

24. The Radical Hope in the Annunciation: Why Both Single and Married Christians Welcome Children (2001)

Occasioned by the birth of his first grandchild, Hauerwas returns to an early theme of his work, giving his account of why "the family" has become such a precarious institution in American society. Here Hauerwas argues that the penchant of some Christians to idealize the family of a bygone era serves only to mask the problems presented by the successful economic obsolescence of the family. With children no longer an economic boon (as they are in preindustrial societies), accounts of the significance of children as a means to "domestic" happiness need all the more to be challenged. Hauerwas argues that Christian marriages and families are to be understood in terms of their contribution to the growth and development of the church. Their significance can be adequately comprehended only when analyzed in conjunction with the complementary Christian calling to singleness.

1. "Families and Family Values": Do We Know Why We Want Them?

I begin with an announcement: On the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1998, Joel Adam Hauerwas was born. I am a grandfather. Nothing is more hopeful than the birth of a child. Such births defy the unknown, claiming that we can in fact trust in God. So I stand before you as one representing the hope *that is named by the family* and in gratitude to Adam and Laura Hauerwas for opening their lives and thus Paula's and my lives to this new life.

It may not be fair to begin with this announcement. Why should you care whether Joel has been born? It is a nice thing, of course, that he has been born, but such matters are "personal." This essay is supposed to address the family *qua* family, not the family Hauerwas. Yet, given some of what I have said in the

[This is an edited version of a lecture delivered at the Catholic University of America, April 28, 1998. The lecture title was "Should Catholics Support Family Values? Christian Marriage, Sex, and Singleness."]

past about the family, namely, that the first enemy of the family is Christianity, I want to make clear that I care deeply that Joel has been born.

I am hesitant to speak about the family because I am not altogether happy with what I have to say. The family in America is in profound trouble. I think I know why the family is in profound trouble, but I have no answer that will “fix” the family. Indeed, I fear my theological understanding of the place of the family can make things worse. I do not want to make things worse. I want Joel Adam Hauerwas born and I want him to have the confidence to have children. However, I also want Joel’s wants to be shaped by the hope that is of God so that they will not be demonic. How to say that in a society like ours that fears having children is not easy.

Thus, readers of this essay who assume that the roles of marriage and/or singleness are coherent in this society, and that this essay constitutes advice on “how to do family” or “how to do marriage,” may well be disappointed. For we live in a time when we must ask more basic questions, like “What is marriage?” and “Why would anybody want to do it?” One of the things I will try to show is that if Christians are going to “do” marriage and family faithfully, they need to overcome their “romantic” individualistic fantasies about them, which is no easy matter.¹

2. *The American Family*

Let me try to explain these last remarks by giving you an overview of why, in spite of the celebration of the family by most Americans, the family that we celebrate is in such profound trouble. Indeed, what I hope to show is that the very celebration of the family—the fact that Americans so desperately cling to the family as our anchor in the storms of life—is but an indication of the trouble in which the family in America finds itself. The more we are forced to make the family the end-all and be-all of our existence, the more the family becomes a problem not only for American society generally, but more particularly a problem for Christians.

In order to appreciate just what Christians are up against in thinking about “family” and how we might adequately respond, I need to outline what I take to be the two most destructive developments in the past few centuries for the current understanding of the family. I name these two developments “The

1. For more on this last point, see Hauerwas, *CC*, 156–57.

Economic Marginalization of the Family,” and its flip side “The Romantic Idealization of the Family.”

2.1 *The Economic Marginalization of the Family*

To understand how the role of the family has changed in the past two hundred years, I want to summarize what I understand to be the viewpoint of the philosopher who perhaps has had the greatest influence on our current social and economic order. His perspective on the family can be summarized in three points: First, he advocates the Stoic view that individuals are best able to take care of themselves and should be committed principally to their own care. Why? Because “every man feels his own pleasures and his own pains more sensibly than those of other people.”

