that it was like the perpetrators had power over me all over again. And I wanted the power to rest in me.

Understanding this violation takes years. It permeates my entire being. Daily, I am more aware than others of boundaries, potential dangerous situations, and fear. Even textures or the smell of food can be a trigger sometimes. The simplest things could trigger a memory. Fortunately for me, fifteen years after my realization of being abused, these memories get triggered only occasionally. To explain how this works to my Sisters in community is almost impossible. I liken it to anyone who was in a fire who then sees a candle flame or smells smoke. Seeing a flame or smelling smoke could trigger the memory of the fire. Since 9/11, people are more aware of posttraumatic stress disorder. Survivors suffer a form of PSTD, diagnosed officially or not.

Living in community has helped me learn very valuable lessons. For example, I recall asking a Sister for a hug once and she willingly gave me one and then told me I didn't need to ask for one. My inner child knew and felt differently and yet, because of my work and the fact I was healing, I knew this Sister was not criticizing me! I saw this as an expression of care. This began to open up for me a brand new awareness for me—that my Sisters wanted me and needed me to heal. This helped enable me to see that my healing was possible and already happening. I began to realize that once again, I could dream and see these dreams come true.

Living Now

My relationships today are healthy and have boundaries. I am the first to admit that there are times and situations when I feel victimized but it does not last that long. I struggle sometimes because it is easy for me to slip back into the victim ("poor me") attitude. If I realize that I am feeling victimized, I speak up or do something later to set a boundary and promote a sense of healing within me. For example, I can set a limit on whether I work overtime or not. If I choose

to do so, I realize that if I set a limit, I won't feel victimized later. This is because I made the choice and I need to be responsible for my choices. I am no longer a helpless child.

I have been part of Survivors of Incest Anonymous for years and have found in that Twelve Step group and others, like Al Anon and Adult Children of Alcoholics, the support has enabled me to continue to look at and work with this trauma of childhood abuse. Sisters in my regional community have also been very supportive. I have been able to receive therapy and counseling from different women throughout the years. My regional community has been very supportive in providing these funds without question.

I have found other Sisters, not just within the Sisters of Mercy, who are also survivors and for a time, we met to form our own support group. This was very helpful for me.

Many of the survivors I know, both men and women, lay and religious, struggle in the same way. It may be true that living in a community offers more support. And not being in a sexual relationship may enable healing. Surviving can be anyone's need, regardless of his or her vocation.

Much of what enables a person to heal, to move from survivor to thriver or lifer or whatever way one wants to describe their restoration is pure grace. For me, this grace has been a miracle. My retreats and daily prayer times have challenged me and anointed me with what I needed to heal. I have learned how to have compassion for myself and for others. The acts of forgiveness I have been called to make have greatly gifted my healing journey. Each one was very hard for me to do. With each one, the process varied, but became easier. I used rituals to make this forgiveness real for me. For example, visiting the cemetery, writing letters I never sent but burned. Forgiveness is a gift and a grace. Yes, I CAN forgive, but I shall never forget. To forget would give my perpetrators power over me all over again.

Church, Theology, Spirituality

Since the sexual abuse scandals the Church has taken a more helpful stance. No longer on the sidelines, is perhaps the best way to describe it. For me, the Church has not been a crucial element in my healing. For others I know, it has been. This is true for me regarding the legal system as well. The diocese where I minister has strongly enforced their policy regarding victims' allegations of sexual abuse by Church personnel. I find this a way for the Church to be supportive of survivors. I also realize that the statute of limitations has been a deep frustration for survivors whose memories are still very real, but who are now as adults "too old to press charges."

My image of God has radically changed since I was a little girl identifying with the crucified Jesus. It has moved from "Christology from above" to "Christology from below." As a little girl, my image of God was three distinct parts, God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost. At that time, God the Father was a very old man with a long white beard and a book where sins were recorded. I was very afraid of God the Father and was convinced my name was written many, many times in that book. I was very angry at this image because he let Jesus be tortured and die on the cross. Jesus was either the kind person I heard about at Church or dead on the cross. The Holy Ghost was the link between the Father and Jesus and looked like a bird.

I CAN forgive, but I shall never forget. To forget would give my perpetrators power over me all over again.

As I grew up, I realized that God was really much more than this image. I began to believe more in a better image of father at the same time. I think these images changed as a result of my maturing and understanding that some fathers can be compassionate and caring. Once I entered the convent, I learned much more about the image of God. My image of God began to change when I began to spend more time in prayer and began to go on retreats. Again and again, my understanding of God was challenged by what I was learning. My past experience clashed with my new understanding.

I began to find my voice and speak about the abuse. I even spoke about it in prayer. How could God love me and let the abuse happen? Where was God in the abuse? Was God even there? The anger I

I refused to use the word Father to describe God and found myself drawn to a Mother image of God. This image eventually helped me work through my anger . . . Then, one day, I realized that God wanted the abuse to stop more than I did!

had at God was very scary for me to feel and work with. For months, I refused to use the word Father to describe God and found myself drawn to a Mother image of God. This was a nurturing image, which eventually helped me work through my anger. My therapist helped me a great deal. Then, one day, it happened. I realized that God wanted the abuse to stop more than I did! This converted my image of God in an instant.

My relationship with Jesus also became much more intimate. To read the Scriptures and place myself in them was risky, but very healing for me. For example, to imagine Jesus looking into my eyes and not condemning me took me a very long time to believe. To imagine myself listening to Jesus speak and proclaiming Jesus to others was healing. To begin to understand that the Holy Spirit is more like the inspiration and love energy between the Father and the Son was another dramatic moment. My relationship with God is ever changing. And I thank God for that.

Resources for the Healing Process

Resources for this process are abundant. My "bible" for healing is the book *Courage to Heal* and the workbook that goes with it. My own journaling has been a great source. I am also my own resource. Listening to the stories of other men and women survivors is very valuable in supporting my healing. I admit that Oprah Winfrey's sharing her journey was helpful for me

I have special insights and strength from my survivorship. I have a few close friends with whom I share my life. These people are very important to me. Some know my history—or herstory as I prefer to call it—and some do not. My ministry among women and children especially bears a sense of compassion that I do not believe I ever thought I would have. In the past, I would ask, "why me?" My healing took a leap the day I asked instead, "Why NOT me? Who better?"

The call to heal has led me to a depth within myself to be with those in pain and sorrow and despair. It has gifted me in ways that I have yet to discover. The strength I had to endure what I did now blesses me with the strength I need on a regular basis. For example, strength to watch our numbers shrinking and see those Sisters I so care about go home to God.

The legacy of mercy has totally saturated my life, much like the tears that so soaked me for years and years. It is written in Jeremiah (29:12) that God has proclaimed:

> Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes . . ."

No truer lines were ever written! It is my prayer that all who read this account can experience the depth of God's love and compassion as much as I have, but be spared such a traumatic and very painful process.

Resources

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The Wrath of God
A Sign of Hope?

Mary C. Daly, R.S.M.

It's hard to think of the wrath of God this morning as I sit looking over the snow-capped Rocky Mountains listening to the soughing of the wind through the pines. The mule deer and the elk graze peacefully all round, seemingly unafraid of their human neighbors. I ponder the majesty of the mountains, the peace of the pine trees clothing the nearby hills, the dignity and reverence of the animals whether elk, deer, ptarmigan, crows, and big horn sheep. Wrath, violence, anger seem not only far removed, but would certainly be unwelcome intruders. The atmosphere of the mountains does not seem to entertain them.

Yet two incidents related to this area and jarring to the sense of peace come into mind. The first was sometime in the 1990s when the Big Thompson River overflowed in the canyon leading out of Estes Park causing destruction of homes and businesses and loss of life. The second incident occurred in 1995. Samson, a revered twelve year old elk, a regular visitor to this YMCA camp, was shot and killed by a poacher. The poacher was apprehended and prosecuted.

These are two different sorts of incidents disturbing, in two different ways, our sense of that peaceful tranquility of order. In the first, we are in touch with the devastating power of nature, a power mirroring that uncontrolled and often destructive passion associated with anger and wrath. Natural events, especially those sudden happenings beyond human understanding or control have long been ascribed to divine judgments. Insurance policies and airlines call certain events "acts of God" as they disclaim responsibility for the harm. Such events often witness to an understanding of God as that Being beyond our control, beyond our human judgment, who is inclined to bring punishment on us.

In the killing of the elk, we are in touch with our own wrath rising from a violation of respect that disrupts the ideal of peaceful relations between human beings and a gentle majestic animal in nature. In the arrest of the poacher, we feel satisfaction knowing he is caught. Closure is brought. At least this one did not get away with his evil deed. For the public, there is perhaps a vain hope that the poacher's prison term will give opportunity for repentance.

Yet feelings of vengeance mar and indeed often overcome a desire for the sinner's repentance. "The fellow needs to suffer!" These feelings arise toward a poacher who killed an elk! Magnificent as that creature is and however heinous its killing, the destruction of human beings in war and genocide far outstrips it. Outrage at such massive killing generates similar feelings of anger and vengeance. Yet the poster picture sold by the park of the elk resting majestically amid the snows and pines of the Rockies, a full rack of antlers crowning his serene gaze, witnesses to the mysterious link—the violent killing of both human beings and the elk incites our rage. We are drawn into contemplation of a deep mystery hidden in the dynamic of our responses to these acts of violence.

Preachers' View of Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God

Preachers who interpret the First or Old Testament have had a heyday with incidents like floods and

Natural events, especially those sudden happenings beyond human understanding or control have long been ascribed to divine judgments.

untimely deaths. In trying to understand the raging river, we can hear them saying that the righteousness of God had risen up and hurled thundering water upon sinners unrepentant in their evil ways. As to the poacher, we can hear the preacher insisting that believers obedient to a righteous God would demand retribution against such a man whose actions have violated the order nature established by a provident God who cares for all living things.

For many people, the First Testament evokes a picture of God compatible with the sermon for which the colonial era New England preacher, Jonathan Edward is remembered, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Such a picture of God would sometimes seem to emerge from reading portions of Israel's history as seen through the eyes of the scriptural writer. There are many references to God's wrath in both Testaments of scripture that reinforce this image. Wrath appears in the Bible as a characteristic of God. Wrath is the destructive and punishing power of the divine.

As wrath is our reaction to a wrong inflicted on us, we attribute the same emotion to the Being who created us in the divine image. But what is the effect of our attribution of wrath to God ?

However, we also recognize something in Divine Being that resonates with human experience in response to the presence of evil, in human beings or in nature, that we cannot avoid. We name it "wrath" in God, after the human experience. There is a circular connection. As wrath is our reaction to a wrong inflicted on us, we attribute the same emotion to the Being who created us in the divine image. But what is the effect of our attribution of wrath to God ? What do the Scripture writers see as the source from which God's wrath flows?

Struggling with the Idea of Wrath in God

In the First Testament, God's wrath is felt against both the Hebrew nation and foreign nations, against individuals and against society. Underneath God's wrath lies a deep sense of the people's belonging to God and the implications of that belonging. The One to whom they belong loves them fiercely and acts fiercely on their behalf. Thus the Israelites read the events of their time in light of this perception of the claim of God's love on them. Anyone who harms God's people will themselves be harmed. This threat expresses the conviction, "God loves us. We have been chosen by God and we belong to God."

In the case of God's wrath punishing the Israelites themselves, this is understood by the prophets as proof that God's love makes demands, and proof that God expects love in return. Time and again, the prophets lay out for Israel the claim of God's love upon them and the invitation to a response. They make clear the moral claim of the covenant with their Creator.

We interpret this claim of God and the resistance of the Israelites as a clash of wills: God's will against the people's choice or the individual's choice. If God's will is not followed, punishment results. Scripture writers sometimes interpret the consequence of disobedience as divine wrath lashing out against those who have offended God. In this projection, God sets about correcting evil through the infliction of suffering, since that is how human beings deal with disobedience. Such an interpretation has its dangers. It can demonize God as a vindictive, punishing, power-grabbing Being who wants to dominate at any cost since such "punishing" acts often fall indiscriminately upon the good and the bad, an injustice perpetrated now by One whom we want to understand as compassionate, merciful and just.

