

# Catholic Herald

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September 15, 2011

Vol. 142 No. 31, 36 pages



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## Prayerful, patriotic remembrance



Paige Grover, a Marquette University senior from Beloit, helps fellow Young Republicans on Sunday, Sept. 11, 2011, at Marquette University, Milwaukee, display 3,000 American flags near the University Memorial Union to honor those who perished on 9/11. More photos of the display can be viewed and purchased at <http://photos.chnonline.org>. (Catholic Herald photo by Allen Fredrickson)

## 9/11 widows turn tragedy to outreach

### Duo directs grief to helping Afghan women

**Karen Mahoney**  
Special to your Catholic Herald

**S**usan Retik had every reason to hate. Seven months pregnant with her third child, Susan Retik's husband David was killed on Sept. 11, 2001. He was aboard American Airlines Flight 11 to Los Angeles, the flight that hijackers crashed into the World Trade Center.

She had every reason to hate and desire vengeance as retribution for the death of her husband as well as the death of all killed and injured from the attack on the U.S. However, Retik, of Needham, Mass., is no ordinary victim. Instead, she has devoted her life to helping women in the same country where the hijackers had trained.

She and Patti Quigley, also widowed on Sept. 11, and eight months pregnant with her second child when her husband Patrick was killed while traveling on United Airlines



Susan Retik

said Retik. "We were struck by how terrible it was to be a woman and couldn't imagine what it was like. I felt a kinship toward them, and remembered about all the people that helped me when I lost David, and knew that they had no one to help them."

Decades of fighting in Afghanistan had left tens of thousands of women widowed. Their faces haunted Retik and Quigley, who realized the Afghan widows were also vic-

Flight 175, directed their grief toward helping Afghan widows, who were also suffering.

"We basically became aware of Afghanistan and the plight of the women through the news media."

tims of violence. However, unlike the Afghan widows, grief-stricken individuals around their neighborhoods and country instantly embraced the women, and sent cards, money, stuffed animals, gifts and quilts.

"We had people making dinner for us, helping with our laundry, and sending us letters," said Retik, who is Jewish. "And we had assistance from our husbands' employers, the Red Cross and Salvation Army. These Muslim women have no support."

Initially, Retik thought about helping one widowed Afghan woman financially so she no longer had to struggle. However, as she thought about it, she realized it would be beneficial to help many more. With Quigley's help, the women began the non-profit organization, Beyond the 11th. The organization aids Afghan widows whose lives have been touched by terrorism and

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# What 'faithful citizenship' means for Catholics

## Must link beliefs with political action

Beth Griffin  
Catholic News Service

**NEW YORK** — Politics is a good thing, participation in public life is a moral obligation and Catholics need to do a better job of linking their beliefs to their actions, according to speakers at a Sept. 6 conference on "Faithful Citizenship: Voters, Bishops and Presidential Elections."

The program at Jesuit-run Fordham University featured a lively exploration of a document on political responsibility issued every four years by the Catholic bishops of the United States.

"Polarization is seeping into our ecclesial life and very often we wonder (if) our faith shapes our politics or if it gets turned around to our politics shape our faith. We can divide up the work in our church, but we should not be dividing our community of faith," said John Carr, executive director of the U.S. bishops' Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development.

"All of us — bishops, professors, staffers, ordinary laypeople, academics, students — need to do a better job of linking what we believe to how we act in public life," he added.

Since 1976, the Catholic bishops have issued a quadrennial statement linking church teachings to political responsibility. The most recent iteration, in 2007, is called "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States."

"At this moment of intense cynicism and frankly justifiable frustration with the political process, the most countercultural thing the church teaches and the bishops have said is that politics is a good thing, that participation in public life is a moral obligation and an essential

part of being American and Catholic," Carr said. "That is more countercultural in some ways than all life is sacred, that war ought to be a last resort, that the poor ought to come first, that marriage ought not to be redefined."

He said Catholics share a bond of faith, not politics. "We are a church and not a lobby. We are a community of faith and not an interest group. What brings us together is the word of God and the teaching of the church, not politics and not ideology."

Carr said the "Faithful Citizenship" statement lays out basic principles and applies them to pressing issues facing the country. Historically, versions of the document have summarized Catholic teaching, with an emphasis on the role of the laity and encouraged participation and engagement. "In public life, what we bring is not only what we believe, but what we do. Who feeds the hungry? Who shelters the homeless? Who cares for the poor?"

