Spirituality



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by Shannon Evans O'Brien

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The National Catholic Reporter is a place for journalism, not necessarily faith formation. And yet we recognize that as a Catholic newspaper, we have a unique opportunity to address the soul and not only the mind. We can and should report and opine on the faith, but we would miss something crucial if we did not also make available trustworthy guidance for the ever-present wrestle of every Catholic: "How do I live this out?"

As NCR's spirituality editor, I've found that question — and its gritty, boots-on-the-ground implications — rising to the forefront as I envision the future of this section. The world is changing at a head-spinning pace, which means the needs of everyday readers are changing as well. In order to be supple and responsive to this evolution, change is necessary here, too.

Today, Mike Leach bids farewell to the beloved Soul Seeing series after 15 years of overseeing the biweekly reflections that touched countless hearts. But rest assured that you will continue to hear from Leach, and many of the Soul Seeing writers as well, in the pages of NCR.

Our Spirituality section has expanded in such a rich and exciting way over the years that there is no longer reason to have a separate Soul Seeing column. We hope that all of our Spirituality articles will serve to nourish your soul.

Spirituality Weekly will continue to land in your email inbox with a roundup of articles from the week, Sunday Resources, and a prayer that I hand-select. Happily, it will soon include original art by Br. Mickey McGrath as well, something you won't want to miss.

And finally, Scripture for Life, our weekly reflections on Sunday liturgical readings, will continue under an expanded team of female theologians. Srs. Mary McGlone and Carol Dempsey have penned these reader favorites for many years, and we are excited to add to their company five more voices. Below are the team of Catholic theologians who will be helping us all apply the Bible to our real, lived experience through Scripture for Life this year.

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Flora x. Tang is a feminist theologian who researches and teaches at the intersection of decolonial theology, gender and sexuality studies, and environmental justice. She is currently visiting assistant professor of feminist and ecological theology and Louisville Institute postdoctoral fellow at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. Her current research focuses on Christian systematic theological responses to racialized displacement and environmental violence. She holds a doctorate in peace studies and theology from the University of Notre Dame (2026) and a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School (2020). Born in Beijing and raised in the U.S. Midwest, she enjoys spending her free time cooking plant-based meals, hiking and making embroidery art.



Laura Kelly Fanucci is an award-winning author, speaker and regular contributor to publications including America, OSV News Service, U.S. Catholic, and Give Us This Day. She has authored many books, most recently *Called on the Way: The Daily Practice of Discipleship* (Liturgical Press, 2024) and *Living Easter: 50 Days to Practice Resurrection* (Ave Maria Press, 2026). Her forthcoming book on nature, cancer and God will be published by Penguin Random House Christian in spring 2028. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and a Master of Divinity degree from St. John's School of Theology and Seminary in Collegeville, Minnesota, where she worked for over a decade at the Collegeville Institute on ecumenical projects in practical theology. She writes spiritual essays on Substack at The Holy Labor and humorous reflections on surviving cancer at The Compassion Brigade. She lives in Minnesota with her spouse and five sons.



Mary M. McGlone is a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet to the marrow of her bones. She is grateful for having grown up in Denver, which gave her a love of the mountains, clouds, nature and the color blue. She has been pursuing theological studies since childhood, mostly because her questions never stop. She studied theology at Marquette University and the University of San Francisco and she earned her doctorate from St. Louis University in 1991. Over the years, she has ministered in the Midwest and Peru with short terms in Ecuador and Romania. She enjoys working as an interpreter (Spanish-English). Her last academic post was at Avila University in Kansas City, Missouri. She has served two terms in congregational leadership and is currently enjoying the ministry of writing, research and, most of all, offering retreats and workshops in the U.S. and Peru.



Carol J. Dempsey is a Dominican Sister of Caldwell, New Jersey, and an internationally recognized feminist, cultural and decolonial Bible scholar with particular expertise in the prophets. She is a full professor of biblical studies at the University of Portland, Oregon, and holds degrees from the Catholic University of America (doctorate), St. Louis University (master's) and Caldwell University (bachelor's). A former research fellow at Yale University, she works to bring the biblical text into dialogue with today's pressing global issues while critiquing texts through many contemporary transdisciplinary lenses. She aims to uncover political, social, gender, race, empire, ecological and other cultural issues embedded in texts and shows how a noncritical reading and a "praying with" Scripture can consciously and unconsciously re-embed unjust attitudes and ways of living into our world and religious imagination today. The past president of the Catholic Biblical Association of America (2024-25), Dempsey has published and edited 18 books, numerous essays and articles, and presented more than 100 papers and keynote addresses to learned societies, the general public and interreligious gatherings. Her newest book, *Responding to Climate Crisis: Hope at the Margins*, is a co-edited, transdisciplinary volume that engages scholars from the Global North and Global South (Bloomsbury

Academic, 2026). Her latest published article is "Moving Beyond Text Fetishism: Toward a Catholic Biblical Hermeneutic" (Presidential Address: Catholic Biblical Quarterly, January 2026). She is currently working on three contracted manuscripts, *Isaiah*; *Prophets, Politics, and Propaganda*; and *What It Means to Be (c)atholic in the New Diaspora*. She enjoys playing with her very intelligent 5-year-old parrotlet, Ava Grace, and gathering with friends and family for delicious meals and great conversation.



Diana Marin serves as director of mercy and justice at St. Ignatius Parish in San Francisco, where she works at the intersection of faith, social justice and community engagement. Previously, she served as director of coalitions and campaigns at Catholic Climate Covenant, advancing environmental justice and mobilizing young adults for climate action. She also previously served as theologian-in-residence for the Nuns and Nones Land Justice Project, convening Catholic sisters and millennial "nones" in conversations on eco-theology. Her work explores the connections between spirituality, human dignity and our shared responsibility for the common good. She holds degrees from Harvard College (Artium Baccalaureatus) and Harvard

Divinity School (Master of Divinity).



LaRyssa D. Herrington is an independent researcher, scholar and public theologian with a doctorate in systematic theology and liturgical studies from the University of Notre Dame. She has authored several peer-reviewed articles and two book chapters, and her research has been featured in popular press outlets such as U.S. Catholic, The Just Word (Future Church), Religion News Service, National Black Catholic Congress, Black Catholic Messenger, and the "Glad You Asked" and "Looking for Drinkable Water" podcasts. A lifelong participant in the performing and cultural arts, Herrington's academic interests converge with her passions for theater, spoken word, writing, singing, playing instruments, and performing solo or with various ensembles.



Sarah Kohles is a Sister of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, and an assistant professor of theology at Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa. Her doctorate in biblical studies is from Graduate Theological Union. Kohles' publications include *Women at the Window: A Feminist Reading of Sisera's Mother, Michal, and Jezebel* and contributions to *Reseeding Religious Life Through Global Sisterhood*, *Creating Spaces for Women in the Catholic Church*, and *In Our Own Words: Religious Life in a Changing World*. She also offers an annual online Lenten series through Shalom Spirituality Center on biblical topics.

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