Yet if we look at the situation from another perspective, we see something different, and move from a moralistic to what can be called an "essential" understanding. By "essential," I mean that God is in continuing relationship with those who have come forth from the divine Being. It is a relationship of love, compassion, and of belonging one to another. Violating that relationship has consequences. It is not so much a punitive consequence, expressed in the threat, "Do that or I will punish

you." Rather, it is a consequence inherent in the structure of being itself. When you deny the way reality is structured, it will hurt. One who cuts off a foot will limp. One who cuts off a neighbor will cause society to limp. For good or for ill, we impact one another by who we are and what we do. There is something in the inherent nature of our being as individuals, as society , as nature, that cannot be violated without consequence to that being.

This concept applies to the Covenant relationship of human beings and God. We live out a relationship with God in our day-to-day relationship with each other, and in the context of our earthly environment. When we violate that relationship with nature, it has consequences for human society. Injustice against a single person affects society as a whole, and results in violence, crime, social unrest, domination of one people by another, and war. Do we see this as God punishing us, or rather as God's order of creation, of nature taking its course?

A different model for understanding God, one also derived from our experience, is that of a family that must deal with a dysfunctional member. Wrath, anger, and punishment often fail to have an effect or bring about reform. Misplaced love and compassion can have the same result and can actually do harm to the member. Such a situation takes careful discernment of loving insightful members who can both assess the situation and determine what is best for the dysfunctional member and make the hard choices that are called for. By not shielding a dysfunctional member from the consequences of his or her behavior, the others can help the member to face reality and make more life-affirming choices.

This is a hard stance to take. Family members want to come across as compassionate, not as challenging. They want to offer comforting love, not hard love. But if they have the real good of the member at heart, they will not capitulate to the dysfunctional pattern. They will hold out loving support, but will call the self-destructive person to face the reality of the situation. In a similar way, God calls us.

How To Read the Vengeance Passages

While such a view may help us understand God's "tough love," it does not disguise the wrath and cry for vengeance seen on the pages of Scripture. How are we to read such passages? In *Praying the Psalms*, Walter Brueggemann gives us some helpful insights into understanding the scriptural description of God's vengeance.[1] He reminds us that Scripture mirrors our own desire for vengeance; he challenges us to own it in ourselves and bring it before God. He notes that in Scripture, vengeance belongs to God and therefore Scripture calls us to surrender our own exercise of vengeance to God. The scripture writer perceives that God's is a limited vengeance in contrast to God's compassion. For God sends compassion to a thousand generations, but wrath only to four.

In Scripture, vengeance belongs to God and therefore Scripture calls us to surrender our own exercise of vengeance to God. The scripture writer perceives that God's is a limited vengeance in contrast to God's compassion. For God sends compassion to a thousand generations, but wrath only to four.

Brueggemann sees vengeance in Scripture as the other side of God's compassion. For the biblical writer, God's love for the Israelites results in vengeance against an alien people who tread on Israel's rights. Brueggemann finds a hint that the biblical writers realized flaws in their perception of wrath in God. And so they describe God's punishment through the flood tinged with divine grief and sorrow. This same change from wrath to sorrow occurs in Hos 11:1–9. After the usual expression of God's anger in vv. 1–7, we find in vv. 8 and 9 that God's own heart is overwhelmed and stirred to pity. Brueggemann says that in this profound moment, God breaks with the habits of heaven and earth. God presents "himself" in radical graciousness. "He" is "God and not man." This God is also a God unlike any of the other gods (cf. Psalm 82).[2]

In other passages, we see that the prophets attributed anger and wrath to the divine in response to the self-destructive behavior of God's dysfunctional family. We see the outcome of that dysfunction narrated in the history of the tribes of Israel and Judah in a cycle of sin, punishment, and repentance. A similar cycle is seen in the wars and destruction inflicted on the nations of the mid-East. For the editors of the sacred pages, such a history had to be understood as the unfolding of demands of the relationship between God and the Israelites. Yet even as they attributed disasters to God's wrath, they could not do so without also expressing the compassion of God's love. The Israelites gradually came to understand that God's love extended to all human beings. Little by little, the pages speak of a God whose care and love extend beyond the boundaries of Israel and Judah. This is a God who grieves for all those who suffer.

Though the prophets proclaimed and threatened the people with the consequences of their actions, they did not proclaim a God of wrath but rather the wrath of a God who loves them.

Hope and Despair

The Hebrew people found hope for the future and for themselves in a God who cares and who thus can be offended. This is a God who desires love and relationship, who is affected by human life and struggle, and who expresses wrath when offended. Though the prophets proclaimed and threatened the people with the consequences of their actions, they did not proclaim a God of wrath but rather the wrath of a God who loves them. For God's basic nature is love and mercy (Exod 34:6–7). God's wrath is the outcome of God's care about the same people. This is a God who will right wrongs and bring an end to injustice even if the people themselves do not.

A society that has no God concerned with human affairs may have difficulty rising above their inevitable despair. Eventually, they must despair over their inability to change historical forces, whether political or economic, whether in church or in society. They must despair over their inability to reverse greed, to protect the environment, or to untangle all the difficulties and right all the injustices that abound in our world. For the people of Scripture, God is a God who cares, who promises to rectify injustices they suffer, and even the injustices they perpetrate. Knowing such a God enables people to work for that same outcome God is working for, the work of a just God in their midst. They are called to move beyond their own limitations and join with the power of a just God who saves.

Leaving Violence

It is not strange that we see God in terms of our own human nature. As Voltaire comments, "God has made us to God's image and we have returned the complement." Scripture presents us not only with many images of God but also challenges us to deal with these images and what they say about us as well as God. We know a God who cares and that God resides within us empowering us by God's own power to confront injustice. As Brueggemann notes:

> "But, finally, we come to those staggering ethical injunctions about love in the place of vengeance:
>
> —You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjus (Matt. 5:44–45).
>
> —You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5:48).
>
> —Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them (Lk. 6:28).
>
> —Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Deut. 3:25; Rom. 12:19).
>
> —Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).
>
> This is the most extreme claim made in this regard. But notice, these ethical statements are in fact theological claims. What we are to do relates to who God

is: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). The possibility of a vengeance-free ethic is rooted in the staggering reality of God. And so we are driven to the crucifixion, in which God has decisively dealt with the reality of evil that must be judged. God has responded with "his" own powerful inclination for justice.[3] There is no less of vengeance in the New Testament. But God has wrought it in "his" own person, and so the world has been purged and grace has overcome.[4]

God's Love Surpasses Our Own

The challenge of the Incarnation is that we move with the God who moves within us, within society, to bring about God's reign. This is obedience to God, who is at work within us and within the cosmos. It is God who makes things right, who rectifies injustice. God does this in Jesus who, in accepting the cross, absorbs all vengeance and wrath. Jesus is faithful in love for humanity and for all creation in a love that endures beyond death. It is living into this dynamic Being of God that we are invited in our own struggle for justice. It is in this that we find our hope.

We know ourselves as conflicted persons, people of both wrath and love. While these traits may be exercised in an arbitrary fashion in humans, we do not say the same of God. The God that Scripture presents is not capricious, but surpasses our knowing. This calls us to live with hope in the mystery of mercy and justice surpassing our understanding. Then we can read Scripture as a testimony to human beings and their struggles to understand themselves before God as well as a testimony to God and God's call to us. We will understand it as opening to a future that we are called to co-create with all of God's creation.

The God that Scripture presents is not capricious, but surpasses our knowing. This calls us to live with hope in the mystery of mercy and justice surpassing our understanding.

We can see, in the mountains and in the elk, the moose, the big horn sheep, the being and majesty of the divine reflected in God's creation. We see this reflection also in the dynamic of a community that learns to manage earth's resources according to nature's being, and thus prevent or deal with destructive flooding. Such a community can temper justice toward others with mercy. It can enact codes of conduct that embody respect for creation—for its own goodness, rather than simply for its service to humankind. Such a community works to create peaceful relationships with all peoples. It seeks to rectify injustice in creative rather than simply punitive ways. It reflects the unity of all being in the harmony of God.

Notes

1 Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms* (Winona, Minn.: St. Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 1973), 67–80.
2 Ibid, 77.
3 Brueggemann places quotation marks around masculine references to God to indicate their problematic nature.
4 Ibid, 78f.

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Violence of the Iraq War and Just War Theory

Elizabeth Linehan, R.S.M.

The revision of the Institute Direction Statement from the 2005 Chapter calls us all to the practice of nonviolence. Surrounded as we are by violence and news of violence, perhaps complicit ourselves in the doing of violence, we need this challenge. However, its meaning is not self-evident. In this essay, I will discuss the just war tradition, which has provided a framework for Catholic moral teaching on war.

War is violent by definition. Richard Wasserstrom's definition is as good as any: "Typically . . . war is an international phenomenon involving the use of a certain amount of deadly force under a claim of right."[1] Recent history suggests strong reasons for condemning wars. And yet the tradition of the Catholic Church is that a nation is sometimes justified in resorting to war.[2] The 1983 letter of the U.S. Catholic bishops, *The Challenge of Peace*, took the new step of accepting pacifism as a legitimate option for individual Catholics, but stopped short of applying this to governments.

The Challenge of Peace was written more than twenty-five years ago in the context of the Cold War and nuclear deterrence. Much of it addresses the morality of possessing weapons of mass destruction. Under the very different conditions of today's wars, we might ask whether the just war tradition still viable. Today, should we reject the violence of war unequivocally and completely?

The urgent question to ask in response to recent history is how the just war theory could be a morally viable way of analyzing war, if it can be appealed to as justification for the U.S. attack on Iraq, and possibly an attack on Iran.

The U.S. war with Iraq that began in 2003 seems to provide strong reasons for rejecting the whole idea of a "just" war. The Bush administration appealed to just war criteria (explicitly or implicitly) in attacking Iraq. The administration claimed that this was a war of self-defense against unjust aggression of terrorists and nations that harbor terrorists. They claimed that a preemptive strike was called for based on Iraq's supposed cache of weapons of mass destruction, and Saddam Hussein's intention to use them. Since economic sanctions had supposedly failed, and Hussein was not cooperating with U.N. inspections, war was the only viable option ("last resort"). The anticipated positive results would significantly outweigh the anticipated harms to all parties ("proportion"). Attacks would be limited to military targets, using the increasingly precise technology available today ("discrimination").

Four years later, Iraq is a continuing disaster. The Bush administration is using ominous rhetoric now about the threat posed by Iraq's neighbor, Iran. Some political commentators are saying that this rhetoric is the buildup to a "preemptive" strike on that nation. If that happens, the same just war criteria will very likely be invoked to justify the attack. The urgent question to ask in response to this recent history is how the theory could be a morally viable way of analyzing war, if it can be appealed to as justification for the U.S. attack on Iraq, and possibly an attack on Iran. My response to this question has two parts: 1) I will argue that the Bush administration's appeal to just war theory is an abuse of it; and 2) I will offer some reasons for continuing to defend the just war tradition, and using it to critique nearly all arguments for war making in the contemporary world. Given

space limitations, both parts of my response will have to be painted with a broad brush, leaving details to be filled in by others.

Is the Iraq War a Just War?

Among the most important issues raised by the attempt to apply the just war tradition to the 2003 war with Iraq are these:

1. The blurring of an essential line between self-defense against actual or certain and imminent attack, and "preventive war." The more remote the possibility of another nation attacking our nation or its allies—remote either in the time it would take to develop necessary weapons, or remote in the timetable of the potential attacker—the more opportunity for measures of self-protection other than war. A true "preemptive" strike in self defense happens when the threat is grave and imminent, as was arguably the case in the Israelis' first strike against Egypt in the 1967 Six Day War.[3]

2. Treating the "war on terrorism" as if the term "war" was being used univocally, so that everything that applies to a war between one nation and another applies here. Thus, President Bush claims war powers under the War Powers Act, and defines as legitimate targets of attack any nation that "harbors terrorists"—whatever that means. As Neta Crawford argues, this implies "though terrorist organizations may have only a few thousand adherents residing among a population of millions, an entire country may become the focus of retaliation for terrorism."[4] In the context of Iraq, the soldiers of that nation defended their country, not any policy of sheltering terrorists, and so it is difficult to see them as legitimate targets of hostility under the just war theory.