Second, after ourselves, our families are the most important object of our affection, because our own happiness is greatly influenced by their happiness and/or misery. More specifically, nature directs our sympathies more to our children than to our parents. Why? Because from the eye of nature “a child is a more important object than an old man; and excites a much more lively, as well as a much more universal sympathy. It ought to do so. Everything may be expected, or at least hoped, from the child. In ordinary cases, very little can be expected or hoped from the old man. The weakness of childhood interests the affections of the most brutal and hard-hearted. It is only to the virtuous and humane, that the infirmities of old age are not the objects of contempt and aversion” (219). A sobering observation, perhaps, but one in which we cannot help but see ourselves.²

2. It is fascinating to compare this account with Aquinas’s account of charity. Aquinas’s discussion of the order of charity is framed by his presumption that we are first to love God above all else. In this context, note his understanding of the relation between love of self and love of neighbor: “God is loved as the principle of good, on which the love of charity is founded; while man, out of charity, loves himself by reason of his being a partaker of the aforesaid good, and loves his neighbor by reason of his fellowship in that good. Now fellowship is a reason for love according to a certain union in relation to God. Wherefore just as unity surpasses union, the fact that man himself has a share of the Divine good is a more potent reason for loving than that another should be a partner with him in that share. Therefore man, out of charity, ought to love himself more than his neighbor: in sign whereof, a man ought not to give way to any evil of sin, which counteracts his share of happiness, not even that he may free his neighbor of sin” (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* [New York: Benziger Bros., 1946], II-II, 26, 4). As for love of family in relation to others, Aquinas suggests that love of kindred must come first since we are commanded thus by the Decalogue. He even suggests we ought to give priority to our love of our parents over our children because the father is the source of our origin, “in which respect he is a more exalted good and

Third, in countries where the rule of law is strong, such that even the poorest and weakest members of that state have relative security, family ties are weaker. Why? Because in a society where the rule of law gives individuals a sense of safety, “the descendants of the same family, having no such motive for keeping together, naturally separate and disperse, as interest or inclination may direct. They soon cease to be of importance to one another; and, in a few generations, not only lose all care about one another, but all remembrance of their common origin, and of the connection which took place among their ancestors. Regard for remote relations becomes, in every country, less and less, according as this state of civilization has been longer and more completely established. It has been longer and more completely established in England than in Scotland; and remote relations are, accordingly, more considered in the latter country than in the former, though, in this respect, the difference between the two countries is growing less and less every day” (223).

Who is the philosopher who so clearly saw the decline of the extended family? It was Adam Smith, and he noted all these things in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* first published in 1759.³ Smith’s aim was to articulate the philosophical presuppositions and institutional arrangements necessary for the creation of societies in which the poorest man of a clan could survive without need for the regard of the chieftain. Such a system would no longer require individual acts of charity (though of course neither would it exclude such acts, but would render them “voluntary”) since the system itself would supply the wants of each individual through free exchange. The family would still exist, but it would increasingly be understood as but another instance of exchange relation.

As for what follows from Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, the rest, so to speak, is history. For I take it that Smith’s observations about how the family is reshaped by the growth of a society governed by law (what Max Weber called a “legal-rational social order”) have come to pass. Scotland did and has become England and now the whole world will soon be California. Of course, Smith thought this to be a good thing. Indeed, the whole point of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was to show how the weakening of familial ties would increase the necessity of sympathy between strangers and result in cooperative forms of behavior that had not previously been realized.

more like God” (II–II, 26, 9). While Aquinas’s account of the order of charity is not without problems, what makes it so interesting is that it is determinatively ordered by our love of God.

3. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); page numbers in the text.

Moving from Smith's account to the contemporary situation in which we find ourselves, I see two main efforts to respond to the profound changes with regard to the family that Smith both prophesied and helped bring about. First, it is not difficult to see that much of the current social and psychological literature, which is often written in the interest of saving the family or at least making the family "work," merely reproduces Smith's understanding of "sympathy," the dominance of which has brought us to our current predicament. From my perspective these social workers and psychologists are but trying to cure the illness by infecting more people with the disease.

Second, the same is true for those who want to save the family by appealing to the intervention of the state. That is surely to have the fox guard the hen house. That the state has increasingly taken over the functions of the family is the result of the changes Smith at once named and championed. For example, I think few developments have been more deleterious for the family in America than what we now call "public education" and its supporting services. The development of such bureaucracies, legitimated by their commitment to "help" children, inevitably result—in spite of their best intentions—in making parents feel incompetent to raise children. Indeed, a 1977 Carnegie Council Report suggested that the primary role of the parents should be that of a manager coordinating the care their children receive through the appropriate experts.⁴ As the report puts the matter, "No longer able to do it all themselves, parents today are in some ways like the executives in a large firm—responsible for the smooth coordination of the many people and processes that must work together to produce the final product."⁵

