

## Opposition mounts to Obama's Notre Dame University visit

**Michael Sean Winters**  
*In Washington*

THE PRESTIGIOUS Catholic University of Notre Dame came under increased pressure this week over its decision to invite President Barack Obama to deliver the address and receive an honorary degree at the Indiana-based institution's graduation ceremony on 17 May.

The head of the United States bishops' conference, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, said that the university's decision was an "extreme embarrassment" to Catholics, the conservative website LifeSiteNews reported. Speaking to a conference last weekend on the 2008 Vatican document on bioethical issues, "*Dignitas Personae*", he added: "Whatever else is clear, it is clear that Notre Dame didn't understand what it means to be Catholic when they issued this invitation, and didn't anticipate the kind of uproar that would be consequent to the decision, at least not to the extent that it has happened."

But the cardinal said the university would not rescind the invitation. He said the US presidency "is an office that deserves some respect, no matter who is holding it", and said that

Notre Dame would not disinvite the president, since "you just don't do that". He said requests to revoke the invitation would fall on deaf ears, but said that there was legitimate potential to organise some form of protest.

Cardinal George was not alone in his criticism of Notre Dame. Archbishop Timothy Dolan, who will be installed at the Archdiocese of New York later this month, called the decision "a big mistake" during a television interview. And Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and the incoming head of the bishops' conference's pro-life committee, wrote in his diocesan paper that he was "very disappointed" and said that the decision "requires charitable but vigorous criticism".

Pro-life activist Randall Terry announced plans to rent a house near the university for the next seven weeks, from which he and his supporters plan to mount demonstrations aimed at preventing the President from speaking at Notre Dame. His website – [www.stopobamanotredame.com](http://www.stopobamanotredame.com) – promises "we will raze [*sic*] hell in this battle to keep Obama from speaking at Notre Dame".

Local bishop John D'Arcy, of the Diocese

of Fort Wayne-South Bend, has already announced that he would not attend the ceremony, and an online petition by the Cardinal Newman Society against the invitation had collected more than 215,000 signatures.

But Hugh Cleary, superior-general of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, the order that founded Notre Dame, took a different approach in an open letter he wrote to Mr Obama on Monday. In it he admitted he had not been able to vote in the last election because of Mr Obama's position on abortion, and asked him "to rethink, through prayerful wrestling with your own conscience, your stated positions on the vital 'life issues' of our day", particularly abortion and embryonic stem-cell research.

The university's president, Fr John Jenkins, is standing by his decision to invite Mr Obama to speak, arguing that hosting the President does not suggest approval of all of his ideas. A survey of letters to the student newspaper *The Observer* indicated that, while 70 per cent of alumni were opposed to Obama speaking at the university, 97 per cent of the graduating class approved of having him as the speaker at their graduation ceremony.

*(See Michael Sean Winters, page 6.)*

## Vatican investigates the Legionaries of Christ

**POPE BENEDICT XVI has ordered a further investigation into the Legionaries of Christ, the conservative men's religious order whose founder – the late Fr Marcial Maciel – has been accused of sexual abuse and was recently discovered to have fathered children, writes Robert Mickens.**

Known as an Apostolic Visitation, and to be conducted over the next few months by regional teams of bishops, the new investigation was announced on Saturday by the order's superior, Fr Alvaro Corcuera.

Fr Corcuera's announcement followed a 10 March letter from the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, in which the cardinal said the visitation hoped to help "overcome the present difficulties ... in a climate of fraternal and constructive dialogue". An investigation which ended in 2006 resulted in the Vatican inviting Fr Maciel to renounce all public ministry.

## Tauran urges tougher line with other faiths

CATHOLICS NEED clearer and more comprehensive teaching on reciprocity to guide dealings with Muslims – especially in places such as Saudi Arabia, according to the head of the Vatican's office for relations with other religions, writes Robert Mickens.

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, said at a conference in Rome last week that the Church's Magisterium offered no "systematic treatment of the principle of reciprocity". However, he said Pope Benedict XVI had placed greater insistence on its necessity, especially in relations with Islam and on "key questions such as the problem of religious liberty". Nonetheless, the cardinal said the Church's teaching still remained fragmented and needed to be solidified.