   In fact, it is not obvious that terrorist attacks should be defined as acts of war at all, rather than crimes. If crimes, they should be dealt with using all the resources of domestic and international law enforcement. Bryan Hehir and others have made this case. As Hehir wrote in *America* in 2001, "Containing and capturing terrorists is by definition a function of police and legal networks. War is an indiscriminate tool for this highly discriminating task."[5]

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3. The number of civilian deaths in Iraq as a result of the war is a matter of dispute. President Bush estimated it at 30,000 in December of 2005. The web site "Iraq Body Count" estimates conservatively between 56,000 and 62,000 in mid-February, 2007.[6] A study published in the British medical journal *The Lancet* in October of 2006 claimed the number of "excess deaths" in Iraq since the war began was 655,000.[7] The United States does not officially keep count of Iraqis killed in the war. Any claim that the principle of proportion is being respected in conducting operations there is made dubious by the willful ignoring of actual consequences for anyone other than Americans. "Proportion" of benefits to harms in just war tradition applies to all affected, of any nation. No matter which estimate of Iraqi deaths one accepts, the harms are disproportionate.

Defending the Just War Tradition, Weakly

Catholic teaching on the morality of war is intended to put the burden of proof on those who propose to go to war, and to make the resort to war difficult to justify. As the U.S. Catholic bishops write, "Just-war teaching . . . has evolved as an effort to prevent war."[8] Once a war has begun, the teaching aims at limiting the harms done by war, especially to noncombatants. In an article that is extremely critical of the U.S. counterterror war (as "not just in the moral sense"), Neta Crawford offers

this argument for continuing to take the just war tradition seriously:

> The invocation of the just war tradition by the Bush administration, along with the fact that the conduct of the U.S. counterterror war seems to have been at least in part influenced by it, indicates that just war theory makes a military and political difference . . . The theory is remarkably resilient.[9]

Even though it may often be more "honored in the breach," the moral tradition of just war is widely accepted. As such it is still perhaps more effective as a bulwark against the worst atrocities nations might commit against other nations—or more effective than the more demanding position of pacifism that many regard as impractical. That is essentially the classical argument given by G.E.M. Anscombe in her 1961 essay "War and Murder." As she writes,

> Now pacifism teaches people to make no distinction between the shedding of innocent blood and the shedding of any human blood. And in that way pacifism has corrupted enormous numbers of people who will not act according to its tenets. They become convinced that a number of things are wicked which are not; hence, seeing no way of avoiding "wickedness," they set no limits to it.[10]

I would certainly dispute her understanding of pacifism as based on a misinterpretation of the New Testament admonition to offer no resistance to evil, to "turn the other cheek." *The Challenge of Peace* offers a very helpful clarification: "The vision of Christian nonviolence is not passive about injustice and the defense of the rights of others; it rather affirms and exemplifies what it means to resist injustice through non-violent means." (par. 116) Thus they can support a "pacifist option" for individuals. (par. 119)

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Further, I believe that tremendous work needs to be done to make it possible for individuals, groups, and even nations to resist evil and defend human rights through nonviolent direct action. That is where my heart is, but it is not where most of the world is.

Reaffirming Just War Theory

I believe that just war principles, taken seriously, make most wars in the contemporary world extremely difficult to justify. When a number of nations have (or have the capacity to develop) weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, and chemical), the cost of war is inevitably very high. There is no realistic way these costs can be restricted to "combatants." Moreover, applying the criterion of "proportionality" requires counting all of the burdens a war imposes, including the severe burdens to a population on the economic margins of survival, the result of redirecting national resources from domestic needs to war making.

Given the damage anticipated from a contemporary war, the requirements of "just cause" and "last resort" become especially stringent. Perhaps before we discuss "last resort," we need to discuss "first (and second, and third) resort." The United Nations, for example, could be a greater force for resolving international conflicts if the most powerful nation in the world supported it. Diplomatic initiatives are not a default approach, taken only when violence has been ineffective, but the strategy of the strong and confident.

On the question of just cause, we need a robust discussion of the vast difference between an armed response to unjust aggression against innocent people, and a war undertaken to "preclude any hostile power from dominating a region critical to our [U.S.] interests . . ."[11] The just war tradition offers categories in which that discussion can go on. It will suggest stringent limits on the use of force to pursue national interests.

The realistic choice we have today is between 1) abandoning a theory rooted in Catholic tradition, influential far beyond Catholic circles, and 2) revitalizing that theory in the context of the twenty-first century. Many of its fundamental insights are enshrined in international law. This acceptance—even when it is merely verbal—provides ground for shaping consensus about particular conflict situations.

Much as I am personally attracted to the pacifist option, joined with strategic nonviolent direct action, it does not enjoy the same broad support. This reality is sufficient reason to continue to support just war restrictions on the use of armed force, and to invite others to join us.

Notes

1 "The Morality of War: a Preliminary Inquiry," *War and Morality*, ed. Richard Wasserstrom (Belmont, CA., 1970), p. 304.

2 Leaders of a nation may even be morally *required* to enter into a war to defend their people against unjust aggression. *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (U.S. Catholic Conference, 1983), par. 75.

3 Michael Walzer discusses this event in *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), pp. 82–85.

4 "Just War Theory and the U.S. Counterterror War, American Political Science Association (www.apsanet.org), 2003: 17.

5 "What Can Be Done? What Should Be Done?" (October, 2001): 11. Cited by Crawford, p. 16.

6 www.iraqbodycount.org; February 13, 2007.

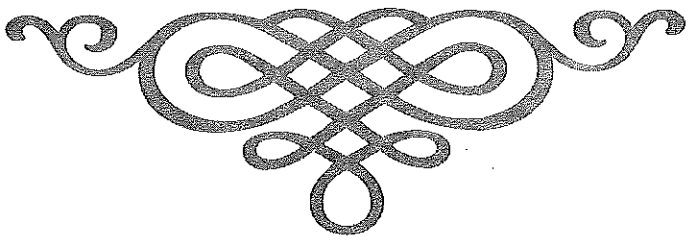
7 David Brown, "Study Claims Iraq's 'Excess' Death Toll Has Reached 655,000," *The Washington Post* (Wednesday, October 11, 2006), A12.

8 *The Challenge of Peace* (1980), par. 83.

9 "Just War Theory and the U.S. Counterterror War, American Political Science Association (www.apsanet.org), 2003: 20.

10 Reprinted in James Rachels, Ed., *Moral Problems* 3rd Edition (Harper and Row, 1979), p. 402.

11 Richard B. Cheney, "Defense Strategy for the 1990s: the Regional Defense Strategy" (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Defense, 1993). Quoted by Dale Snauwaert, "The Bush Doctrine and Just War Theory," OJPCR: *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution* 6.1 (Fall, 2004): 125.



Misuse of Just War Theory
How a Double Standard of News Reporting Encourages Violence

Ruth Lautt, O.P.

Teach me your way O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence.
Ps 27:11–12

In early January of this year, I visited Yad Vashem in Jerusalem with a group of Protestant ministers. At one point, I found myself standing in front of an exhibit that recalled a massacre of Jews early in the Nazi period. The Nazis rounded up a group of Jews. Then they invited their non-Jewish neighbors to shout and yell at the Jews about every misdeed, no matter how small, they could recall each one ever committing.

I felt as if I had been struck by a bolt of lightning. In one terrible moment I realized how effective a tool this could be for encouraging hatred and violence against a group of people. By focusing intensely on the ordinary, human sins—lies, grudges, failure to repay debts—of one particular group of people, another group could feel justified in allowing or even abetting the punishment, even slaughter, of those people. And I realized you could do this to any people by simply applying a standard to them that you apply to no one else.

We are called into areas of conflict, not to take sides or stoke the flames of discord by presenting a biased and skewed version of the facts, but to be peacemakers.

Resisting a Double Standard

A "double standard" is a moral code applied more strictly to one group than to another. The use of a double standard when assessing human conduct raises ethical concerns because, when a moral code is applied more vigorously to the behavior of one group, it has a foreseeable impact . It makes that group appear to be guilty of more than their share of wrongdoing. Inevitably a double standard casts that group in an unfavorable light.

A double standard thus encourages prejudice and the likelihood of persecution and violence. It is particularly troubling when the group being judged more strictly is a historically oppressed people, already vulnerable to scapegoating and persecution.

The gospel brings Christians face to face with situations of conflict because of our very mandate to renounce violence and work towards reconciliation whenever and wherever we can.

We are called into areas of conflict, not to take sides or stoke the flames of discord by presenting a biased and skewed version of the facts, but to be peacemakers. We are called to bear witness to the goal of peace and work towards the possibility of reconciliation. Christian peacemaking, however, always requires truth telling.[1] It does not tolerate selective application of moral principles, which is a partisan tendency. Ultimately, selective application of norms is untruthful and unjust because it has the effect, if not the goal, of making one party appear in a more negative light than the other.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict

One area of conflict that has captured the interest of many American Christians is the longstanding Arab-Israeli conflict. The reason for this interest lies both in the historical roots of Christianity in the Holy Land and the American churches' long stand-

ing relationship with Palestinian Christians and legitimate concern over their suffering.

Coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict by the mainstream Christian press and social justice advocates, however, reveals that Israel is subjected to a moral double standard. No other country is subject to such endless scrutiny by Christian commentators, who place Israel under a critical and ethical microscope. These commentators seem almost to lie in wait to pounce whenever they conclude that the Jewish state has strayed from a standard they apply to no other country and no other group of people. This inclination should raise an immediate red flag especially because of the historical oppression of Jews by Christians.

We have seen this double standard in the pages of the Jesuit weekly magazine *America*. In its reporting of the recent conflicts between Israel and Hamas for example, there has been a persistence in stressing what *America* portrays as a disproportionate response on the part of Israel, while virtually ignoring the fact that Israel has been the victim of unprovoked attacks from territory from which it had previously withdrawn.

Coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict by the mainstream Christian press and social justice advocates, however, reveals that Israel is subjected to a moral double standard.

Israel withdrew from Gaza in the fall of 2005, giving over that territory to the Palestinians without asking reciprocal concessions. Unfortunately, instead of seizing the opportunity for what could have been the start of a Palestinian homeland, Gaza was turned into a base for the daily firing of Qassam rockets into Israeli towns, terrorizing its civilian population and making normal life impossible.

Then on June 25, 2006, Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped by a Hamas squad that crossed the border from Gaza into Israel. In response, Israel's Defense Forces entered the Gaza Strip as part of Operation Summer Rains. In addition to their hope of freeing the kidnapped soldier, the Israelis had the broader goal of ending the continuous Qassam rocket attacks.

In its August 14–21, 2006 edition, *America* published an article about these events in Gaza clearly emblematic of a double standard. In an article written by Rev. Donald Moore, S.J., Palestinian aggression and terror tactics were brushed aside with a single reference to the "senseless firing of Qassam rockets." Fr. Moore then proceeded to devote three full pages to a condemnation of Israel's defensive tactics.

The article used inflammatory phrases like "collective torture" to describe Israeli military incursions into Gaza, but never mentioned the "facts on the ground" from the Israeli perspective. For example, no mention was made of the town of Sderot which lies a kilometer from the Gaza Strip and whose residents to this day talk of the terror they experience when, more than one year after Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, they are still being attacked daily by Qassam rocket fire.

Principles of the Just War Tradition

Early Christian writers often, though not universally, condemned any involvement in war. From the time of Constantine, however, Christian thought was more willing to acknowledge that sometimes war may be unavoidable. St. Augustine helped develop what became the just war doctrine by defending war that was undertaken for the good of society, when its end was peace.[2]

Just war doctrine includes two categories of principles. First, *jus ad bellum,* is used to assess when a state may go to war. It includes a careful balancing of the presence of the following factors: 1) just cause, 2) comparative justice, 3) legitimate authority, 4) right intention, 5) probability of success and 6) whether or not force is being used as a last resort. Only after it is determined that a state may morally opt to go to war, the standards of *jus in bello* are imposed for the conduct of armed conflict: 1) noncombatant immunity—military personnel must take due care to avoid and minimize indirect harm to civilians; 2) proportionality—efforts must be made to avoid disproportionate collateral damage to civilian life and property; and 3) right intention—even in

the midst of conflict, the aim of political and military leaders must be peace with justice.[3]

Thus, there is a presumption against war, coupled with strict moral standards to determine when lethal force may be used. The rules of *jus in bello* then serve as strict moral guidelines once a state of belligerency has begun.

