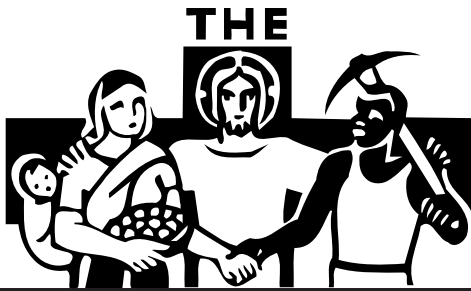


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How To Right The Wrong

By EFRAN MENNY

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At the age of seven, I experienced one of the most heartbreaking episodes of my life: experiencing separation from my mother due to her incarceration. One particular day in first grade left an indelible impression on me.

I sat alone on the playground bench. The day was illuminated with bright rays, and the joyful laughter of my peers echoed across the lot, yet there I sat in a despondent state of grief. I watched my classmates move in an inaudible, black-and-white manner. A voice like sweet honey broke through my preschool callousness.

"Efran, what's the matter?"

Finally, someone recognized my hurt.

"My momma is in jail and I miss her," I managed to utter while choking on my words. With no hesitation I started to cry, and she embraced me with the warmth of a hug that erased my hurt.

Looking back twenty-five years later, I can say that was an influential moment. No, that wasn't my origin story on being against the prison industry. On the contrary, I have intellectually wrestled and teetered on this topic. However, when I reflect on the nature of prisons or prison-related entities and the catastrophic harm inflicted on Black families, I sympathize with the countless Black children who are forced to make sense of this terrible dynamic.

If we can effectively dismantle the racist and exploitative prison industry and create thriving systems that promote healing, accountability and recovery, we will be targeting the root causes of criminal behavior.

First, it's imperative that we challenge the knee-jerk reactions to "Let's abolish prison." Upon hearing it, the idea sounds outlandish. For so many who benefit from unbalanced distribution of power, to attack the criminal justice system is to attack the fabric of the country's ideals of justice, fairness and impartiality. Sadly, when we critically examine these three aspects and rate the prison system and similar institutions—courts, police, etc.—the record doesn't add up.

For starters, Pew Research polling showed that nearly all Black respondents and even a majority of white participants think Black people get less favorable treatment than whites in the US criminal justice system. To have nearly the entirety of a historically neglected ethnic/racial group report their encounters with white supremacy is one thing, but even the group with the most power affirms something is objectively wrong with the current system.

Moreover, to counter the popular narrative of the ideals, we have to recognize the level of conditioning we receive from early childhood concerning the complex industry of prisons. The same amount of effort given to "copaganda" and "cops good, criminals bad" must be used to help the masses. At the heart of the argument for eliminating prisons is this: incarcerating people causes a ripple effect of damage. Whether it be detention centers for immigrants or state and federal institutions, the levels of trauma being experienced are significant.

Research shows that parental incarceration in childhood creates considerable mental



Uncle Sam-Repent

Brian Kavanagh

and physical health challenges, such as poor access to healthcare, risky health behaviors, and exposure to adverse traumatic events. In families, incarceration alters dynamics dramatically, causing economic hardships. Data from a national study reveals that women with an incarcerated co-parent are not only forced to find additional jobs, but their limited income can make it necessary for families to move to areas with a concentration of crime, violence and inferior schools. Overall, there exists a breadth of scholarship concerning the consequences of incarceration on the family, and of ignoring the catastrophic violence and trauma from carceral institutions.

In light of Catholic teaching, we have to ask: if the family is the cell of society and the fundamental place where socialization and values are implemented, how do we create thriving family units when prisons cause a detrimental chasm in the dignity of the familial institution? In fact, to be pro-prisons is to be anti-family and, ultimately, anti-life.

To authentically be pro-family, we have to abandon punitive justice as the remedy for a crime. To think we can excessively punish someone to reform them is a flawed notion of justice. Simply thinking prolonged periods of confinement to a cell or facility will cultivate a better conscience or moral interior is not the correct path. We have tried those methods. We created piecemeal reforms. We held people accountable while managing to let them off the hook. The era of attempts at reform is over.

By putting forward a humane alternative to prison, plenty of abolitionists aim for Transformational Justice (TJ) rather than punitive methods that maintain unfair systems. At its core, the TJ framework wants to understand the ways harm and violence originate in order to change the systems that create the issue. Moreover, looking at the big picture, TJ affirms true justice because it wants to

(continued on page 6)

Canonization Matters

By RALPH E. MOORE, JR.