"Therefore, it would seem opportune for the Church to be more precise about the authentic sense that it ascribes to the notion of reciprocity in the interreligious area, and to indicate clear norms that, with precision, sanction the areas where such a principle is applicable," the cardinal said. He said such norms

should also indicate the steps to be taken in places "where Catholics suffer unjustifiable situations of difficulty".

"Numerous times I have mentioned the principle of reciprocity in a very precise context, that is the absence of places of Christian worship in Saudi Arabia," said Cardinal Tauran. The 66-year-old French cardinal has been head of the Vatican's interreligious office since 2007 but for 13 years (1990-2003) he served as the Vatican equivalent of deputy foreign minister, a post at which he earned a reputation as one of the Holy See's most skilled diplomats. "I have repeated ad nauseam that just as Muslims have the right to pray in mosques in mainly Christian countries, in the same way Christians have the right to have their own places of worship in mainly Muslim countries," he said.

Until the current pontificate the Vatican's approach seemed to be modelled more on the Gospel principle that Christians should give without expecting anything in return. But this "softer" policy was harshly criticised by those who believed it made the Church appear naive.

UNITED STATES

## Academics launch major study of Pentecostalism

Timothy Lavin  
*In Washington*

PENTECOSTAL AND charismatic Christianity are to come under the academic microscope in a multi-million-dollar study to be launched by the Los Angeles-based University of Southern California.

"It's one of the fastest-growing religious traditions around the world; if there are 500 million charismatic and Pentecostal Christians in the world, that really has the potential to reshape the face of global Christianity," said Brie Loskota, managing director of the university's Center for Religion and Civic Culture, this week. "Religion plays an increasing role in the interaction between states, in civil society, in government, education, business. What effect will Pentecostalism, and other newer expressions of religious faith, have on those in-

stitutions? We don't know the answers, but we're very excited about the questions," said Ms Loskota, who is also director of the new programme, called the Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative (PCRI), which is funded by a US\$7-million grant from the John Templeton Foundation.

Donald Miller, executive director of the PCRI, said the study would also look at why Pentecostalism was growing so rapidly and how it was different in various cultural settings. It will also investigate Catholic and Protestant renewal movements. About a quarter of Americans consider themselves charismatic Christians, including about 30 per cent of Catholics, according to a survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, part of the Washington-based think tank the Pew Research Center. Pentecostalism and its offshoots now claim up to half a billion adherents.

## Burke apologises for criticising colleagues

ARCHBISHOP RAYMOND BURKE, head of the Vatican's highest court, apologised last week for critical remarks he made about bishops who offer Communion to pro-choice politicians, *writes Timothy Lavin*.

The archbishop said that his statements – made during an interview videotaped in Rome with Randall Terry, a long-time anti-abortion activist who recently converted to Catholicism – were intended as encouragement to an audience of pro-life workers.

"Sadly, Mr Terry has used the videotape for another purpose, which I find most objectionable," the archbishop said in a statement.

Mr Terry and a group of activists had gone to Rome to ask the Vatican to take harsher

action against bishops who offer pro-choice politicians the Eucharist – and publicly called for the removal of Archbishop Donald Wuerl of Washington, DC, and Bishop Paul Loverde of Arlington, Virginia, who he said were tacitly approving of politicians receiving Communion. As part of this campaign Mr Terry later played the videotape of the interview at a press conference at the National Press Club in the American capital.

In the interview Archbishop Burke warned that President Barack Obama, who has a pro-choice stance on abortion, could cause enormous harm. He said Mr Obama "could – by promoting and implementing anti-life legislation measures – be an agent of death".

## Priest warned of paedophiles 50 years ago

RECENTLY RELEASED letters reveal that American bishops were warned of the persistent danger posed by paedophile priests as early as the mid-1950s, *writes Elena Curti*.

They were written by Fr Gerald Fitzgerald, who founded the Servants of the Paraclete, an order ministering to priests suffering from a range of psychological problems and addictions. He told bishops and Vatican officials, including Pope Pius XII, that priests who abused children should be laicised immediately, and at one stage said he was hoping to

buy an island where they could be isolated.