U.S. Catholic Bishops Exhort Evenhandedness

Foreseeing the temptation of selective application of teachings on war and peace, the National Council of Catholic Bishops made it clear that care must be taken not to apply just war doctrine selectively or with a double standard aimed at justifying or favoring one side or position.[4]

Rather, application must be based on accurate facts and applied in a fair and balanced manner which treats both sides of an issue.[5] Manipulating just war theory to arrive at a predetermined position undermines the doctrine and constitutes an abuse of ethical principles.

Thus, the bishops stated the following:

> The just-war tradition is not a weapon to be used to justify a political conclusion . . . . Policy-makers, advocates and opponents of the use of force need to be careful not to apply the tradition selectively, simply to justify their own positions. Likewise, any application of just-war principles depends on the availability of accurate information . . . [6]

America magazine, for example, has frequently couched its criticism of Israel's behavior in the language of the Christian just war doctrine. Too often, however, we found that *America* magazine did not abide by the bishops' admonition. Instead of applying just war principles in a comprehensive and balanced manner, the writers and editors of *America* used the language of just war doctrine to portray only Israel's actions in a negative light. Focusing almost entirely on Israel's behavior, the magazine ignored the challenges that just war principles would have raised about Israel's adversaries, and testing their military moves by the same standard applied to Israel.

As of the summer of 2006, residents of the Israeli town of Sderot had been living under the scourge of rockets which Hamas launched from the Gaza strip for more than a year (considerations relevant to *jus ad bellum*). But the strongest expression of outrage about these attacks appearing in *America* was an acknowledgment that they were "senseless."[7]

In the same report, on the other hand, *America* accused Israel of having violated the *jus in bello* principle of proportionality, cynically employing the voice of the grieving father of a kidnapped soldier to assist in its condemnation of Israel: "Whether brute force alone, without any negotiations, can win Gilad Shalit's freedom remains to be seen. Whatever the outcome, such force must be condemned."[8]

This passage seems to suggest that Israel's only goal in the military incursion into Gaza was to obtain the freedom of one soldier, in spite of what the author refers to as the "senseless firing of Qassam rockets from northern Gaza, many of which have struck cities in southern Israel." Nowhere does the author acknowledge Israel's significant interests in stopping daily rocket attacks on its civilian population and preventing future kidnappings of its soldiers. Yet, these issues are part of a balanced consideration of *jus ad bellum*.

By failing to acknowledge all the issues at stake,

Manipulating just war theory to arrive at a predetermined position undermines the doctrine and constitutes an abuse of ethical principles.

America seemed to be applying the moral principles of just war doctrine selectively to encourage readers to believe that Israel was using excessive force to achieve what were in essence minor goals.

In an October 2, 2006 editorial entitled "Unending War," the staff at *America* again placed the state of Israel under their selective ethical lens as they commented on the Israel-Hezbollah war of summer 2006. Once more, the focus was on Israel's violation of *jus in bello* in what *America* went so far as to categorize—wholly without basis or explanation—as an "attempt to effect ethnic cleansing."

America ignored the defensive nature of the war Israel fought after Hezbollah (a group which, like Hamas, is openly dedicated to Israel's destruction)

launched a barrage of rockets at both civilian and military targets in northern Israel. Soon thereafter, Hezbollah crossed into Israel, killed eight soldiers and kidnapped two others.

Hezbollah's attack on Israel was unprovoked and without justification as it occurred six years after Israel had withdrawn completely from Lebanon. And the Iranian-backed militia presented a serious military threat to Israel. According to a recent speech by Hezbollah's leader Sheik Nasrallah, Hezbollah spent six years amassing approximately 20,000 highly sophisticated rockets and other weapons *after* Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000.

Yet, all of this and the failure of U.N. security forces and the Lebanese government to disarm Hezbollah (strong arguments relevant to *jus ad bellum*) were given little, if any, treatment in the pages of *America*.

One hears cries of "Israeli apartheid" in what has become almost a mantra recently in Christian social justice circles.[11] But the apartheid analogy bears no resemblance to the reality of Israeli society. It serves only to perpetrate an inflammatory form of defamation that may have the unfortunate effect of increasing conflict.

Charge of Apartheid Leveled Selectively at Israel

Another glaring example of double standard in Christian coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict is Jimmy Carter's recent book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid.*[9] The book has come under widespread criticism for its selective application of moral scrutiny to the State of Israel. The problems begin with the book's very title.[10]

One hears cries of "Israeli apartheid" in what has become almost a mantra recently in Christian social justice circles.[11] But the apartheid analogy bears no resemblance to the reality of Israeli society. It serves only to perpetrate an inflammatory form of defamation that may have the unfortunate effect of increasing conflict by encouraging an unwarranted animosity towards the Jewish state.

President Carter focuses his apartheid analogy on security measures Israel takes in the Palestinian territories. While Israeli policies such as construction of a security barrier and checkpoints may be questioned as to their impact, they cannot reasonably be analogized to apartheid. The black population of South Africa did not have militias determined to destroy South Africa or its white population. Nor did the white South Africans come to their position of dominance by virtue of defending themselves in a war against surrounding, aggressively hostile nations.

While Israel's security measures may seem draconian to some, they were instituted as a passive defense against terrorism. Israel only reluctantly began construction of a security barrier more than two years into the Second Intifada, after terrorists had killed hundreds of innocent people. The barrier (95 percent fence, 5 percent wall) has been effective in preventing infiltration by terrorists that continues to be attempted to this day. Israelis, no less than any other people, have the right to protect themselves from suicide bombing without being accused of being racists. While President Carter assures readers that the focus of his book is on the Palestinian occupied territories, some readers may believe that the accusation is against Israel proper.

Israeli society bears no resemblance whatever to South Africa's system of legally enforced segregation and oppression.[12] As a democracy, Israel allows, and in fact encourages, open and public criticism of the government. Arab students and professors study, research, and teach alongside of Israeli Jews. Israel has a free press filled with self-criticism, and Israel's citizens are fully equal before the law. This includes Jews and non-Jews from diverse national and racial backgrounds—including, ironically, a large Ethiopian population that would in fact have been the victims of apartheid had they lived in South Africa.

Non-Jewish Arab citizens of Israel have full political rights. They vote and participate in the political

process. There are Arabs in the Knesset. In May 2004, Salim Jubran, an Israeli Arab, was appointed to a permanent seat on Israel's Supreme Court. On January 28, 2007, an Arab Israeli Muslim was appointed Israel's Minister of Science, Culture and Sport.

Israel is not free of discrimination. Many Arab Israelis complain, often with justification, about unequal allocation of resources and educational or career opportunities afforded to Israeli Jews. But having problems with discrimination does not make Israel unique among the nations. The nature and scale of discrimination in Israel is by no means exceptional. All countries (including democracies) have faced claims of discrimination at one time or another, from African-Americans in the United States to Roma gypsies in the newly emerged democracies of Eastern Europe. What about anti-Arab discrimination in France? Or discrimination against Coptic Christians in Egypt? Or intolerance of Baha'is in Iran? Or discrimination against Kurds in Turkey?

Discrimination is a fact of life in virtually every country where there is any degree of ethnic heterogeneity in its population. Why then, out of all the countries in the world in which national, religious, or ethnic minorities claim discrimination, is Israel selected for the emotionally charged "apartheid" label by Christian social justice advocates ?

Conclusion

Given the almost two-thousand-year history of Christian anti-Semitism, we must be wary when Christians single out the Jewish state for repeated, one-sided condemnation. In a world where anti-Semitism is on the rise, we must ask ourselves what the consequence of this double standard of morality will be? We must be vigilant within our own house lest we encourage violence against Jews by stirring up unwarranted anti-Israel animus.

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Notes

1 For a full discussion of this point see Walter Brueggemann, "Truth-Telling and Peacemaking: A Reflection on Ezekiel," *The Christian Century*, November 30, 1998, pp.1096–1098.
2 There are two strains of thought regarding war and peace in Catholic social teaching. Just war doctrine is one. The other is pacifism.
3 See "The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace," A Reflection of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Tenth Anniversary of the Challenge of Peace (November 17, 1993).
4 Now the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
5 Cf. "The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace."
6 Ibid.
7 See Aug. 14 report titled "Gaza's Summer Rains."
8 Ibid.
9 Simon & Schuster (2006).
10 The former President is a Southern Baptist deacon and Sunday school teacher. See Brenda Goodman and Julie Bosman, "Former Aide Parts with Carter over Book," *New York Times* (Dec. 7, 2006), A33.
11 In February 2007 an Episcopal church in New York and a leading Jesuit college in New Jersey hosted events as part of "Israeli Apartheid week." see also, e.g., James M. Wall, "Apartheid Denial," *Christian Century* (February 2007).
12 See for a general overview Nancy L. Clark and William H. Worger, *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Seminar Studies in History Series. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004.

Catherine McAuley and Nonviolence

Janet K. Ruffing, R.S.M.

Steeped now, perhaps more than ever before in our recent history, in our authentic tradition through contemplation, study, reflection, and the greater availability of critical editions of our central historical documents, our collective lived experience of merciful response to the cries of the poor in our own times in multiple cultures inspire us with new insights into our charism. Such was the case in the last quarter of the twentieth century when the social sciences and the social teaching of the church led us to see more clearly the links between mercy and justice.

Our experience in justice making as well as direct service to the poor leads us in this new dawn of mercy intuitively to recognize a connection between mercy and nonviolence. This collective leap of spiritual consciousness leads us to claim that the practice of nonviolence is integral to being mercy in our world. Spiritually, we can name this awareness a change in consciousness, a whole new way of perceiving, understanding, and responding both interiorly and exteriorly to the violence that rages both within us and around us. Theologically, we can understand this phenomenon as the development of doctrine or the development of our graced tradition.

Mary Celeste Rouleau, R.S.M., pointed out that John Henry Newman's essay on the development of Christian doctrine offered "seven criteria for discerning the authentic continuity of tradition, signs of the church's fidelity to the Spirit."[1] Although I will not discuss these characteristics in detail, noting them as a group may help us recognize the healthiness and significance of the authentic development of our mercy tradition. Newman writes: ". . . if it retains the same type, the same principles, the same organization; if its beginnings anticipate its subsequent phases, and its later phenomena protect and subserve its earlier; if it has a power of assimilation and revival, and a vigorous action from first to last."[2]

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This essay explores where we might locate an incipient understanding of nonviolence in Catherine McAuley's heritage, with particular emphasis on the example of her life, her teachings on the interior life and her central preoccupation with union and charity in the community of mercy. In this way, we can identify according to Newman's criteria, the same principles, some anticipation of this later development in our beginnings, the renewing revitalizing aspect of looking at our history with fresh eyes from the perspective of the present, and discovering the enduring vigor of our mercy charism, which continues deeply to inform and animate our shared life.

Appearance of the Term "Nonviolence"

Catherine, of course, lived before the development of Catholic social teaching and before the articulation of the relatively recent concept of nonviolence. *The Oxford English Dictionary*[3] dates its first use in print as 1922, and "Mohondas Ghandi" as its originator. Noticing the meanings woven into the concept of "nonviolence" as Gandhi developed it in the early twentieth century is essential to its understanding. English lacks an adequate vocabulary for this practice. It ordinarily means refraining from violence in principle and in practice. But this interpretation loses the sense of what one does, namely, live one's life and seek to address the effects and

causes of violence and oppression in peaceable ways. This choice of living a peaceable nonviolent life is rooted in the theological understanding of the oneness and interconnectedness of all reality in God as the reason for injuring no one and for tending the injured. Practicing nonviolence is rooted in the God-energy (force) born of truth and love. Gandhi used the Hindu words, *Ahimsa* (no injury) and *Satyagraha* to describe a tenacity and firmness to holding on to Truth. In his view, Truth (*Satyagraha*) is a word for Being itself, a name for God. It connotes a spiritual sense of the interconnectedness of all being, and of the courage and tenacity born of transcendence. As taught both by Gandhi and by his American disciple Martin Luther King, the practice of nonviolence as a way of life and as a strategy for social change was deeply rooted in a spiritual vision of reality exemplified by Jesus in the New Testament. Gandhi blended the inspiration from the life of Jesus with his Hindu view of the unity of all reality in his struggle for Indian independence from British rule. Both men taught and embraced a way of life that transforms the violence of individuals and systems through the divine energy of love and compassion that those who do not resort to violence manifest while they seek to change unjust social conditions.[4]

The Example of Catherine's Life

Catherine learned in her relationships with bigoted and hostile people that gentleness and kindness in the face of hostility achieved more than defense or argument. Catherine experienced her own powerlessness to change the opinions, particularly the religious prejudices, of those with whom she lived. Religious intolerance in Ireland was often combined with various forms of social oppression manifested in the penal laws that restricted the rural Catholic population to a condition of permanent servitude. By the time Catherine was born, an educated Catholic middle class was beginning to flourish in Dublin and these lay men and women actively engaged in philanthropic work to relieve the misery and lack of opportunity for destitute and uneducated Catholics. British rule favored the Protestant landowners, the professional classes, and the wealthiest in Irish society, and their position and privilege were protected by unjust laws. Agitation for Catholic emancipation in this context gradually changed the membership of parliament and the legal provisions that maintained this inequality.

