

catechumens and converts were not regarded as ecumenical links to Judaism, and where attitudes toward Zionism remained largely rooted in ancestral Catholic anti-Judaism and lingering fears of Judeo-Bolshevism. Gori attempted to steer the Latin Diocese between the nascent ecumenical impulses emerging from Rome (which included closer cooperation between the Latin and Melkite rites), the Israeli state's ongoing apprehensions about the "right of return" of Arab Christian refugees, and the legal and educational rights of Jewish converts to Catholicism. It was an onerous balancing act, which Rioli capably illuminates.

For this work, Rioli has drawn upon an impressive array of Israeli, European, and American archival sources, which adds to its depth of analysis. Particularly engaging was her examination of the ecumenical initiatives of the ASJ, a subject which deserves its own book-length treatment. In sum, this is a rigorous and rich study which skillfully situates the Latin Diocese of Jerusalem within the complex kaleidoscope of postwar relations between the Vatican, Palestine, Israel, and Jordan. Scholars interested in the complexities of the postwar transnational Catholic Church, the Middle East in the early Cold War, interfaith relations, and Catholic-Jewish ecumenism can read this work with profit.

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***American Catholic: The Politics of Faith During the Cold War.* By D. G. Hart. Religion and American Public Life. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2020. ix + 261 pp. \$29.95 hardcover.**

In this clever and insightful book, D. G. Hart shines light on the turbulent journey of conservative Catholic thought in the modern United States. He traces four phases. As late as the 1920s, to be a conservative Catholic meant advocating for a church-state merger that made the Catholic Church dominant over the state. Some conservatives in the United States and elsewhere, especially Europe, followed the papacy's lead in condemning liberalism, democracy, religious freedom, and individualism. During the Cold War and after the rise of totalitarianism, as Hart shows, to be an American Catholic conservative meant touting the divine role of the United States in world affairs and celebrating the special gifts of American freedom. Conservatives had become Americanists and, as Hart argues, the guardians of this august tradition had embraced modernity. Conservatism now included a preference for limited government. It also entailed curbing the papacy's influence over political and social affairs. By the twenty-first century, after a phase under the influence of thinkers like Richard Neuhaus and Garry Wills during which conservatives pushed for the importance of Catholicism in keeping liberalism on a moral path, Catholic conservatives embraced intellectual formulations like the Benedict Option and (re)condemned liberalism. Some of them now seek to escape liberalism's alleged moral malaise with efforts to form blessed and heavily fortified Catholic pods.

*American Catholic* takes readers on a thrilling ride, full of twists and turns; it traces gradual slides into fresh conservative paradigms followed by abrupt reversals. In tracing

this trajectory, D. G. Hart has provided an important intellectual history. He has provided clarity about how and why Catholic conservatives changed courses in the modern context and, in so doing, Hart has plotted out the trajectory of an important intellectual lineage. Catholic conservatives, he shows, embraced Americanism, once condemned by Leo XIII, and they became unflinchingly modern in their attempts to update faith to suit liberal politics. As these men liberalized the Church—limiting the influence of the papacy over modern politics—they moved American culture to the right. Hart offers historians of religion in modern America a dazzling irony with which to think.

Readers will find a familiar cast of characters in *American Catholic*. Hart focuses on figures like John Courtney Murray, Brent Bozell, Bill Buckley, George Weigel, Garry Wills, and Richard Neuhaus. Some lesser-known characters appear periodically in the book, but men like Bozell and Buckley are the central protagonists of Hart's story. The sources Hart consults are published books and published articles (almost all of which come from the *National Review*). *American Catholic*, then, is a history of public thought. Hart makes up for the somewhat narrow source base with his creative and entertaining readings of these sources. This book is a highly readable text that moves the reader efficiently and effectively through a complex, multilayered narrative. Hart's prose is lively and lucid. Even when Hart is a bit snarky, his writing is endearing. The narrative moves through eight chronological chapters organized around Catholic conservatives' relationship to Americanism at a given moment in the twentieth century. This book ends by placing Patrick Deneen, Rob Dreher, Ross Douthat, and Adrian Vermeule into this genealogy.