"You know, the one thing we did right, was the day we started to fight. Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on."

—*Keep Your Eyes On The Prize*

Let's be clear: The fact that in 2023 there are no African American saints from the US that have ever been officially recognized by the Catholic Church, while there are eleven white US saints, is a civil rights issue.

This is in the context of the Catholic Church having historically and institutionally ignored government laws that provided equal protection for all. Some Black Catholics can remember the overt second-class membership they were subjected to for decades by the white majority Catholic Church in the United States.

As the Supreme Court ruled against segregation in education in 1954, Catholics were banning Black students from being taught in seminaries and convents. As Rosa Parks sat down to protest unfair bus seating policies and practices in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955, Black parishioners were required to sit in the back or on side aisles inside houses of worship for years after Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. had their victory. There were even separate holy water fonts in some churches just like the racially segregated drinking fountains in the larger society. In some churches, ushers blocked people of color from dipping their hand in the same holy water as white people.

As Dr. King and his followers practiced nonviolence and civil disobedience against segregation laws for racial justice, they were enflaming the command of Jesus Christ to "turn the other cheek." Like Christ, those who endured beatings, dog bites, forceful fire hoses and rejection were enduring unearned suffering. Dr. King in his "Principles of Nonviolence" reminded us that "unearned suffering is redemptive." The correlation between the crucifixion of Jesus and Black people being hung from trees was powerfully expressed by Black theologian James Cone's 2013 book, **The Cross and the Lynching Tree**.

The point is that Black Catholics have always had to fight for their God-given and Constitutionally guaranteed right to be treated as equals, as first-class citizens and as members of their Church. They were taught in school and in Church that everyone on Earth is "a creature made in the image and likeness of God." And yet, with their exclusionary practices, many white Catholics didn't see themselves through the eyes of a God with love for all. Many white people made God in the image of their white selves: superior, separate, subjugating and hateful.

Black Catholics have lived with these contradictions since the earliest days of enslavement in the United States in 1619, when they first arrived in this part of America. And now we find apartheid remains in the communion of Catholic saints. There are no churches in this country named for an African American because you must be a saint for that to happen. And until Black Catholics started posting pictures of the first six African American prospects inside their churches, Catholic churches had subliminally seduced attendees into thinking they had succeeded in making God in their image: an exclusionary deity, a God who only wanted white people to feel loved in God's house. How in the hell did that happen?

There is a process for exceptionally good persons to be honored with the designation of sainthood in the Catholic Church. In six

guilds and in one Baltimore Black Catholic church initiatives are advancing the causes of the Sainthood Six from the United States: Mother Mary Lange, Father Augustus Tolton, Mother Henriette DeLille, Ms. Julia Greeley, Mr. Pierre Toussaint, and Sister Thea Bowman. Their stories can be found in **Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood** edited by Michael Heinlein. A seventh candidate, Brazilian Father Martin de Porres Ward is added to the list of the Sainthood Six by some.

The process to be declared a saint is difficult, long, secretive and financially expensive. The net effect is that no African American has ever made it, despite enduring enslavement, segregation, mass incarceration and mass poverty, nevertheless living lives of generosity, courage, inspiration and faithfulness. Feels like that old saying, "No good deed goes unpunished."

The \$1,000,000 price tag often quoted as firmly attached to the canonization process is reminiscent of the poll tax which served as a precondition of Black and Brown people being able to exercise the right to vote (going back to the late 19th century in some states). Not having enough money is one of the reasons there are no Black saints from the United States. Incidentally, the United States Supreme Court ruled poll taxes unconstitutional on March 26, 1966. Isn't it time for the Vatican to reformat the process to name saints?

It may be the case that for Catholic lay persons, clergy, sisters and brothers who are still white supremacists and who consider themselves good Catholics, the poll tax did its exclusionary job in the old days. The prohibitive price for sainthood may be intentionally maintaining an aspect of the Church's segregation practices of the past, like a valued relic of those bygone days.