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Catherine's family was both Protestant and Catholic, and the Protestant members tended to fare better economically and politically than the Catholics. Catherine learned firsthand how to move back and forth between these groups in her family. Violence in the form of heated debate about these questions within the family and among their social circle created within the Armstrong family an atmosphere of religious intolerance to which Catherine was frequently subjected while she benefited from their charity, having been welcomed into their home.[5] As a young woman, she retreated into her own interior, maintaining her sense of self, integrity, and faith despite the climate of religious bigotry. She met this particular form of hostility with forbearance and love. She declined engaging in religious debate since she did not have sufficient intellectual understanding of her faith to acquit herself well. She also realized that example would do more to change the minds of family members than argument since they were only willing to entertain one side of the issue. It is a testimony to Catherine's nonviolent relational ability, her genuine love, and her inner strength that her many relatives, especially her nieces and nephews loved her so much. After she studied her faith under competent guidance and felt more confident in asserting her positions, usually in a one-on-one nonargumentative situation rather than in the midst of a hostile group, she was able to facilitate her sister's return to Catholic faith on her deathbed and to support her nieces' and nephews' growth in faith when she became their guardian.

Catherine readily accepted hospitality from the Callaghans who shared their home with her at

a time of transition in her family. The Callaghans offered her affection, greater religious acceptance than the Armstrongs and more scope for charitable activity.[6] Nonetheless, they were Protestants. William Callaghan nominally belonged to the Church of Ireland, and his wife, although originally a Quaker, attended services with him on Sundays. Although William was not as intensely anti-Catholic as some of Catherine's own family, he was sufficiently prejudiced that Catherine was reluctant to broach the topic of harnessing two carriages on Sunday mornings so she could more readily and consistently attend Catholic services while they went to Protestant ones. Catherine reported feelings of grateful relief when they respected her request and decision.[7] However, she was not allowed to display a crucifix or other symbols of her Catholicism at Coolock House.

As Catherine formed her own community, sustained by the well of her deep interiority and union with God, she tried to cultivate in her Sisters attitudes and behaviors that would enable them to win others over by word and example.

When Mrs. Callaghan was dying, and Catherine invited her to consider baptism in the Catholic faith, Mrs. Callaghan was reluctant to do so because she feared it would make her husband so angry that he would disinherit Catherine. When Catherine persisted in calling a priest to prepare Mrs. Callaghan for baptism, she did so with the full knowledge she was risking her future financial security.[8] By this time, Catherine's detachment and courage combined with the deep mutual love and affection the Callaghans had for Catherine enabled her to take this risk and eventually offer the same pastoral care to Mr. Callaghan. Catherine's loving and peaceable ways and the service she rendered to the Callaghans as a beloved member of their household and on their deathbeds endeared her to them. Mr. Callaghan discovered in his conversations with Catherine that she was neither greedy nor self-serving. He was confident she would use any inheritance he provided for her to do good.[9]

Despite Catherine's great circumspection, she was also courageous. When she cared for her dying sister and risked inviting her to return to the faith of her childhood, she nearly became a victim of domestic violence. Her brother-in-law became so enraged at the news of his wife's reconciliation with the Catholic Church and his daughter's desire to become a Catholic that he ran for his sword. With the help of a servant, Catherine escaped from the house and fled in her dressing gown to a neighbor's estate where she spent the night. She stayed until William Macauley sent for her and then returned quickly accepting his apology.[10] Catherine's prudence and caution in discussing religious matters with those who were so irrationally bigoted against Catholics indicated her awareness of the potential escalation of violence. She habitually persuaded as much by example as by word. This particular incident demonstrates several aspects of the practice of nonviolence. She initiates the conversation with her sister, aware of the risk she is taking. They talk. At the same time, she removes herself from the violent situation when her brother-in-law becomes irrational. She seeks a safe place and waits. When her brother-in-law comes to his senses and renounces his violent action, she forgives him fully and easily from her heart, restoring the relationship.

As Catherine formed her own community, sustained by the well of her deep interiority and union with God, she tried to cultivate in her Sisters attitudes and behaviors that would enable them to win others over by word and example. She also recommended practices in ministry that would tend to overcome the shame and anger of the very poor she sought to serve. There is a profound awareness of class differences in Catherine's writing. Her rule is written for women of the more privileged classes, and the virtues she fostered in her Sisters are recommended in this context. What would enable women who were used to being in charge of their own households and servants, or younger women reared in such households, to live harmoniously together in community? At the same time, she was preparing this group of privileged women to relieve the misery of the poor, sick, and ignorant in ways that would preserve their dignity and self-esteem.

Catherine's Teaching on Union and Charity Reinterpreted through the Lens of Nonviolence

Theologically, Catherine's adoption of the articles "Of Union and Charity"[11] from the *Presentation Rule* rests on the understanding that love of God and love of neighbor are reciprocal spiritual realities, are central to Christian discipleship, and, consequently, to religious life. *The Rule* (8:1–2) draws on the "Last Discourse" from John's Gospel, a scene that both embodied and expressed in word the union/communion of life shared by Jesus within the Trinity and into which he invites his disciples as friends and companions of one another and of God. In her *Retreat Instructions*, Catherine reiterates this link between union with God and love of neighbor—the vows are contextualized by love of God, deep interior union with God, from which flows a love poured out on the world through the works of mercy Sisters perform. In the *Constitutions*, the chapter "Of Union and Charity" in very brief compass, evokes this idealized life of communion/union of the Sisters who form the beloved community gathered around Jesus. This union is meant to resemble trinitarian union/communion in love. In Johannine teaching, this mutual love of the disciples for one another is the mark of discipleship. Because this teaching in the gospel is directed to all Christians, those who profess to follow Jesus in religious life should make this "their favorite virtue." Living "together as if they had but one heart and one soul in God" should so distinguish relationships in the community that this shared mutual life both anticipates and is modeled after the eschatological reality of the communion of saints. Life in a community that cherishes and practices union and charity is already heaven.

Articles 3–5 specify concretely and practically how the Sisters are to achieve this union and charity. Practices in "conversation, manner, and conduct" are all in the service of this unity of heart and mind, mutual love and charity. The *Rule* speaks about both "love and charity." Loving one another is neither abstract nor impersonal. It is neither detached nor aloof, but genuine mutual affection as well as loving with the love we receive from Christ. Words and manner are important. What we say and how we act either fosters a genuine and peaceable love or expresses the violence erupting from our self-centered thoughts, perceptions, and feelings. Words and behavior either promote division, rivalry, and violence or foster union and charity, embody this vision of the interconnectedness of all reality with itself and with God.

The Rule takes for granted there will be differences of opinion, but negotiating differing points of view is to be accomplished with respect for the position of the other, an emotional climate that fosters discovering the truth together, and a persistent loving attitude toward the other.

Attitudes that support growing in union and in loving relationship are: the willingness to help one another and loving, patient forbearance of one another's quirks. These are both attitudes and virtues. Willingness leads to generosity and mutual service. Patience prevents the escalation of irritation and frustration to anger. Verbal disputes are to be avoided and never rise to the level of altercation. Catherine actually struck "altercation" from her version of this chapter.[12] Nonviolent dialogue is the norm when opinions differ. Reasons for one's opinion should be offered with "coolness, moderation, and charity." *The Rule* takes for granted there will be differences of opinion, but negotiating differing points of view is to be accomplished with respect for the position of the other, an emotional climate that fosters discovering the truth together, and a persistent loving attitude toward the other. Further, the *Rule* restrains negative speech about one another. Speaking negatively of another is a form of violence. Sisters are advised to speak about another's faults only after prayer, spiritual direction, and, one assumes, considerable reflection and containment of one's own distorted perceptions and reactions. If one speaks at all, the *Rule* encourages speaking only to the superior out of genuine love and concern for the other. Our current *Constitutions* encourage "speaking the truth in love" to

one another. A mutual dialogue would occur before representing serious difficulties to leadership. The motive for any conversation is clearly the well-being of the other and of the community.

The second half of article 4 identifies the internal sources that weaken and harm the union and charity for which we strive. These are: "rash suspicions and judgments" and "all jealousy and envy." These interior thoughts and feelings (there are many other possibilities) accumulate over time if not checked. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians describing the qualities of charity is then cited as guidance for tempering internal reactions that tend to disrupt charity and result in subtle forms of interpersonal violence. "Charity is patient, is kind, envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor 13:4–7).

The concluding fifth article reprises themes introduced at the beginning of the section. The union and charity in which we espouse to live is not a purely human project. It is founded on "God alone." The Sisters' hearts should be "united together in Jesus Christ, their Spouse and Redeemer, in whom and for whom they should live and love one another." This is a profoundly spiritual reality, possible only through our hearts' being centered in the love that flows from God and toward God in Christ, immersion in the Divine love in which we participate and through which we are empowered to live in transformative ways. All other relationships within the community are meant to be in harmony with this one love. Any relationship that interferes with this union in love among us is to be avoided. It is notable that Catherine excluded the article from the *Presentation Rule* that specified who ought to be addressed as "Mother," preferring that all should be called simply, "Sister."[13]

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The chapter "On Humility" that immediately follows "Of Union and Charity" is intimately related to it. In article 2, Catherine's editing which was largely eliminated by Archbishop Murray's revision, clearly indicates that the fruit of humility is a genuine, heartfelt love for one another. It reads: "They shall bear to each other great and cordial respect [and affection], not in outward behavior, looks, and words only, but also really indeed in heart and in mind."[14] Catherine inserted affection after cordial respect, underscoring that she desired real affection among the members of community as well as respect. In the next sentence, she inserted "in tender concern and regard" again, I believe, indicating that the same "tender concern and love" we show to the poor is also integral to our relationships with one another. As we reflect on this nineteenth-century articulation of these themes from the perspective of our own times, which are characterized in North American culture as an "age of narcissism," retrieving an authentic understanding and practice of humility might strengthen our communal bonds of union and charity as we modify our self-centeredness from a genuine place of authentic freedom and strength.

Kindness and Respect in Relations of Unequal Power

In the *Retreat Instructions* given to novices preparing to make first vows, Catherine reinforces these same themes. Catherine claims "the ways of God . . . are all peace and tranquility."[15] Union with God, friendship with God is the goal of vowed life. Growth in the love of God is nurtured by "frequent acts of the love of God. At first you may not feel fervor but it will increase, provided you are faithful in the practice of acts of love, for love begets love. Those who arrive at prefect love of God will feel such peace of soul as nothing will be able to disturb."[16]

When teaching about charity, Catherine contrasts the behavior of a "mistress in the world" with that of "a religious:"

> The sister who has a great deal to do with others, giving directions about work and other things, must take care not to act like a mistress of the world when she finds her directions neglected. . . .She should act in such a manner that when young women under her care meet reproofs in the world they may contrast the manner of the mistress with that of the humble, gentle, manner of the religious and be induced to say, "How different is this from what I meet with in the convent!" . . . One word of instruction from a sister who conducts herself in the mild, gentle spirit of her Redeemer will have more effect than all that could be said by one of different deportment.

This passage is quite complex. On the one hand, Catherine suggests that Sisters, even when they are in a leadership role, ought to exercise that power from a position of gospel humility and forbearance. They are in charge, but ought not to act in an officious manner. This is the role or class consciousness about which Catherine understood a great deal. Sisters were not to be "mistresses" like the "great ones who Lady (Lord) it over others" but rather relinquish "power over" in favor of "power with." At the same time, she wants the Sisters to demonstrate to the young women whom they are training for domestic service, to learn from the Sisters how to respond to a "mistress" without reacting indignantly or impetuously." They could lose their jobs if they are unable to accept their lower social status and endure the potential verbal abuse of their "mistress." It is perhaps even more subtle than that. Catherine also wishes the experience these young women have in the convent to more closely approximate the reign of God. "How different is this from what I meet in the convent." The mild, gentle spirit of the Redeemer shining through the behavior of a religious, who acts in this way, breaks the cycle of domination. A Sister treating a young woman with kindness and respect encourages her to grow in her own strength and self-esteem, and hopefully she will treat others in a similar way.