"These men are devils and the wrath of God is upon them, and if I were a bishop I would tremble when I failed to report them to Rome for involuntary layization [*sic*]," wrote Fr Fitzgerald to an unnamed bishop in 1957, thought to be Archbishop Edwin Byrne of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The letters were published this week by the Kansas-based *National Catholic Reporter*. They were given to the paper by a California law firm and had previously been under court seal.

## Tridentine cleric to head English liturgy commission

A WESTMINSTER priest closely associated with the Tridentine Rite since his ordination in 1990, has been chosen to serve as executive director of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (Icel).

Fr Andrew Wadsworth had been talked of as the next leading executive of Icel – a mixed commission of 11 English-speaking episcopal conferences – earlier this year (*The Tablet*, 31 January), but it was not until this week that the Washington-based body announced the appointment of one of the leading figures of the Latin Mass Society, who teaches other priests to celebrate Mass in the old rite.

This Easter Fr Wadsworth has been asked by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Archbishop of Westminster, to celebrate the Triduum in the old rite in a central London church.

With a licence in biblical theology from the University of Maynooth in Ireland, Fr Wadsworth is currently the Catholic chaplain and head of Italian at Harrow, the prestigious public school for boys in north-west London, and also teaches Greek and Latin to seminarians at Allen Hall, the Westminster diocesan seminary.

He will succeed Mgr Bruce Harbert, who has been in post for seven years, in September.

■ **ITALY:** Amendments to make proposed "living will" legislation strictly follow Vatican regulations on prohibiting the discontinuation of artificial feeding and hydration for comatose patients have been forced through by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's conservative majority during a hotly contested battle in the Italian Senate, *writes Robert Mickens*.

The bill, which also includes a clause that would make "living wills" non-binding on doctors, is expected to win necessary passage in the lower chamber of parliament, where Mr Berlusconi also has a comfortable majority. Polls show that Italians are deeply divided over the proposal and opposition parties have vowed to collect enough signatures to win a public referendum on the issue. They want to make "living wills" binding and allow individuals to refuse all treatment, including hydration and alimentation. The Church has backed Italy's proposed amended "living will" legislation.

# Cardinal accused of disobeying Pope

Robert Mickens  
In Rome

THE HEAD of the Vatican's Ecclesia Dei commission has reprimanded the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, for setting "unduly restrictive" conditions on use of the Tridentine Mass, saying they were "in direct contradiction" to the wishes of Pope Benedict XVI. "Your 'Archdiocesan Guidelines' are simply not acceptable as they stand and I ask you to reconsider them," said the Ecclesia Dei

president, Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, in a letter dated 6 March and seen by *The Tablet* this week. It said "guidelines allowing only a monthly Mass in a chapel of [the] Metropolitan Cathedral" were in violation of the norms established in the *motu proprio*, "*Summorum Pontificum*", issued by the Pope in 2007 for the widespread use of the Tridentine Mass. Cardinal Castrillón said the papal decree was "part of the universal law of the Church" and could not be limited by the "particular law" of a diocesan bishop. The Archdiocese of Mani-

la ministers to more than 2.8 million Catholics.

"There is simply no legitimate reason why this [Tridentine] Mass cannot and should not be celebrated in any church or chapel of your archdiocese," Cardinal Castrillón said in his letter to the Archbishop of Manila.

He insisted that Cardinal Rosales actively promote the implementation of the *motu proprio* by "helping priests who are desirous to learn how to celebrate" the old rite Mass, which he said only required that the priest be "reasonably competent in Latin", and that there were faithful who wished to assist at its celebration.

The Archdiocese of Manila published the Tridentine Mass guidelines on its website last year. But they were quickly removed when supporters of the old rite protested to Rome.

Meanwhile, the priest who won provincial elections in 2007 to become governor of the region of Pampanga in the north of the Philippines has said he is considering running for president in next year's general elections. Fr Eddie Panlilio, who was suspended from his priestly duties in 2007, said last week that if elected he would ensure that the current president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, was prosecuted on corruption charges.