Passing a literacy test was also required in some states before persons of color were allowed to vote before the Voting Rights Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. The Church expects proven medical miracles. Perhaps keeping the faith through the prejudice and discrimination of living an enslaved person's life, being treated as inferiors, being excluded from Catholic institutions after contributing to church offerings, constructing churches, schools, houses and hospitals is a miracle in and of itself. The *positio*, the initial narrative submission part of the process, is the set of documents that make the argument for persons to be considered suitable for sainthood. It is a subjective evaluation parallel to the literacy test of old. It too should be eliminated, particularly as it pertains to the African American candidates for sainthood.

The bottom line is that the sainthood process excludes Black Catholics from the US. It is a process made of rules to which exceptions have been and are continually applied. ❖



Artist Unknown

BOOK REVIEW

GIVE ME A LIVING LOVE: The Poems of Ann Manganaro, SL edited by Kathleen DeSutter Jordan, designed and produced by Lee Miller. Loretto Books, Nerinx, Kentucky, 2023. Reviewed by Anne Marie Kaune.

In this slim volume, barely fifty poems, Kathleen DeSutter Jordan introduces us to the poetry of Ann Manganaro SL, marking the 30th anniversary of Ann's death at forty-seven. In her beautiful introduction, Jordan provides context for the poems and shares the deep faith, hope and love that defined Ann's life and found expression in her poetry. Ann was "a vowed religious and a Catholic Worker, a teacher and a doctor. But Ann was also a poet." Her poems are prayers: psalms of rejoicing, thanksgiving and praise, and psalms of grief and lament.

The poems in this collection reflect two significant periods in Ann's life. The poems from January 1, 1977 until March 1981 were written when Ann was an active member of Karen House Catholic Worker in St. Louis and a medical student at St. Louis University. She lived at Karen House until 1988 when she left to serve as a medical doctor in El Salvador. There are no poems between 1985-1987 when Ann was completing a rigorous pediatric residency and receiving treatment for breast cancer. The second group of poems was written between August 1988 and September 15, 1992 (the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, a major Loretto feast) while Ann was a physician in a refugee resettlement community in El Salvador. One poem, written in 1984, bridges these two periods and binds them together, shedding light on Ann's life of radical commitment to the Gospel and voluntary poverty:

"Seek first the reign of God, the realm of God/ The place where God resides, where God abides/... Open, let yourself become the very food/Of the feast you seek. Seek first the reign of God."

The poems are intimate and personal, shared at first only with John Kavanaugh, SJ professor at Saint Louis University and a columnist at *America*, and Kathleen Jordan. Before his death in 2012, Kavanaugh sent the poems he received to the Loretto archives with a commentary, thus making them available to us.

The first twenty-four poems are essentially love poems written for John Kavanaugh with whom Ann had fallen in love and who loved her in return. They contain all the joy of new and exhilarating love, a chaste love, in which they would remain faithful to their religious vows and to their lives of service and which would deepen into an abiding, faith-sustaining friendship. There is a poignancy and tenderness here:

"How lovely the love that can be shy still/ In this jaded age of ours.../Pale and swift as a winter dawn/And as sure. And as merciful."

"Where you stood, where I turned/ Your face still spills across the day's grace."

And with the acknowledgement that God is the true Light of her life, Ann writes on September 16, 1977:

"You are not the light of my life. But you are/A fountain the light plays upon, a place where/ Silver will, and gold, still spill in endless/ Intricate strands."

These and later poems also express Ann's sensitivity to creation and the natural world: "a landscape of fallen stars," "the season's wild subliminal colors," "praised be cricket sounds, as the night sifts down/to settle in the grass," "each last grain of corn God's gift." They reveal her Ignatian heart, finding and serving God in all things.

There is pathos and acceptance in the poem from March 14, 1979:

"A toast to the beautiful brown-eyed children we might/Have had...Our daughters and sons remain/ Unborn, lovely, laden with all the grace/Which by God's grace we learn to bear elsewhere."

For Ann that elsewhere would be El

Salvador. Upon completing her medical degree, she knew she wanted to serve in an underserved country; in January 1988, in the depths of El Salvador's civil war, Ann arrived in San Salvador as part of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). By May she had settled in Guarjila, Chalatenango, a resettlement village for Salvadoran war refugees in eastern El Salvador near the Honduran border. While there she established a clinic, trained local health promoters and trekked through the forested mountains to treat the war wounded and others, always on foot, carrying her medical pack on her back. She responded to the people in a nearby village brutally bombed from the air, in which women and children were killed and wounded. These were difficult, often traumatic years of hard work, danger and loneliness. She faced checkpoints and questioning by military authorities with uncommon courage and was seared by the suffering of the Salvadoran people. Her commitment deepened:

"...I will spend/My life, soul, self to break the hold/Of hell here. I will set my hands to heal/The scorched earth: the burned and broken I will tend."