One of the curiosities of our time is how many conservatives in America—that is, people who support the capitalist economic arrangements championed by Adam Smith—believe the family can be protected, despite its ever diminishing role in the face of such economic arrangements. Some "communitarians" attempt to respond to this problem by appealing to the importance of "intermediate institutions" like the family, the church and synagogue, and various other civic and social organizations. However, in stressing the importance of these intermediate institutions, most communitarians usually fail to appreciate that to call the family an intermediate institution is to have already accepted the presuppositions of a legal-rationalistic social order that presup-

4. The Carnegie Council, *All Our Children: The American Family under Pressure* (1977).

5. I discuss this report extensively in "The Moral Value of the Family" (1978), in *cc*. The direct quote I use can be found on page 17 of the Carnegie report.

poses the quest to make all relationships exchange-relations. Having all too often accepted this capitalist presumption, many of those who make the loudest calls for “family values” assume the family exists primarily as the place from which we receive and learn affection. This is what Adam Smith called “sympathy.”

2.2 *The Romantic Idealization of the Family*

Formerly, the strength of the family had been its social, economic, and political significance. The fact that the economic and political significance of the family is now secondary has the ironic effect of making an idealized account of the family too important in our lives. In a world of strangers, we cling to the family as the one place that supplies us with relationships that we have not chosen. As a set of relationships that are a “given” rather than ones we can choose to opt into or out of, family relationships at least seem to promise to give our lives, if not purpose, at least an “anchor.” The problem, however, is that the family is generally unable to bear the burden of such intense psychological and moral expectations. We have seen that when one attaches such intense psychological importance to the family, what results is the spawning of whole industries of counselors of the family (e.g., social workers, psychologists, and educators), who now take as their task to “save” the family or “save us from” the family. Furthermore, these projects of saving the family (or saving us from the family) are undertaken in terms largely shaped by the economic concerns of Adam Smith. Even further, it is not clear that these “family counselors” have any significant alternative to offer us. I fear that too often, the alternative offered is little more than stressing to us the importance of a “career.”⁶

Following Robert Nisbet, I do not believe that familial kinship can be sustained on solely interpersonal and psychological grounds. To sustain the family, there must be a set of traditions and practices that are passed on from generation to generation.⁷ “But, to the extent the family today is not even seen

6. That “career” too often becomes the alternative to the family indicates the class nature of much of these discussions. The role money has in the destruction of the family I think has not been appropriately appreciated. For a discussion of how privacy concerning money subverts efforts to have a disciplined church, see Hauerwas, *AC*, 99–101.

7. The relation between my reflections on the family and my overall project has been poorly understood. One happy exception to this is a wonderful footnote by Grady Scott Davis in *Warcraft and the Fragility of Virtue: An Essay in Aristotelian Ethics* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1992), 25. Davis rightly sees that my reflections on these matters constitute my most sustained critique of liberalism. As Davis puts it, “It is in coming to grips with the constitutive institutions of the community—marriage, family, religion, political participa-

as the bearer of tradition—whether it be the tradition of a nation, religion, or the family itself, the children are not raised or initiated by the family to be worthy of carrying forward the work of their ancestors. Rather, they are to be raised to make intelligent choices when they are adults. Perhaps the crassest form of this attitude is exemplified by those parents who raise their children to be able to choose to be ‘religious or not’ when they grow up. To do otherwise is to ‘impose one’s own views’ on children, which would be, it is suggested, a violation of their autonomy.”⁸ I will return to the difficulties inherent in these “romantic” or psychological views of family and marriage a little later in this presentation.

3. *The Christian Family*

My extreme dissatisfaction with the above two alternatives—the family as necessary starting point that we must leave behind in the interest of being free (the project of Adam Smith), or the family as “everything” (i.e., its romantic idealization)—is the reason I have tried to remind Christians that for us the family is constituted by a quite different politics from the world that was aborning when Smith wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In particular, I have objected to the view of some Christians that the greatest virtue of Christianity is the bulwark it supposedly provides for some form of defense of the family. That seems to me to be nothing short of idolatrous. After all, Christianity has been and will continue to be, if we are serious as Christians, a challenge to familial loyalties.

For example, my friend Will Willimon notes that during the time he has been Dean of the Chapel at Duke, he has received four angry phone calls from parents. All the calls have taken the same form. The parent says, “We sent Suzy to Duke with her head on straight. She was to major in economics and go on to law school. But she has become so involved in the Wesley Fellowship that she has now decided she is going to become a missionary to Honduras. How could you let this happen? You have ruined her life.” That as pale a form of Christianity as Methodism can still produce this kind of result indicates pretty definitively that the Gospel is not altogether friendly to the family. I am sure that campus ministers at the Catholic University of America could tell similar

tion, and health care, for example—that the limits of the contractarian tradition become clearest and Hauerwas’ writings on these topics more telling in their critical implications than even the best of Rawls’ more ‘philosophical’ critiques.”