**GERMANY:** Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged Churches to be more socially active during the current economic and financial crisis by encouraging a sense of the common good instead of individual materialism, writes Jonathan Luxmoore.

"After the market excesses, we need to learn to think and act again in the interests of the whole community," said Ms Merkel during a visit to Berlin's Catholic Academy. "There is a reference to God in the German constitution which says politicians are not all-powerful. The Christian vision of the person

is a defence against self-will in politics and ideologies offending human dignity."

The 54-year-old chancellor, whose father was a Lutheran pastor, said greater church involvement was needed at a time of "ever greater uncertainty about the foundations for our actions".

■ The Italian Catholic Bishops' Conference has announced it is setting up a 30-million-euro (£27.8m) fund to help families without an income to pay their rent and mortgages. A national collection for the fund will be taken on Pentecost Sunday, 31 May.

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### BRAZIL

## Grings plays down Holocaust claims

A CHURCH leader in Brazil has accused Jews of exaggerating the extent to which they were victimised during the Holocaust, writes Jon Stibbs. Archbishop Dadeus Grings, of Porto Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul, said in an interview published last week in the Brazilian trade magazine *Press e Advertising*: "The Jews talk about six million people killed. But how many Catholics were victims of the Holocaust? They were 22 million in all ... the biggest [Holocaust] victims were the gypsies, because they were exterminated. And [the Jews] don't mention this." Estimates put the number of gypsies killed at between 200,000 and 500,000 and in 1984 the Jewish Holocaust-survivor Simon Wiesenthal said they were murdered in a proportion similar to the Jews.

Henry Chmelnitsky, President of the Rio Grande do Sul Jewish Federation, said in a statement: "Fewer Jews died in World War II because there were and there still are fewer Jews in the world." Jewish-Catholic relations in South America are still strained following Pope Benedict XVI's rehabilitation of Bishop Richard Williams of the Society of St Pius X. In 2003 the archbishop claimed only 1 million Jews died in the Holocaust, which led to Israel's ambassador to Brazil registering a complaint with the nuncio.

## IN BRIEF

### Canadian Caritas faces allegations

Four Canadian bishops – Archbishops Thomas Collins of Toronto, J. Michael Miller of Vancouver, Brendan O'Brien of Kingston, and Bishop Nicola De Angelis of Peterborough – have told parishioners they will not send Lent donations collected in aid of Development and Peace, the charity of the Canadian bishops' conference and part of Caritas Internationalis, until it answers recent allegations on the conservative website LifeSiteNews that some of its partner organisations in Latin America support abortion.

### Pope's 29 speeches in eight days

Pope Benedict XVI is to celebrate four outdoor Masses, visit two mosques and the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial during his forthcoming visit to the Holy Land. The Holy See press office said the Pope would deliver 29 homilies and speeches during his 8-15 May journey to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian town of Bethlehem.

### Cardinal stands by Dalai Lama

Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, Archbishop of Durban, has expressed "shock and regret" that the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, has been denied a visa to attend an anti-racism conference of Nobel laureates in South Africa, after pressure from China, a major business partner of the country.

### Kinshasa accused over LRA

Catholic bishops in the north of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have accused their Government of doing too little to stop the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) gaining a foothold in the north-east of the country. They said the LRA, originally based in Uganda, had settled in DRC "with the complicity of the Congolese state".

### Rebel priest to go after Easter

Fr Peter Kennedy, the sacked administrator of St Mary's parish in South Brisbane, is to set up what he describes as a Catholic community in exile when he leaves this month. Parishioners from the church, which has blessed gay relationships and had women preachers, agreed with Archbishop John Bathurst of Brisbane that Fr Kennedy would preside at his last Mass at St Mary's on 19 April.

### US bishops warn against reiki

The doctrine committee of the US bishops' conference has denounced the use of reiki, an alternative therapy, at Catholic retreats and health-care centres, calling it "superstition" that "corrupts one's worship of God" in guidelines issued last week.