Carr said the statement "never declaimed any notion of telling Catholics how to vote" and has always given "priority to human life and dignity, expressed in different language through the years."

"Faithful Citizenship" urges formation of conscience and practice of prudence, Carr said. It tells Catholics to resist evil and act on their affirmative responsibility to make things better. It says people must distinguish between issues of unequal moral importance. As an example, he said, "A million abortions are not the same as a cut in the WIC program."

Carr said, "We need more Catholics in both parties in public life, taking what we believe into the public square and fighting for it. We need more dialogue within our church and we need to understand if politics is not about our fundamental values, then it is just about money, ego and power."

Panelist Robert George, professor of jurisprudence and director of the James Madison program in American ideals and institutions at Princeton University, acknowledged that neither major political party fully embodies the principles laid out by the bishops.

He said the Republican Party needs "more of a dose of Catholic social thought and the Democratic Party needs a very heavy dose of the pro-life and pro-family message of the Catholic tradition."

He said Catholics can use the issue of slavery as a template for political response in current times. Then, as now, people were raised in a culture that blocked their vision of the true and equal dignity of all members of the human family, he said.

George said Catholics can emulate Abraham Lincoln's response to slavery. "We have to be persistent and relentless and join forces across the lines of religious differences to offer a common witness to inherent principles of basic justice."

Carr suggested that both major parties establish life and dignity caucuses that would take the "rough edges off the libertarianism of the Republican Party and the individualism of the Democratic Party" and ultimately "get institutions working together to lift people up and empower people."

— John Carr

## WIDOWS

Continued from Page 1

war, such as the ones whose faces they saw on the evening news after U.S. forces went in to remove the Taliban and Al Qaida, which was responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks.

After raising thousands of dollars through bike rides, and various fundraisers, Quigley and Retik traveled to Afghanistan in 2006 to see the challenges burqa-clad widows face in a country that grants women few rights. Under the Taliban regime, women were unable to work or leave the house without a male escort. They have more freedom today, but still, widowed or not, are primarily illiterate and at the mercy of men and the government.

"But we have seen progress through our efforts, and it was good to travel to Kabul to see progress in the women we were trying to help," said Retik. "The challenge, though, involves not only getting men to value the women more, but getting the women to value themselves more. Because they have never experienced true freedom or equality, they don't think they are worth as much as a man."

In 2005, Quigley, a Catholic, resigned from Beyond the 11th to shift her focus

to Afghan Girls. She is now part of Razia's Ray of Hope and helps pioneering activist Razia Jan fulfill her dream of educating the next generation of Afghan people in order to end the cycle of poverty, despair and terrorism.

A documentary chronicling the women's six-day visit to Kabul and their work, called, "Beyond Belief," a film by Beth Murphy, will be shown Friday, Sept. 16 at 6 p.m. in the Gerhardinger Center, Room 109 on the Mount Mary College campus, 2900 N. Menomonee River Parkway, Milwaukee.

Retik will be the featured speaker at a luncheon, hosted by Mount Mary College, at the Pfister Hotel on Thursday, Sept. 22.

Through the documentary, Retik hopes that others will understand the importance of the mission to help the Afghan women.

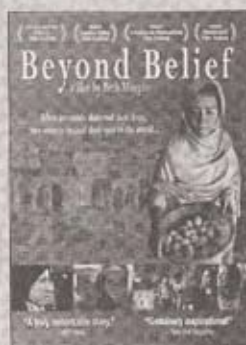
"I hope it gives people a much better understanding of why we do what we do, and the need we had to meet different women in Afghanistan," said Retik. "It is important to see their struggles and how we all can make a difference in their lives. I think the documentary humanizes the women. I mean we hear it in the news, but they are real mothers, daughters and sisters just like us, living uneducated and difficult lives."

Retik is assisted in her work by her children, Ben, Molly and Dima, who help in fundraising when they can. In 2006, she married Donald Ger, and the couple has a 3-year-old daughter, Rebecca.

Last year, President Barack Obama presented Retik with the Citizens Medal in recognition of her efforts.

"It was incredible and not something I ever expected to happen," admitted

Retik. "I had never been to the White House and it was so amazing to meet the president and be surrounded by others receiving this same award. It makes me feel good that the president of the United States is aware of the work of Beyond the 11th, and by choosing me as a representative, it says to me that he understands the important role that widows play."