8. Quoted from “The Family: Theological Reflections,” in *cc*, 169.

tales of discussions with parents whose son or daughter has found a call to priesthood or religious life while an undergraduate here.

Of course, the Christian challenge to the family goes deeper than the difference in expectations that may occur between parents and children. I take it that nothing embodies the Christian challenge to the family more determinatively than the presumption that Christians do not have to have children to be Christians. The most decisive difference between Christianity and Judaism is to be found here. God has not willed the church to be reproduced through biology but through witness and conversion. We must remember that the most significant thing the single give up is not sex. What the single give up are heirs, grandchildren named Joel Adam Hauerwas, and they do so because they now understand that they have been made part of a community that is more determinative than the biological family.⁹

3.1 Christian Singleness

Singleness is the one practice of the Church that most profoundly shows that it has accepted and wishes to participate in the hope that God secured through Christ's cross, resurrection, and ascension. Singleness embodies the Christian hope that God's kingdom has come, is present, and is still to come. Accordingly, we cannot help but witness this good news to others. These "others" may indeed be our own children, but are more likely to be children who have come from families who have never heard the name of Christ. When the church loses the significance of singleness, I suspect it does so because Christians no longer have confidence that the Gospel can be received by those who have not been, so to speak, "raised in it." Put differently: Christian justifications of the family may often be the result that Christians no longer believe the Gospel is true or joyful.

That singleness is the first way of life for Christians does not imply that marriage and the having of children is in any way a less worthy way to be Christian. Quite the opposite. The fact that marriage is for Christians a vocation rather than a requirement gives it a new dignity. For the Christian, marriage cannot and must not be seen as a necessary means for self-fulfillment. Christians are not called to marriage for "fulfillment," but for the upbuilding of that community called church. This has the remarkable implication that what it means for Christians to "love" in marriage can be properly understood

9. For a further discussion of this, see "Sex in Public: How Adventurous Christians Are Doing It," essay 23 in this volume.

only in relation to the love that we share with our brothers and sisters in Christ. For Christians, marriage is not ultimately where one learns what love is about; indeed, the "love" that Christians share in marriage is made possible because we have first been loved by God.

3.2 *Christian Marriage*

I realize such a view seems quite bizarre in a culture dominated by romantic accounts of marriage. We assume a couple falls in love and comes to the church to have their love publicly acknowledged. One problem with this romantic view is that it tends to the presumption that if the love that was initially present in the relationship is no longer present, the marriage no longer exists. Romantic accounts of marriage simply cannot comprehend the church's view that marriage names the time created through a faithful promise that makes possible the discovery of love. Marriage is God's gift to the church through which the hope born by the gift of the kingdom patiently learns to wait in the time made possible by the presence of children.¹⁰

If this is not the fundamental theological presumption that sustains Christian marriage, then I do not see how we can make sense of the Church's acceptance of arranged marriages. I am aware that we tend to look on the institution of arranged marriage as a cultural mistake we are well rid of, but such a view assumes "arranged marriage" is a far narrower category than in fact it is. As I often observed when I taught at the University of Notre Dame, the very existence of Notre Dame and its sister institution Saint Mary's was dependent on the continuing belief in arranged marriages. Those institutions were rightly used by Catholic families who sent their sons and daughters in the hopes that they would meet someone of approximately the same social class and religious background to marry. That is arranged marriage under the illusion of choice.

Moreover, that is why I always taught "Hauerwas's Law" to my classes in marriage and the family at Notre Dame: "You always marry the wrong person." Like any good law it is, of course, reversible. You also always marry the right person. My law was not intended to instill in students a cynical view of marriage, but rather to help them see that the church rightly understands that we no more know the person we marry than we know ourselves. However, that we lack such knowledge in no way renders marriage problematic, at least

10. For my critique of recent Catholic sexual ethics which accept the presumptions of romantic accounts of sex and marriage, see *AC*, 113–15, 125–27.

not marriage between Christians; for to be married as Christians is possible because we understand that we are members of a community more determinative than marriage.¹¹

That the church is a more determinative community than a marriage is evidenced by the fact that it requires Christian marriage vows to be made with the church as witness. This is a reminder that we as church rightfully will hold you to promises you made when you did not and could not fully comprehend what you were promising. How could anyone *know* what it means to promise life-long monogamous fidelity? From the church's perspective the question is not whether you know what you are promising; rather, the question is whether you are the kind of person who can be held to a promise you made when you did not know what you were promising. We believe, of course, that baptism creates the condition that makes possible the presumption that we might just be such people.