Finally, in the *Retreat Instructions*, Catherine emphasizes love from the heart as characterizing relationships in the community. She encourages "gentleness of manner" with one another but also with others. Community members are drawn to God by real relationships that avoid "stiffness and reserve"—what we might call conditional love today. Catherine values a Sister's contribution to the community who has such a "gentleness of manner" more than another who could fill any office or conduct all the business of the community.[17] She desired each Sister to "have a cordial affection for every sister" that was "not only in appearance but a true, sincere and heartfelt affection for all."[18]

If this genuine love and affection freely flows throughout and within the community, Catherine believed it would overflow in apostolic zeal. "Zeal for the salvation of souls should be the result of such charity." Having grown and flourished in this loving community and in her personal union with God through profession, a Sister "may then with security and fruit exercise it abroad. She should exercise her ministry "first, with great charity and tenderness; second, with energy and sweetness; third, with great humility and diffidence in self."[19]

Catherine McAuley seemed to have discovered in the New Testament, as did Gandhi after her, the peaceable way of Jesus. The spirituality of her times, which unfortunately could maintain the status quo of oppressive relationships, did offer a way "to accept suffering rather than inflict it."

Contemporary Nonviolent Movements

Catherine McAuley seemed to have discovered in the New Testament, as did Gandhi after her, the peaceable way of Jesus. The spirituality of her times, which unfortunately could maintain the status quo of oppressive relationships, did offer a way "to accept suffering rather than inflict it." Catherine encouraged her Sisters to practice the virtues of gentleness, humility, compassion, and reconcilia-

tion. Without a conscious social critique, this spirituality did not clearly distinguish among the differing conversions required by the oppressor and by the oppressed that we need to take into consideration for ourselves as we freshly appropriate the virtues that sustain nonviolence in our times as a way of life and not simply as a strategy.

As we grow in our social awareness of the injustice others suffer, we realize we can unknowingly inflict harm on others by virtue of our own privilege. As Beverly Lanzetta notes, advancing the cause of others is tied "to religious values that teach and practice compassion, equanimity, nonviolence, and peace. Every commitment to advancing human dignity also involves a necessary awareness and transformation of hidden states of consciousness that perpetuate acceptance or silence in the face of the inferior status of the 'the other' or violence directed at another's life."[20]

Lanzetta reflects that this effort always involves growth in consciousness, which in turn obligates [the person who is treated unjustly] to combat the inferiority, self-hatred, or lack of self-worth that demoralizes personal integrity and crushes one's ability to resist. Similarly, on the side of abusers [or oppressors] and those thus obligated to effect remedy, there must exist an inner repentance, or coming to terms with the shame and sorrow one feels and the suffering and pain one has caused. This, too, involves engagement with the spiritual issues of life."[21]

Christian tradition does not have a word that is an exact equivalent to nonviolence.

Within Roman Catholicism, the peace movement has grown slowly and sporadically. The Catholic Worker Movement was nonviolent and pacifist from its beginning, drawing inspiration from the Sermon on the Mount. Pax Christi, the Catholic International Peace Organization began in 1972 and invites its members from all sectors of the church to make a vow of nonviolence. The Sermon on the Mount of Jesus is the basis for this vow. It begins with recognizing the violence in my own heart. Pax Christ's text of the vow is to carry out the love and example of Jesus, specifying the practices of nonviolence as follows:

- by striving for peace within myself and seeking to be a peacemaker in my daily life;
- by accepting suffering rather than inflicting it;
- by refusing to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence;
- by persevering in nonviolence of tongue and heart;
- by living conscientiously and simply so that I do not deprive others of the means to live;
- by actively resisting evil and working nonviolently to abolish war and the causes of war from my own heart and from the face of the earth.[22]

Reflecting on Catherine's life and teachings through the lens of this contemporary vow of nonviolence richly suggests many parallels between Catherine's gospel way of life and vision for the community and the practice of nonviolence. It remains for us to decide what the practice of nonviolence means for us in Mercy. At the heart of the practice of nonviolence within Christian tradition is the growing conviction that Jesus both taught and practiced nonviolence in his life and ministry and that according to Jesus, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, he understood that violence begets violence. Jesus promoted "a third way," to use Walter Wink's term, between acquiescence to oppression and violent resistance.[23]

This third way overcomes violence by transforming the reaction of the victim so as to defuse the natural violent, retaliatory response to violence rather than escalate it. Scripture scholars interpret the Greek word in the saying "resist not evil" as referring to "violent" resistance, and the tactics that follow "turn the other cheek" and "walk the extra mile" are behaviors that claim personal dignity for the person offended.

Christian tradition does not have a word that is an exact equivalent to nonviolence. "Blessed are the peacemakers" and "Blessed are the meek, the gentle, the nonviolent, for they shall inherit the earth." The Beatitudes are a program for promoting internal and external peace that requires a higher level of spiritual consciousness than most Christians, held hostage by a theology of domination and cultures of violence and greed, manage to

achieve. The spiritual principle entailed in the beatitudes is that we become what we hate unless we transform our responses. Transforming our responses from the violence in which we are trained by cultures of domination and violence requires an ascetical program that trains us for nonviolence. Gandhi was very clear that nonviolence is not weakness but requires greater courage and strength than resorting to violence. The practice of nonviolence does not mean acquiescence to injustice but interior and external resistance. Love begets love; peace begets peace; joy begets joy.

Catherine seems to have intuitively learned a variety of nonviolent approaches to living and taught them to her Sisters in the framework of imitating the virtues of Christ. I believe we can very fruitfully reinterpret and reappropriate in fresh ways Catherine's central emphasis on union and charity within the community as a way of living and practicing nonviolence both within the community and in our ministries.

If we take into account the insights of social analysis and the social teaching of the church, we can embrace our justice-making mission as a healthy, vigorous development of our charism. The practice of nonviolence both as a strategy for justice making and as a way of life is a correlative development of our charism and in deep harmony with our earliest traditions. If we take into account that differing social positions require different conversions of life, we can recognize when we are in the position of "power over" or when we benefit from any kind of privilege and embrace the conversion of life that invites us to recognize when we are in the position of the oppressed and adopt the appropriate conversion of life required to claim our full humanity. Both forms of conversion of life will lead us toward the gentleness of nonviolent social change.

Today, we need to live in the mercy of God, daring to trust the mercy poured out in us healing and strengthening us. We need to discern how mercy expresses itself in the practice of nonviolence in ways that do not acquiesce to the oppression of others or ourselves, that continue to resist the status quo of the domination system and that cultivates gentleness and peacefulness in our life in mercy. And we need to grow in deepening our understanding and practice of nonviolence as we respond to the suffering poor and draw them together with us under the mantle of mercy.

Notes

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2 John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1878) (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1968), 36.
3 *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Oxford University Press, 2007. Accessed online: http://dictionary.oed.com.avaoserv.library.fordham.edu/cgi/entry/50180428?query_type=w, January 18, 2007.
4 The Classical Source for this teaching is *All Men are Brothers: Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as Told in his own Words*. Compiled and ed. by Krishna Kripalani. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1960). For a shorter version, see Dr. Gerard Vanderhaar, *Personal Nonviolence: A Practical Spirituality for Peacemakers*. (Erie: Pax Christi U.S.A., 2006), 11–17.
5 "The Limerick Manuscript" in Mary C. Sullivan, R.S.M. *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 141.
6 Ibid., 144.
7 Ibid., 143.
8 Ibid., 145–146.
9 Ibid., 147.
10 Ibid., 154–5.
11 "Rule and Constitutions of the Religious Sisters of Mercy" in Sullivan, 303–304.
12 Ibid., n. 25., 303.
13 Ibid., n.26., 304.
14 Ibid., 305.
15 Sister Mary Teresa Purcell, *Retreat Instructions of Mother Mary Catherine McAuley*. (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1952), 25.
16 Ibid., 27.
17 Ibid.,58.
18 Ibid., 58.
19 Ibid., 63.
20 Beverly Lanzetta, *A Feminist Mystical Theology*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 184.
21 Ibid.
22 See "Pax Christi Vow of Nonviolence" in *The Catholic Peace Voice* (Winter 2007), 9. The vow can be found on the website, www.paxchristiusa.org.
23 Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*.(Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 175–193.

Thomas Merton on the Ethic of Nonviolence

Marilyn Sunderman, R.S.M.

Two Desert Fathers had been living together as hermits for many years and had never gotten into a fight. One of them said to the other, "Why don't we do like everybody else in the world and get into a fight?" The other fellow said, "O.K., how do you do it?" He said, "Well, fights start over possessions, owning something exclusively so that the other fellow can't have it. Let's look around and get ourselves a possession and then have a fight over it." So he found a brick and said, "I will put this brick between us" and I will say, "This is my brick," and you will immediately say, "No, it is mine," and then we will get into a fight." So the man got the brick and put it down between the two of them and said, "This is my brick." And the other said, "Well, brother, if it is your brick, take it."[1]

The most basic principle of the ethic of nonviolence is that all life is sacred. Such an ethic holds that each person is a son or daughter of God and that all have been created by God to live in peace and love with others and in harmony with nature. The ethic of nonviolence, which is an ethic of love, roots itself in such values as care, cooperation, compassion, equality, and forgiveness.

Jesus, the incarnation of the nonviolent God, spent his life teaching and practicing nonviolence. Jesus called his followers to embrace God's nonviolent reign of peace by taking on others' violence in a nonretaliatory way and accepting suffering in order to right wrongs. Jesus taught: "If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to that person the other as well. If a person takes you to law and would have your tunic, let that person have your cloak as well"(Matt 5:38–41). In a final act of nonviolence before he died, Jesus cried out: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

In 1983, in the pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*, the United States bishops used the term *nonviolence* to describe Jesus' gospel way of peacemaking. In their letter, the Church leaders stated: "The vision of Christian nonviolence is not passive about injustice and the defense of the rights of others; it rather affirms and exemplifies what it means to resist injustice through nonviolent methods."[2]

A decade later, in their letter, *The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace*, the United States bishops once again spoke about nonviolence. They stated:

> Nonviolence implies both a philosophy and a strategy which shuns force and pursues a range of alternative actions (e.g., dialogue, negotiation, protests, strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, and civilian resistance) in order to bring law, policy, government itself or other armed parties in line with the demand of justice . . . As a nation we have an affirmative obligation to promote research and education in nonviolent means of resisting evil. We need to address nonviolent strategies with much greater seriousness in international affairs.[3]

Thomas Merton: A Voice Against Violence

In the 1960s, Thomas Merton, a Trappist priest at the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, became a voice of protest against all forms of violence. Merton declared:

Jesus, the incarnation of the nonviolent God, spent his life teaching and practicing nonviolence. Jesus called his followers to embrace God's nonviolent reign of peace by taking on others' violence in a nonretaliatory way and accepting suffering in order to right wrongs.

> [B]y being in the monastery I take my true part in all the struggles and sufferings of the world. To adopt a life that is essentially . . . nonviolent, a life of humility and peace, is itself a statement of one's position . . . It is my intention to make my entire life a rejection of and protest against the crimes and injustices of war and political tyranny, which threaten to destroy the whole human race and the world with it."[4]

During the last years of his life, Merton spent his energies writing about nonviolence. In developing an ethic of nonviolence, he adopted Gandhi's philosophy of *Satyagraha,* i.e., soul or love force that always attempts to overcome evil by good, anger by love, and untruth by truth. From Gandhi, Merton learned that, if one wants to become immersed in a nonviolent lifestyle, one must become more and more open and committed to the truth.

Merton agreed with Gandhi that nonviolence is the law of *human* being. For Gandhi, nonviolence is an orientation to life based on the conviction that love is the deepest human power. Concurring with this teaching, Merton asserted that to live nonviolently is to proclaim by one's life the supreme efficacy of love.[5]

From his study of Gandhi's writings, Merton became convinced that nonviolence is a power superior to the forces of brutality in the world and that this power will ultimately be victorious over all forms of violence and deception. From Gandhi's life and writings, Merton also gleaned the insight that human rights, including those of one's oppressor, deserve the utmost respect. Nonviolence seeks the good of both oppressed persons and their oppressor(s). Finally, Merton agreed with Gandhi that nonviolence is the only way to achieve peace and justice in the world.