The poems in these years reach a depth beyond the earlier poems, reflect her grief and sorrow, starkly evident in four poems written in 1991:

"I have been shipwrecked: no more sailing now/For me...No more swift streaking through the foam;/The billows bear me now toward no home."

"My days are now filled with fire...The cracking and rasping of fields set ablaze/the drone as the planes rise/Prelude to the dark fire flung from the sky/...Hurled down around me as I walk."

But she was also sustained by the Salvadoran people, especially the beautiful children, by the courage and hope she witnessed in their mothers, including mothers who had lost children: "the golden children playing in the road," "Her face is lined with loss and the custom of loss/With the leaving too often of one more/Loved one... Yet hope still rises/ In her deep eyes, in a love beyond all losses."

She found comfort and companionship with fellow JRS volunteers. One lovely poem was written in 1991 for the wedding of two of those friends:

"You will become...God's grace/Embodied in each other's now intertwined lives."

Ann continued this labor for five years, at times in a real "dark night" which lifted when she made a retreat at La Palma in 1992. The last two poems in the collection reflect this period of deep grace and renewal:

"I came here gasping for God as if for air/ and came to the right place it seems. For God/ Hangs in the very air like incense here." Here she finds her soul exulting in the beauty of the place and breathing in "what tastes like life's heart and with/And for whom I choose to let God be so."

In the beautiful final poem of the collection, "Anniversary Prayer," September 15, 1991, (again the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows) Ann writes:

"Please give me a living love again or let/ Me go...let me sing/A pure-pitched truth that transmutes despair/ Leave all else, but bring me thus: love/Throbbing through me, through me love alive."

In April 1993 Ann experienced increasing fatigue. While resting one day she noted her enlarged liver; she diagnosed the return of her cancer. After consulting a doctor in El Salvador, Ann returned to her mother's home in St. Louis. There she was tenderly cared for by her family and friends from her many communities: El Salvador, the Catholic Worker, Sisters of Loretto and beyond. John Kavanaugh accompanied and prayed with her and her loving community. She entered full life with God on June 6, 1993. John presided and preached at the funeral Mass of his beloved friend.

In 2004, while visiting our daughter Elizabeth, who spent a semester in El Salvador,

my husband Steve and I visited Guarjila, a pilgrimage of sorts to Clinica Comunal Ana Manganaro. On the outer wall of the clinic is a large mural of Hermana Ana and Saint Oscar Romero. A similar mural is behind the altar of the open-air chapel. We met with nurses and doctors who had been trained as health promoters by Ann and visited with a woman who told us of Ann's travels through the jungle to treat the wounded, accompanied by a friend from the village. Here, eleven years after her death, and to this day, Ann is a living presence.

The Sisters of Loretto, Kathleen DeSutter Jordan, and Lee Miller have given us a gift in this beautiful book. These poems show us that God gave Ann the grace she prayed for. She became a living love.

To order copies of this book, please contact Amanda Mattingly at bookorders@lorettocommunity.org.

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Port Jefferson, New York

Dear Editors,

In the May 2023 issue of *The Catholic Worker* I read Dorothy Day's essay "Peter Maurin—Our Co-Founder" originally written in May 1940. In it Dorothy says that Peter "deplores the philosophy or lack there of it, of most modern labor leaders."

The philosophy of labor union leaders in the 1940s til today is to improve wages, working conditions and benefits. In 2021 non-union members earned 37% less than union members. Unions provide greater health and safety conditions on the job. The benefits of union membership include: increased pensions, job protections, seniority, arbitration, shorter hours, health, dental and life insurance, strength in collective bargaining, reduced wage gaps for women, advancement of civil rights, maternity leave, jobs protection, etc. Each generation of labor leaders have improved the life of the worker through collective bargaining or political action.

Unions are not perfect. However, where would we be without them? The employee would be at the mercy of the employer. Unions, more than any other organization, support the worker. It is the reason corporations fight so hard against them and such anti-union pressure has reduced our membership.