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[www.thetablet.co.uk](http://www.thetablet.co.uk)

## Letter from Rome

A bizarre headline – "Vatican raps Obama medieval mystic" – topped a news story produced on Friday last week by the Italian news agency ANSA. It turns out that the mystic in question was Joachim of Fiore, a late twelfth-century monk from southern Italy whose writings were very influential in his day (even on some popes), then fell out of vogue (some of his ideas were deemed heretical) and in the past few decades have regained some popularity (especially among post-metaphysical philosophers). But what does Barack Obama have to do with all this? "The fact that the recently elected President of the United States referenced Joachim of Fiore three times during his electoral campaign has renewed interest in the medieval monk's teaching." He did? At least according to the Preacher of the Papal Household, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa OFM Cap. He made that statement in one of the fiery *fervorinos* he preaches each Friday in Lent to the Pope and the Roman Curia. And he noted that some ideas "attributed" to the monk were "false and heretical". But did Obama really "reference" Gioacchino da Fiore? And the symbolic "three times"? It seemed odd that no one had mentioned this when it happened. Then I recalled another Italian news story from last August. It was about the obscure town in Calabria – San Giovanni in Fiore – where this "medieval mystic" is buried and has long been revered as a "blessed". The report said the mayor wanted Obama to visit the town and receive honorary citizenship since he had "referenced Joachim of Fiore three times" in his campaign speeches. Unfortunately, there's no trace of these speeches. But stay tuned. Fr Cantalamessa will be preaching at the papal liturgy in St Peter's Basilica on Good Friday and maybe he'll say more ...

Professor Mary Ann Glendon has been quietly reinstated as president of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. She was originally appointed to the post by Pope John Paul II in 1994 but temporarily relinquished it in February 2008 in order to serve briefly as President George W. Bush's Ambassador to the Holy See. The Vatican did not publicly announce the 70-year-old human-rights lawyer's re-appointment. It merely noted it in the middle of last month in an internal memo from the Secretariat of State's office of statistics, which periodically lists updates to the *Annuario Pontificio* (this one happens to be on page 1826 of the "fat little red book"). In an interview with Catholic News Service before she returned to America in January, Professor Glendon was described as being "unabashedly proud" to have served as Mr Bush's envoy to Vatican. "How

lucky I've been to have served here at a time when relations between the United States and the Holy See have been so close and productive," she said. Professor Glendon should know. She headed the Holy See's delegation at the United Nations-sponsored world summit on women in Beijing in 1995, and at that time United States-Vatican relations were quite cool. Professor Glendon's deep involvement with the Holy See and her lack of experience with the US State Department made it sometimes difficult to know who she was actually representing – the US or the Pope. But that is not likely to happen with her successor. Catholics in the United States are eagerly waiting to see whom President Obama will appoint as Ambassador to the Holy See. Some critics of the President have already begun complaining that he has shown disrespect by not having appointed someone already. But, in fact, no new US ambassadors have been appointed anywhere – except to the UN.

Many African priests, religious sisters, seminarians and other students living in Rome believe the media have treated Pope Benedict XVI unfairly by the way it has reported comments he made on Aids and condoms during his recent visit to the capitals of Cameroon and Angola. A number of Africans brought signs and banners to last Sunday's Angelus in St Peter's Square to show the Pope their solidarity. "Dear friends, you wanted to come to manifest your joy for my apostolic trip to Africa," Pope Benedict said from his study window overlooking the square. "I thank you from my heart. I pray for you, for your families and your homelands." The group was led by Archbishop Robert Sarah of Guinea. For those who have never heard of this saintly 63-year-old prelate, he is currently the highest-ranking African in the Roman Curia. After serving more than 20 years as the Archbishop of Conakry he was appointed in 2001 to be secretary, or number-two official, at the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples (Propaganda Fide). There is nobody from the "continent of hope" – as both Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI have called Africa – that presently heads a major Vatican office. The last one was Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria who stepped down last December as prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship. Many are curious to see if the Pope will rectify this situation in the coming weeks, especially since so much has been made about this being the Pope's "year for Africa". Will there be a major appointment before October's African Synod? **Robert Mickens**