Like John McGreevy's *Catholicism and American Freedom*, Samuel Moyn's *Christian Human Rights*, James Chapel's *Catholic Modern*, Giuliana Chamedes's *A Twentieth-Century Crusade*, and Katherine Dugan's *Millennial Missionaries*—books that explain how conservatives embraced seemingly liberal ideas like human rights and religious freedom—Hart's tome helps to explain the particular ways Catholic conservatives have come to inhabit secular liberal modernity. This is a tradition that is constantly repurposing itself to inject Catholicism into the American experiment in effort to improve the nation. For Buckley, religion gave America a heritage of freedom; for Bozell, it meant maintaining libertarianism; for Wills, Catholicism gave a centrifugal liberalism important doses of community-level cohesion; for Neuhaus, the Church provided moral clarity for democratic republicanism. This is actually what late nineteenth-century popes feared, but the Second Vatican called for: Catholicism should not seek to judge the modern world so much as to become a critical resource inside of it. As so much good history does, Hart's book gets readers thinking about other possibilities and potential roads not taken. Above all, it forces scholars of modern American Christianity to reckon with these important ironies. Catholic conservatives now play on the ground of modern liberalism, the very ground the papacy has encouraged them to occupy. Conservatives helped to liberalize the church.

Hart's study is valuable for the ways it shows how the condemnation of Americanism in the early hours of the twentieth century shaped the remaining years of an important century. He brings into American history the insights offered by James Chappel regarding European church history: over the course of the twentieth century, the church moved from an anti-modern institution to an anti-totalitarian institution. This is hugely significant.

One wishes, perhaps, that Hart would have been willing to push even further his razor-sharp insights in order to tell us why these thinkers, in addition to adapting to

liberalism, also seem now to be lost and bereft of some real political solutions. Would it also be possible to say that Catholicism in the modern world—particularly the conservative brand—is a bit rudderless? Hart wants to hang onto the utility of this tradition, and there is much to be admired in staking out such a position. This book is empathetic, as any good intellectual history ought to be, but it could have also been more critical. What might it mean that the options thinkers consider now include integralism and the Benedict Option? Is there a way out of secular modernity for Catholicism? In a sense, however, Hart, an accomplished and influential thinker, generously leaves such conclusions to be entertained by the reader.

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*John F. Kennedy and the Politics of Faith.* By Patrick Lacroix.  
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2021. viii + 263 pp. \$34.95  
cloth.

Patrick Lacroix's interesting study argues that the Kennedy years represent an important, if neglected, part of what he terms "the arc of US religious history." He contends that the landscape of faith and politics was reshaped in the three years that JFK held office. For him, the years of Kennedy's presidency did not simply coincide with but rather caused the decline of old denominational animosities, and, furthermore, they encouraged "the development of new partnerships based on a shared ideological outlook" (2). Lacroix argues that the beginnings of the liberal-conservative division within many American religious denominations began during the thousand days that JFK held office and that we are still living with the consequences of this religious transformation.

Lacroix is on a mission to fill what he portrays as a significant scholarly lacuna. He observes correctly that most JFK biographers have neglected to examine the intersection of religion and politics during the Kennedy presidency. He also suggests that notable historians of American Catholicism, such as Patrick Allitt, John McGreevy, and Mark Massa have also tended to "relegate Kennedy to irrelevance by their laconic treatment of his presidency" (229). He acknowledges that some work has been done by scholars like Thomas Carty and David Allen, but he presents his book as a comprehensive account of the intersection of faith and politics throughout Kennedy's term in office.

Lacroix does not give much time to JFK's own Catholic commitments. His effort is not to explore the impact of JFK's personal religious views but rather to examine how religion and the Kennedy presidency intersected. He concludes that religion was "repurposed to promote liberal reform domestically and abroad," especially around matters like racial justice and arms control (18).

Lacroix begins his substantive investigation with a review of the religious background to the 1960 campaign and an analysis of the role of religion in that notable presidential contest. He establishes conclusively that JFK meant what he said in his famous address in Houston on September 12, 1960, when he assured the Protestant ministers that he