Only against this background is Christian reflection about sex intelligible. Christians do not have a sexual ethic based on some general account of human sexuality. Rather, we have marriage as a practice that governs how we think about sex. For Christians there is nothing called premarital sex because we believe that all sex is marital. The problem with sex outside publicly acknowledged marriages is not that it is not sex, but that it is without the purposes that come only from marriage. To name such purpose unitive and procreative is obviously shorthand for a very complex relation, but such a shorthand has its purpose in a time when people think they get to make up what sex is for.¹²

11. In other words, baptism makes marriage possible.

12. My difficulty with the Roman Catholic argument against contraception is that it may involve the abstraction of sex from marriage. The argument that every act of sexual intercourse must be open to conception I fear tries to read too much off the act itself, thus divorcing the act from marriage. It is one thing to maintain that marriage as an institution must be open to procreation; it is quite another to maintain that every act of sexual intercourse must be open to conception. The problem is how to make clear that marriage is a practice whose telos is children in a world in which marriage has been spiritualized in the name of love. If nothing else, the prohibition of contraception reminds Christians that sex has a purpose inseparable from our bodies.

A significant reason why Catholic sexual ethics are currently in such deep trouble is that so many Catholics have such a negative view of the church that they could not imagine sacrificing their personal sexual satisfaction as what might be required to be part of the adventure of what it means to be part of the body of Christ called "church" (see *Hauerwas Reader*, 503). Their inability to see this adventure as worthwhile is not even primarily due to "lust" (though it may be!), but more profoundly a sense of loneliness and the need for power in their lives (see AC, 131).

The Christian refusal to separate marriage and the having of children can be usefully contrasted with Adam Smith's account of the place of children. Smith simply assumed the having of children was a natural process that resulted in a particularly intense form of sympathy. Yet what he does not provide is an answer to the question as to why having children is a good thing to do. Indeed, I think there is no greater sign of the incoherence surrounding the having of children in our culture than the pagan assumption that biology makes children "ours." Such an assumption seems to draw on Smith's view that it is necessary for the child to be "like us" in order to create bonds of sympathy. That children are born of our bodies, that children can be the bodily form of the unity of a marriage, is no doubt a great gift. But it is not, from a Christian perspective, a necessary condition to account for our responsibility for children.

Christians, single and married, are parents. "Parent" names an office of the Christian community that everyone in the community is expected faithfully to fulfill. Those called to marriage are presumed to accept the call and responsibility to have and care for particular children in the name of the community. But the goods and the burdens of that office cannot be restricted just to those that "have" children. That is why the church rightly expects parents to bring up children in the faith. No responsibility is more important.¹³

Accordingly, the church has rightly resisted state authorities when they attempt to educate children in a manner contrary to parental desires. The church does so because the church expects parents to represent Christ for our children. Having said that, it is also important to remember that the parental rights of those who have their children baptized are not primary but derivative, since they draw their intelligibility from the church's command that parents bring their children up in the faith. Christian parents do not own their children; rather, those of us who are Christian parents are called to serve our children by recognizing that the children of our bodies are gifts of God, not our possessions. That is the "right" the church protects in the name of parental care of children. Of course, the problem in America is that Christians have come to believe the public authorities are but an extension of the care we are to give our children.¹⁴

13. For examples of how the faithful activity of a church creates possibilities for parenting that are not possible given the individualistic assumptions about marriage and family in our culture, see Hauerwas and Willimon, *RA*, chaps. 4–6.

14. In *AC*, I use Bertrand Russell's account of marriage to show how the contractual version of marriage and sexual relations, contrary to Russell's desires, must lead to the growth of the state.

I am aware that the account I have just given of the Christian family may strike many as extreme. Surely the business of marriage and having children is a more straightforward affair. Indeed, there seems to be something distinctly "unnatural" about my account of Christian marriage. My account may even seem to risk creating a gulf between God's good creation of marriage and family as we generally know it and how marriage and the family are institutionalized in the church. Or, to put the objection in more Catholic terms: I may seem to risk divorcing nature from grace.¹⁵

I cannot deny that Christian singleness represents a challenge to what we may well consider "normal." But then again, "normal" is scarcely a good indication of what is "natural." Singleness does not deny the natural, but rather is a reminder that nature "naturally" has an eschatological destiny. In that respect, singleness is no different from marriage. With this account of "natural," I can think of nothing more "natural" than life-long monogamous fidelity.¹⁶ I can think of nothing more "natural" than the desire for children even in a world as dark as this one. What Christians have discovered about singleness or marriage is not unique to us. It is simply our privilege and responsibility to be for others what God has made it possible for us to be. Indeed, I think Christians can do few things more important in a world like ours than to be a people capable of welcoming children.