**"Beyond 9/11: From Tragedy to Transformation"** will feature Susan Retik, one of the women profiled in the documentary, speaking at a luncheon on Thursday, Sept. 22, at the Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee. Tickets are \$50 per person.

An International Day of Peace Celebration will be held on the Mount Mary campus on Wednesday, Sept. 21 from 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Janan Najeeb, president of the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition, will present "Muslim Women as Peacemakers." The program will close with an interfaith prayer of peace. The event is free. Attendees may bring or buy their lunch, plus enjoy a complimentary sample of Middle Eastern cuisine.

More information on the documentary, "Beyond Belief," can be found at [mtmary.edu/beyondbelief.html](http://mtmary.edu/beyondbelief.html).

Information on Susan Retik, and the "Beyond the 11th: From Tragedy to Transformation" luncheon is available at [mtmary.edu/beyondthe11th.html](http://mtmary.edu/beyondthe11th.html).

## Monthly retreat experience offered for women

'First Fruits' to meet at St. Anthony, Pewaukee

**PEWAUKEE** — An information session about First Fruits, a new, monthly retreat experience for women that includes presentations, music and break-out opportunities, will take place at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 20 at St. Anthony on the Lake Church, W280 N2101 Highway SS.

Joan Carey, author of "Ponder This," and Kathie Amidei, pastoral associate of lifelong faith formation at St. Anthony, who are initiating the program, invite women to enjoy a cup of coffee and "relax into a retreat-like experience" once a month from October through May.

The program, being piloted at St. Anthony, will begin Tuesday, Oct. 18, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and will continue Tuesdays Nov. 15, Dec. 6, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, March 13, April 17 and May 15. Optional group sessions — attend one or all — held from 9:15 to 11:15 a.m., 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

For more information or to register for the Sept. 20 information session, email Joan Carey at [atcareyj@wi.rr.com](mailto:atcareyj@wi.rr.com) or call St. Anthony's Christian Formation Office at (262) 691-9170.

## A lesson in faith



**Above:** Campus minister Peter Burds talks with sophomores and juniors during a prayer service Friday, Sept. 9, in the new adoration chapel at St. Thomas More High School, Milwaukee.



**Left:** Sophomores Robyn Cabigting, Megan Wengelowski, Kelly Howell and Bradley Drew sing during the service. (Catholic Herald photos by Alan Fredrickson)



## Beyond the 11th: From Tragedy to Transformation

**A Powerful Lunch You'll Never Forget**  
*Featuring*  
**Susan Retik**  
Co-Founder of Beyond the 11th

**Thursday, September 22, 2011**  
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
**The Pfister Hotel Grand Ballroom**  
424 East Wisconsin Avenue ~ Milwaukee





The heartbreaking loss of her husband on that New York morning 10 years ago transformed Susan Retik's life forever and the lives of the thousands she has touched through the work she has chosen to do. Retik recounts how grief and pain gave way to inspiration and hope, and what she has learned along the way.

**\$50 per person; \$500 per table of 10**

Learn more and register online at [www.mtmary.edu/beyondthe11th.html](http://www.mtmary.edu/beyondthe11th.html)

Before you attend, be our guest at a FREE screening of *Beyond Belief*, a documentary featuring Susan Retik. Times and locations listed at [mtmary.edu/beyondthe11th.html](http://mtmary.edu/beyondthe11th.html)

With thanks to our sponsors



## The Grapes of Raffle!

**\$2,500 Cash Raffle!**

*Proceeds benefit the*

**St. Camillus Hospice Agency**

Drawing will be on October 7th, 2011

during our Charity Wine Tasting

*Need not be present to win.*

**Grand Prize: \$2,500!** 2nd-5th Prizes: \$250 each - 6th-10th Prizes: \$100 each. Drawing at 7:30 pm. Tickets: \$10 each, 3 for \$25, 8 for \$50, or 20 for \$100. To purchase, deliver payment and your name, address, phone and email to the Order of St. Camillus Foundation, Inc., 10200 W. Blue Mound Rd, Wauwatosa, WI 53226. Raffle ticket purchase does **NOT** include admission to the wine tasting event itself. Separate \$35 admission fee is required to attend the wine tasting. Raffle License No. R0024085A-12911. More info: [www.sicam.com/st-camillus-foundation/st-camillus-hospice-agency-charity-wine-tasting/](http://www.sicam.com/st-camillus-foundation/st-camillus-hospice-agency-charity-wine-tasting/) Good Luck!