According to Merton, nonviolence flows out of the experience of contemplation . . . In essence, contemplative awareness leads to the realization that one is called to practice nonviolent love for all one's fellow human beings and all the rest of creation with whom one is united in and through God.

The Nexus of Contemplation and Nonviolence

During the earlier years of his writing career, Thomas Merton wrote extensively about contemplation. Just as his study of Gandhi's philosophy of *Satyagraha* contributed to his development of an ethic of nonviolence, so, too, did Merton's reflections on contemplation enable him to better comprehend what it means to embrace a lifelong commitment to peacemaking.

For Merton, contemplation and nonviolence are inherently related. Merton defines contemplation as the "deep and intimate knowledge of God by a union of love."[6] Contemplation entails discovering the fountain of the living water of love welling up inside oneself. Through the school of love that is contemplation, one enters profoundly into the mystery of God's love for oneself and others.

In his writings, Merton stresses that contemplation cleanses the soul; it facilitates reverence for and harmony with all that exists. In the solitude of contemplation, one comes in contact with the peaceful wellspring of God's great Silence. One rests in the Truth, in Hidden Wholeness, and becomes aware of one's true place in the world.

According to Merton, nonviolence flows out of the experience of contemplation. The contemplative person awakens to the reality that God is at the center of all that exists. For Merton, "Our deep awareness that we are truly at one with everything and everyone in the Hidden Ground of Love we call God demands of us that we live a nonviolent love."[7] In essence, contemplative awareness leads to the realization that one is called to practice nonviolent love for all one's fellow human beings and all the rest of creation with whom one is united in and through God.

In his writings, Merton emphasizes that the true contemplative person seeks to integrate a life of contemplation and action. Love is the hinge that unites action and contemplation. Regarding this, Merton reflects, "Action is charity looking outward

to others and contemplation is charity drawn inward to its own divine source."[8]

Contemplation leads to a life of concern for others. The true contemplative plunges into the heart of the world and actively seeks to fulfill human needs such as respect for personhood, gainful employment, adequate housing, and availability of proper nutrition. Likewise, the socially responsible contemplative person prayerfully critiques the violence of the "war machine, bombs . . . racism, materialism, and physical and spiritual poverty in contemporary Western life."[9]

The contemplative person issues an emphatic "No" to human society bent on violence. Regarding this, Merton notes, "Each one of us has to resist an ingrained tendency to violence and to destructive thinking. Every time we renounce reason and patience in order to solve a conflict by violence, we are side-stepping this great obligation and putting it off."[10] For Merton, the nonviolent healing of our culture is inherently linked to an appreciation for and the experience of contemplation.

Merton stressed that the ethic of nonviolence involves one's total orientation to life. According to Merton, living nonviolently is the great prophetic Christian witness for our time. The nonviolent person actively resists social evils by confronting them in peaceful ways and, thus, builds a new world by loving as Christ loves.

Merton sought to apply the ethic of nonviolence to the following blatant social evils of his day: racism, addiction to war, and nuclearism. What follows is a discussion of his reflections regarding each of these issues. In writing about these social issues, Merton sought to live out his admonition: "We are obliged to take an active part in the solution of urgent problems affecting the whole of society and of our world."[11]

The Cancer of Racism

Thomas Merton, who viewed racism as an obvious sign of the crisis of violence that prevailed in America during his lifetime, described the black civil rights movement in the United States as "one of the most positive and successful expressions of Christian social action . . . seen anywhere in the 20th century."[12] He looked upon African Americans' nonviolent efforts for liberation as "the greatest example of Christian faith in action in the social history of the United States."[13]

Merton's sensitivity to the reality of the oppressive situation of African Americans in twentieth century America grew out of his experience in 1940 of working at Catherine de Hueck Doherty's Friendship House in Harlem. There, he gained keen "insight into the patience with which, at that time, the Negroes still endured a deprived and exploited existence."[14]

According to Merton, the struggle for black liberation in the United States is linked to Gandhi's *Satyagraha*, i.e., truth or soul force. Regarding this, Merton wrote:

> The mystique of Negro nonviolence holds that the victory of truth is inevitable, but that the redemption of individuals is not inevitable . . . The Negro children of Birmingham, who walked calmly up to the police dogs that lunged at them with a fury capable of tearing their small bodies to pieces, were not only confronting the truth in an exalted moment of faith, a providential *kairos*. They were also in their simplicity bearing heroic Christian witness to the truth, for they were exposing their bodies to death in order to show God and man that they believed in the just rights of their people, knew that those rights had been unjustly, shamefully, and systematically violated, and realized that the violation called for expiation and redemptive protest, because it was an offense against God and his truth.[15]

In his writings on racism, Merton stresses that, in America, White Americans historically enslaved African Americans in inferiority and powerlessness by

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imposing economic and social degradation upon them. Merton notes that, in various periods of American history, White Americans conceived of African Americans as subservient and subhuman, i.e., as nonpersons.[16] According to Merton, over time, the deep-seated sin of racial prejudice ate away at American society like a cancer.[17] Within this disgraceful situation, African Americans offered the message of salvation to their white oppressors by refusing to accept the evil of white iniquity and injustice against them.[18] African Americans sought to awaken White Americans' consciences to the need to reform society according to the norm of Christian love.

King taught that nonviolence is a way of life for strong, courageous rather than weak persons. He stressed that nonviolence, a discipline that demands active nonresistance against the forces of evil, seeks to build the beloved community of humanity through friendship and understanding.

For Merton, the elimination of racism in the United States requires that White Americans experience a "profound change of heart, a real shake-up and deep reaching metanoia."[19] White Americans need to repent of their lamentable injustices and cruelties to African Americans, which are sins against Christ.[20]

Merton stresses that in Christ there is no racial division. All are equal. Thus, White Americans need to call out to African Americans and vice-versa. African Americans and White Americans must become brothers and sisters in the fullest sense of the word.[21] In Merton's view, only by so doing will it be possible to eliminate racism in America.

Thomas Merton deeply admired Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a model of Christian opposition to racism. Merton applauded King's philosophy of nonviolence in the struggle against racial prejudice in the United States. He described King as a courageous and edifying Christian who grounded his thinking and actions in Christ's law of love, which he believed would unite people, even enemies, in truth.[22]

Remembering his early teen years in Atlanta, Georgia, King reflected:

> I was deeply concerned about the problem of racial injustice. I grew up abhorring segregation, considering it both rationally inexplicable and morally unjustifiable. I could never accept the fact of having to go to the back of a bus or sit in the segregated section of a train. The first time that I was seated behind a curtain in a dining car I felt as if the curtain had been dropped on my selfhood.[23]

In the development of his philosophy of nonviolence, King, like Merton, was profoundly influenced by Gandhi's writings on and lived commitment to nonviolence. Dr. King noted that

> As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time that the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.[24]

King taught that nonviolence is a way of life for strong, courageous rather than weak persons. He stressed that nonviolence, a discipline that demands active nonresistance against the forces of evil, seeks to build the beloved community of humanity through friendship and understanding. Nonviolence directs itself against forces of evil rather than persons who are doing evil. It recognizes the fact that all life is interrelated.

King emphasized that unearned suffering embraced in a nonretaliatory way is redemptive and transformative. He believed that nonviolence begins in the heart of a person who chooses love and then expresses it in his or her actions, including love of one's enemy.[25] King's personal praxis of nonviolence consisted of preaching and writing about racism; it also included his participation in peaceful demonstrations, sit-ins, and boycotts. Because of his nonviolent resistance to racism in America, King endured periods of imprisonment and received multiple death threats. When a bomb exploded on the porch of his home in 1956, it nearly killed his wife, Coretta, and their two-month old daughter, Yolanda. In the wake of this shocking

event, he urged an angry crowd of his followers to put away their guns.

Dr. King envisioned an American society in which all would live together as brothers and sisters, with respect for the dignity and worth of all persons, based on the belief that all are God's children. Addressing his fellow Americans, King stated:

> I must urge you to get rid of every aspect of segregation . . . Segregation is a blatant denial of the unity which we all have in Christ . . . May I say . . . to those . . . who are struggling against this evil: Always be sure that you struggle with Christian methods and Christian weapons . . . Always avoid violence. If you succumb to the temptation of using violence in your struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and your chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos.[26]

During the final year of his life, Dr. King pleaded for an end to the Vietnam War.

Connecting this war with the African American struggle against racism in the United States, he asserted:

> We are taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools.[27]

Dr. King was convinced that love, nonviolence, and soul force would ultimately triumph over hate, violence, and physical force and that every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle. King walked the way of the cross of Jesus Christ and, like Jesus, chose to act nonviolently in the ever-present face of violence in society.

In 1963, when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize, King stated:

> Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time—the need for people to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression . . . Nonviolence is not sterile passivity but a powerful moral force, which makes for moral transformation. Sooner or later, all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace . . . If this is to be achieved, people must evolve for all human conflict a method, which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation for such a method is love.[28]

In a letter to Ping Ferry, Merton depicted Dr. King's receiving the Nobel Peace Prize as "one of the greatest things that has happened in recent years."[29] Additionally, when the thirty-nine year old King was assassinated, Merton expressed his deep hope that his friend's death would stir the conscience of the United States in a profound way.[30] In a touching letter to Dr. King's wife, Merton eulogized her slain husband by declaring:

> He has done the greatest thing anyone can do. In imitation of his Master, he laid down his life for his friends and enemies. He knew the nation was under judgment and he tried everything to stay the hand of God and man. He will go down in history as one of our greatest citizens. My prayers are with you and with him. May he find the rest and reward, which God has promised to all who trust in his mercy.[31]

Thomas Merton became a staunch proponent of the abolition of war. He declared: "I feel now perfectly convinced that there is one task for me that takes precedence over everything else: working with such means as I have at my disposal for the abolition of war."

Working for the Abolition of War

In the 1960s, Thomas Merton became a staunch proponent of the abolition of war. He declared: "I feel now perfectly convinced that there is one task for me that takes precedence over everything else: working with such means as I have at my disposal for the abolition of war."[32] Merton believed that this same task was a moral obligation incumbent on the entire human race, since, in his opinion, any war could eventuate in a nuclear war[33] and, thus, lead to a nuclear holocaust that would end civilization as we know it. Regarding this, he asserted:

> There can be no question that unless war is abolished the world will remain constantly in a state of madness and desperation in which, because of the immense destructive power of modern weapons, the danger of catastrophe will be imminent and probable at every moment everywhere.[34]

In his writings, Merton challenged the human community to rediscover the "early Christian ideal of peace and nonviolent action,"[35] which he believed had been abandoned in his day to a large extent. He wrote: "[W]e have to work, sacrifice, and cooperate to lay the foundations on which future generations may build a stable and peaceful international community."[36]

Merton contended that the way to begin the international journey to lasting peace was to develop a program of gradual, multilateral disarmament of nations through nonviolent negotiations. In this way, rather than continuing to budget billions of dollars to secure more and more caches of armaments, the world nations could monetarily ensure the global population access to the food, medicine, housing, and education needed to live decent human lives.

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Vaporization in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

In his prose poem, *Original Child Bomb*, in a starkly factual way, Merton narrates the United States' bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the consequent wholesale decimation of the inhabitants of those cities. Through its bombing operation, the United States vaporized 130,000 Japanese citizens of Hiroshima and 30,000 people in Nagasaki.