4. *Where Do We Go from Here?*

Which brings me back to how I began this essay. You may remember I expressed the worry that my critique of those that make Christianity a "good thing" for the family may play into the hands of the forces that are about the destruction of the family. Put more accurately: I am not at all sure how we as Christians can sustain the practices of singleness, marriage, and the having of children in a world that makes those practices a matter of individual satisfaction. The account I have just given of the Christian family which I think is true is also, I fear, too ethereal. Nisbet is right. The family, and in particular the Christian family, cannot survive unless the family in fact is necessary for our survival.¹⁷

15. For my extensive reflections on the relationship between nature and grace, see "The Truth about God: The Decalogue as Condition for Truthful Speech" (1998) in *STT*.

16. For a wonderful argument to this effect, see Catherine M. Wallace, *For Fidelity: How Intimacy and Commitment Enrich Our Lives* (New York: Knopf, 1998).

17. While this essay has emphasized how a Christian conception and practice of the family requires the church, American Christians live in a culture whose individualistic assumptions

It is quite interesting in this respect to think about the poor. The poor go on having children in our society in a manner that those with money seem to think irresponsible. But I wonder if the poor are not prophetic just to the extent they understand the having of children is not a matter of our being able to make sure the world into which children are born will be safe. What we are about as Christians is the having of children. That must come first, and then we must subject other aspects of our lives to that reality. I am not suggesting that children become an end in themselves, but rather that children are the way we remember that it is God that matters, not making the world safe or rich.

At stake in all this is the survival of the church. I am often accused of tempting Christians to withdraw from the world. I have no wish for that, nor, for that matter, any idea how that might be done. Yet I am convinced that if the church is to be able to discipline marriage in the name of that politics called church, we are going to find ourselves as Christians in tension with the world—at least the world as envisaged by Adam Smith—in which we find ourselves. My claim that the first task of the church is to be the church may, in other words, be exactly what is required if Christians are to be a people capable of bringing children into the world. Moreover, for the church to be a community capable of sustaining the having and care of children, we must also be a people who are not bent on the control of our economic destinies. No attitude is more destructive of children or the family than the presumption that the having of children is a zero-sum game. This is but a reminder that nothing is easier or harder to remember than that, when all is said and done, we must remember that children are a gift from God. Thank God for Joel Adam Hauerwas.

Further Reading

“The Moral Value of the Family” (1981), in *CC*

“The Family: Theological and Ethical Reflections” (1981), in *CC*

affect not only themselves but also the practices of the church. (For more on this, see *CC*, 160.) This is especially a situation of pathos for American Catholics. Whereas the church was once a central component for Catholic belief and practice, Catholics are now becoming increasingly Protestant in granting no more epistemological claim on their lives to the church than they give to any other institution, and often less. Whereas most Americans do not really think twice about the possibility that their country might ask them to die to protect it, we Christians find it hard to imagine the church requiring anything similarly demanding of us, or responding if it did. If so, the church has just become another institution for voluntary association that we are happy to abandon when it fails to meet our consumer needs.

- "Taking Time for Peace: The Ethical Significance of the Trivial" (1986), in *CET*
- "The Politics of Sex: How Marriage Is a Subversive Act" (1991), in *AC*
- "The Fourth Commandment," with William H. Willimon (1999), in *TG*
- "The Ninth and Tenth Commandments," with William H. Willimon (1999), in *TG*
- "The Retarded, Society, and the Family: The Dilemma of Care" (1982), in *SP*
- "Abortion, Theologically Understood" (1991), essay 31 in this volume
- "Must a Patient Be a Person to Be a Patient? Or, My Uncle Charlie Is Not Much of a Person but He Is Still My Uncle Charlie" (1975), essay 30 in this volume
- "A Child's Dying" (1990), in *NS*
- "Medicine as Theodicy" (1990), in *NS*
- "Communitarians and Medical Ethicists: Why I Am None of the Above" (1994),
in *DF*
- "Hating Mothers As a Way to Peace" (1993), in *US*