I believe the Catholic Worker has always supported labor unions. Peter may have deplored the philosophy of a few modern labor leaders who were crooked or greedy but not "most." As a retired teacher and president of the Central Islip Teachers Union, I have lived through the pre-union days of collective begging. Teachers, like many union workers, can now retire with economic security, health coverage and personal dignity. That would not be possible without the courage and struggles of prior union leadership.

Having presented my labor union perspective, I do admire the moral leadership of Peter Maurin, Dorothy Day and all of you who provide an ethical lighthouse to guide me. I enjoy each issue of *The Catholic Worker*.

God Bless You,
Philip Griffith

Vancouver, British Columbia
To the Editorial Board,

Thanks ever for sending *The Catholic Worker* for so many years, so faithfully. It is greatly appreciated for sure, seven times a year! I used to live in NYC's downtown eastside for a couple of years and had a studio on Essex Street near Rivington as well for a time.

I actually worked at the Catholic Worker kitchen—volunteering, serving and helping to feed/tend to the needy in Denver, Colorado. It was part of a community sentencing service I had to do for walking in on a bomb making plant—Rocky Flats—which was a no-no in the government's eyes.

Take care. Let the war in Ukraine end with a peace!

Jay Hamburger

JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH

The Whitney Museum in New York is hosting an extensive exhibition of the art of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, featuring work that spans five decades and includes collaborations with her son Neal Ambrose-Smith, art and materials from her work to protect the petroglyphs of Albuquerque's West Mesa escarpment, and a series of pieces which confront George Bush's celebratory promotion of the quincentenary of Columbus' voyage in 1992. In the exhibition catalogue, *Memory Map*, Smith describes her youth: learning about the world by availing herself of the bookmobile parked down the road, using her farmworker money to send away for the Famous Artists Course advertised on matchbooks, and dressing like a man after seeing *Moulin Rouge*, in hope of becoming Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

Since then, in defiance of superiors who insisted that "Indians don't go to college" and that women were better suited to teaching art than producing it, Smith has created an enormous body of work that breathes new meaning into indigenous icons like the canoe, the buffalo, the horse and the coyote, while sarcastically satirizing language and images, like the Lone Ranger and Tonto, associated with settler politics, propaganda, and pop culture. After all, humor along with wisdom/knowledge, tribe/community and nature/medicine constitutes one part of Smith's "Survival Suite" of lithographs.

One major element of Smith's work which rewards careful examination is her use of collage. Many of her canvases are filled with newspaper headlines and articles, magazine advertisements, recipes, and other clippings (there are lots of Tontos). "Tongass Trade Canoe," for example, depicts a herd of caribou, apparently dispossessed by loggers, crossing a river. The clippings that overlay this canvas demonstrate the dark sense of humor that Smith often employs: a newspaper article stating that "most of the reindeer on Nunivak Island have disappeared and are presumed to have died," a large headline reading "Off To See The Wizard," and an advertisement exclaiming "Goodbye Clutter!" In another collage piece, "Green Flag," one can find a headline grumbling "Pilgrims as Bad Guys? Come on!" in addition to Ronald Reagan's infamous remark, "A tree is a tree—how many more do you need to look at?"

Along with these collage paintings are dozens of pieces featuring an array of mediums and subjects, such as: "Paper Dolls for a Post-Columbian World," a collection which includes Barbie and Ken Plenty Horses, Father Le De Ville the Jesuit, maid's uniform, boarding school outfit, and smallpox suits; "Sovereign Nations," a painting of three generations of women's cutting dresses, overlaid in the style of Jasper Johns's "Three Flags" and superimposed on the Treaty of Hellgate; "Warrior for the 21st Century," a dancing human body composed of chains, wearing a Salish Kootenai College t-shirt which only partially conceals its fry bread stomach; "Memories of Childhood," a moving and elegant series of collages that combines many of the things Smith loves—horses, huckleberries, bobolinks, Douglas firs and lodgepole pines; and "Homeland," a map of the United States with colorful longitudinal rays emanating from the Flathead Reservation in Montana, where Jaune Quick-to-See Smith was born.

If you are in New York before this exhibition closes on August 13, I encourage you to see these pieces in person. The Whitney Museum offers pay-what-you-wish admission on Friday nights, as well as free admission for SNAP/EBT cardholders. If you are out of town, much of the exhibit can be found on whitney.org

—Amy Shaw



Rita Corbin