For Merton, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki violated the just war theory, since civilians were the primary victims of this atrocity.[37] Merton notes that the "idea was to unleash the maximum destructive power on a civilian center, to obliterate that center and destroy all other will to resist in the Japanese nation."[38]

After the bombing, in a letter to Honorable Shinzo Hamai, Mayor of Hiroshima, Merton wrote:

> I never cease to face the truth, which is symbolized in the names Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Each day I pray humbly and with love for the victims of the atomic bombardments, which took place there. All the holy spirits of those who lost their lives there, I regard as my dear and real friends. I express my fraternal and humble love for all the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[39]

In a word, Merton decried the decision of the United States' government to employ the atom bomb to end World War II. Reporting on a postwar questionnaire conducted by *Fortune* magazine, he noted that it "revealed that half the respondents felt that the decision to use the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been right, while nearly a quarter of them regretted that more atomic bombs had not been used on other Japanese cities."[40]

Vietnam War: The Rape of a Culture

Merton viewed the Vietnam War as another example of humankind's addiction to violence. America's aim in this war was to save Vietnam in the name of the "free world." The strategy to accomplish this goal was to kill Vietcong. Since American military could not distinguish between Vietnam civilians and Vietcong, countless Vietnam civilians lost their lives everyday. During this war, the United States murdered and maimed approximately two million Vietnamese, mostly civilians, and reduced the rest of the population of that country to refugee status. United States B-52 bombers defoliated the Vietnamese wilderness and the United States military sprayed herbicides on Vietnamese rice paddies.

For Merton, the Vietnam War was one of the worst blunders in United States history.[41] It was an atrocity that involved the "callous ravaging of human life and the rape of the culture"[42] of Vietnam. Reflecting on the fact that the violence during this war ignored the human reality of those the United States claimed to be helping, Merton queried:

> Are we so psychologically constituted and determined that we find real comfort in a daily score of bombed bridges and burned villages, forgetting that

> the price of our psychological security is the burned flesh of women and children who have no guilt and no escape from the fury of our weapons? . . . We believe that any end can be achieved from the moment one possesses the right instruments, the right machines, and the right technique. The problem of war turns into a problem of engineering. We forget that we are dealing with human beings instead of rocks, oil, steel, water, or coal.[43]

Merton noted that the United States dropped more bombs on Vietnam than it exploded during World War II in its entirety.[44] Additionally, he asserted that he was on the side of all those who were "burned, cut to pieces, tortured, held as hostages, gassed, ruined, destroyed"[45] during this brutal, futile war. In essence, Merton insisted that the Vietnam War provided irrefutable evidence that the United States had become a "warfare state."[46]

The Nuclear Specter

In Thomas Merton's lifetime, the United States alone possessed a "stockpile of nuclear weapons estimated at sixty thousand megatons."[47] Without taking into consideration the nuclear caches of other nations in the global community, this alone was enough to wipe out civilization and destroy life on planet earth. Thus, in his writings, Merton insisted on the moral imperative that the international community rid itself of existing weapons of mass destruction and cease building new ones. About this, he emphatically asserted:

> To allow governments to pour more and more billions into weapons that almost immediately become obsolete, thereby necessitating more billions for new and bigger weapons, is one of the most colossal injustices in the long history of humankind. While we are doing this, two thirds of the world are starving or living in conditions of subhuman destitution.[48]

In the case of nuclear war, Merton maintained that the conditions agreed upon for a just war are inapplicable. He stated: "A war of total annihilation simply cannot be considered a 'just war,' no matter how good the cause for which it is undertaken."[49] For Merton, nuclear war would be a moral evil second only to the crucifixion.[50] It would lead to the suicide of nations and the wholesale disappearance of culture.

Convinced that in good conscience one can refuse to support any measure that leads to nuclear war, Merton encouraged Christians to not engage in any job that contributes to the making of nuclear weapons. He insisted, "The first duty of the Christian is to . . . take the stand that all-out nuclear, bacterial or chemical warfare is absolutely forbidden by all standards of natural and divine morality, because it means the destruction of the world."[51] Additionally, Merton held that the most conscientious response to the possibility of nuclear war would be for sane people "everywhere in the world to lay down . . . their tools and starve and be shot rather than cooperate in the war effort."[52]

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Merton was deeply disturbed by what he viewed as the lack of antinuclear sentiment evidenced by Church leaders of his day. In a letter to Dorothy Day of 23 August 1961, he commented, "But why this awful silence and apathy on the part of Catholics, clergy, hierarchy, lay people on this terrible issue on which the very continued existence of the human race depends?"[53] Similarly, in a letter to Ernesto Cardenal, he reflected:

> I do not criticize; but I observe with a kind of numb silence the inaction, the passivity, the apparent indifference and incomprehension with which most Catholics, clergy and laity, at least in this country, watch the development of pressures that build up to a nuclear war."[54]

In October 1961, when Merton started writing his *Cold War Letters*, "the United States and the Soviet Union were risking nuclear war in a confrontation at the Berlin Wall . . . In that year between the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Criss, Merton wrote . . . 111 letters."[55] His letters evidence the

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fact that he was struggling with the imminent threat of nuclear holocaust. For instance, in one of his letters, he wrote:

> [I]n this awful issue of nuclear war . . . what concerns me . . . is the ghastly feeling that we are all on the brink of a spiritual defection and betrayal of Christ, which would consist in the complete acceptance of the values and the decisions of the callous men of war who think only in terms of megacorpses and megatons, and have not the slightest thought for human beings, the image of God.[56]

The presence of nuclear weapons intruded personally on Merton's life when a Strategic Air Command (SAC) plane flew over his hermitage on the property of the Abbey of Gethsemani. About this experience, he observed:

> I have seen the SAC plane, with the bomb in it, fly low over me and I have looked up out of the woods directly at the closed bay of the metal bird with a scientific egg in its breast! A womb easily and mechanically opened! I do not consider this technological mother to be the friend of anything I believe in.[57]

Conclusion

This essay began with a parable from the fourth century Desert Fathers. Merton's inclusion of this story in *The Wisdom of the Desert* eloquently enunciates the essence of nonviolence. "If it is your brick, take it." The monk's reply to his brother communicates the truth that what is sorely needed in our world is a peaceful response to scenarios ripe for violence. Those who practice nonviolence in thought, word, and deed provide the materials necessary to construct a peaceful world, one brick at a time. They use their bricks to build the beloved community.

During the last three years of his life in his cinder block hermitage, Thomas Merton reverently and contemplatively engaged in simple activities such as walking, eating, sleeping, washing dishes, sweeping the floor, praying, enjoying the fragrance of darkness, the music of daylight, and rain as the language of God. These simple rituals enabled Merton to become a more nonviolent person through his awakening to the harmony inherent in all of life.

For Merton, the moral imperative of our time is to sow seeds of nonviolence in our world. It is to treat each person with reverence. It is not to allow anger, hatred, or resentment to linger in one's heart. It is to embrace love as the power that refuses to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence. Finally, it is to envisage a world freed of racism, war, and nuclearism wherein sisters and brothers across the globe are able to join hands in abiding peace!

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Contributors

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Dean P. Mandros has been Criminal Division chief in the Lucas County Prosecutor's Office since 1997, and was senior assistant prosecuting attorney there from 1981 to 1996. He earned a J.D. at the University of Toledo College of Law in 1980, and was honored with the National District Attorney's Association Award in 2007, given in recognition of outstanding work on complicated, high profile cases. He provides in-house training for staff attorneys, education for career prosecutors at the national level, and is adjunct professor for trial practice at the University of Toledo College of Law. Ironically, at the time of the murder of Sister Margaret Ann Pahl at Mercy Hospital in Toledo in 1980, he was in intern at the Lucas County Prosecutor's Office. He had recently purchased property about seventy yards from the back of the hospital. From his porch, he could see the windows of the rooms he later identified as the apartment of the chaplain, Father Gerald Robinson. Mr. Mandros prosecuted the jury trial in 2006. The opening and closing arguments were originally accompanied by screen projections of the items presented in evidence.

Sister of Mercy, R.S.M., has been a member for more than twenty-five years. She is currently in a ministry working mostly with women and children.

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Discussion Questions

(**Daly**) "A society that has no God concerned with human affairs may have difficulty rising above their inevitable despair. Eventually, they must despair over their inability to change historical forces, whether political or economic, whether in church or in society. They must despair over their inability to reverse greed, to protect the environment, or to untangle all the difficulties and right all the injustices that abound in our world."

How has your own experience of anger or wrath moved you to right a wrong? What has helped you to move with anger or wrath in a constructive way?

(**Lautt**) "Foreseeing the temptation of selective application of teachings on war and peace, the NCCB made it clear that care must be taken not to apply just war doctrine selectively or with a double standard aimed at justifying or favoring one side or position. Rather it must be based on accurate facts and applied in a fair and balanced manner that treats both sides of an issue."

Taking any controversial, complicated political issue that pushes your buttons—what facts would you need to establish, from each side, to make sure that you are not applying moral principles selectively, but rather treating the question in a "fair and balanced manner"?

(**Linehan**) "The urgent question to ask in response to this recent history is how the just war theory could be a morally viable way of analyzing war, if it can be appealed to as justification for the U.S. attack on Iraq, and possibly an attack on Iran."

Looking at the history of war making in your lifetime, and considering the elements and principles of just war theory (see list in article by Ruth Lautt, O.P.), which wars would you say are justified, and which ones not? Which principle is most crucial in your analysis?

(**Mandros**) "This case is about perhaps the most common scenario there is for a murder. A man got very angry at a woman and the woman dies. The only unusual thing is their clothing. The man wore a white collar and the woman wore a habit."

After a violent and horrific murder, victims of the crime include all the persons who were related to the victim and those who felt identified with her in some way. What response can you offer the community of women and Sisters of Mercy who knew Sister Margaret Ann Pahl? What spiritual steps and strategies of recovery by victims of childhood sexual abuse might be analogous to those for those left traumatized by Margaret Ann's murder? (See article "The Crystal Palace is No More")

If you personally suffered an act of violence against you, would you choose to have it brought to justice? Do you think women should? When?

(**Ruffing**) "Nonviolent dialogue is the norm when opinions differ. Reasons for one's opinion should be offered with 'coolness, moderation, and charity.' *The Rule* takes for granted there will be differences of opinion, but negotiating differing points of view is to be accomplished with respect for the position of the other, an emotional climate that fosters discovering the truth together, and a persistent loving attitude toward the other."

> When you discover fundamental differences of viewpoint, based on experience, education or personality, do you choose to "stay in the game" of discussion, or do you go silent? What does it take in a community dynamic to keep everyone in the conversation? How do you reconcile the ideal of reaching consensus in decision making, yet support a plurality and diversity of viewpoints? Does one ideal suppress the other?

(**Sister of Mercy**) "At home, I was taught to be silent and endure pain. I related deeply to the crucified figure of Christ. 'Offering it up' became a daily action and saying for me. Physical and emotional pain were a regular part of my day. I thought suffering was a normal part of life."

> What correctives are needed in defining what women's spiritual values and virtues should be? What strengths in this community's mentality can offer support to members, whether they are victims of childhood abuse or not? How shall the vision of Catherine McAuley, that this is a community "founded on Calvary" be understood and interpreted today?

(**Sunderman**) "For Merton, the moral imperative of our time is to sow seeds of nonviolence in our world. It is to treat each person with reverence. It is not to allow anger, hatred, or resentment to linger in one's heart. It is to embrace love as the power that refuses to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence."

> How do you deal with the relational violence done when someone holds a grudge—when "resentment lingers in one's heart"? Are there different strategies or the same ones for dealing with family, workplace, church, or community-related grudges? What's your best wisdom for dealing with this feature of the human condition, the tendency to hang on to old hurts?

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MAST, the Mercy Association in Scripture and Theology, met for the first time in June 1987 at Gwynedd-Mercy College in Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania. Called together by Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M. and Mary Ann Getty, twenty Mercy theologians and Scripture scholars from fourteen regional communities formally established the organization to provide a forum for dialogue and cooperation among Sisters of Mercy and associates. The stated purpose of the organization is to promote studies and research in Scripture, theology, and related fields; to support its members in scholarly pursuits through study, writing, teaching, and administration; and to provide a means for members to address current issues within the context of their related disciplines.

MAST has been meeting annually since then, and the organization now numbers fifty, with members living and working in Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as in the United States. Marilyn King, R.S.M., currently serves as MAST's executive director. MAST will hold its 21st annual meeting in **Philadelphia at St. Rafaela Retreat Center June 15–17, 2007**, and its 22nd annual meeting in **Burlingame, California, at Mercy Center June 13–15, 2008.**

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Since 1991, *The MAST Journal* has been published three times a year. Members of the organization serve on the journal's editorial board on a rotating basis, and several members have taken responsibility over the years to edit individual issues. Maryanne Stevens, R.S.M., was the founding editor of the journal, and Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M., currently serves in that capacity. Marilyn King, R.S.M., currently serves as MAST's executive director.

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