

disappointing that he has little to say about the condemnation of Origen, his continuing influence on the minority, and how this is to be negotiated. It seems to me that more needed to be said, but Hart is convinced he has said all that needs to be said.

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A CATECHISM FOR FAMILY LIFE. INSIGHTS FROM CATHOLIC TEACHING ON LOVE, MARRIAGE, SEX, AND PARENTING edited by Sarah Bartel and John S. Grabowski, *Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 2018*, pp. xxii + 265, \$24.95, pbk

A Catechism for Family Life. Insights from Catholic Teaching on Love, Marriage, Sex and Parenting offers precisely what the title suggests: a summary of Church teaching on marriage, sexuality and family life, using the format of question and answer. However, as the title also indicates, this teaching comprises of rich insights that go beyond simple summary. Thus the answers take the form of excerpts from relevant church documents, primarily from the past one hundred years, including scripture, papal audiences, encyclicals, exhortations and homilies, targeted to specific questions. As the editors explain, the documents speak for themselves either by presenting explicit responses or by offering principles for ongoing discernment. On a few occasions the editors have provided comments for clarification. The editors are suitably qualified for this task. Sarah Bartel is a consultant for marriage and family life for the Archdiocese of Seattle; John Grabowski is a lecturer in moral theology and ethics, and Pope Francis invited him to the 2015 synod on the family as an expert.

Although the questions range from the practical, such as ‘should I go to my child’s wedding if both parties are Catholic but they are not marrying in church?’ to the more abstract ‘how is our family a domestic church?’, and to the more theoretical such as gender ideology, the excerpts from church teaching always offer theological reflection that allows the reader to take away more than a ready answer. In this way both the complexity of seemingly simple questions and the wisdom of the church become more apparent. Indeed the excerpts invite a response of prayerful discernment. The editors point out that questions on marriage and family life are often difficult and complex and they recommend that their book is used as part of a process of moral discernment founded on prayer.

The book is clear, well-organised, user-friendly, and offers further resources. Bringing together church teaching in an accessible and ordered

way, the book is a valuable contribution for anyone who is looking for a deeper understanding of church teaching on marriage and family life.

PIA MATTHEWS

MASS EXODUS: CATHOLIC DISAFFILIATION IN BRITAIN AND AMERICA SINCE VATICAN II by Stephen Bullivant, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019*, pp. 309, £25.00, hbk

The state of religion in British society presents an odd polarity of the virtual disappearance of Christianity from the public square counterbalanced by the rise of Islam. It has come to dominate the concerns of the sociology of religion as reflected in publications, conference themes and research grants. Such is the erosion of Christianity that it is now commonplace to speak of Britain being a post-Christian society. Further evidence of this demise is illustrated in the substantial numbers listing themselves as of 'no religion' in the Census of England and Wales 2011, hence the assumption that secularisation has triumphed in a society denoted as post-secular, a term which has gained widespread sociological acceptance. Its ascendance coincides with a wider societal sense of fracture, distrust in public institutions and the reign of cynicism and disbelief. This bleak state of affairs has drawn attention to three interesting queries.

First, why is Islam so viable and thriving as a religion with apparently few problems of transmission? This vitality might suggest that religious survival is based on resistance to modernity rather than a capitulation to it as reflected in the strategies of modernisation and of opening to the world which Vatican II inaugurated. This leads to the second question, one which the sociologist Kes de Groot has well documented in the case of the Netherlands, as to why renewal and decline have gone hand in hand since Vatican II? Thirdly, although presumed dead, secularisation has sprouted into many-headed-hydra, whose heads can be identified as virtual religions ranging from the Jedi and Vegans to zealous advocates of climate change, so leaving organised religions, such as Catholicism, with Wilson's cutting diagnosis as inconsequential. Clearly, something has gone wrong in Catholicism in its readings of how to connect with contemporary culture. By tracing matters back to Vatican II and the Spirit of it which followed, Bullivant has supplied a courageous, timely and well documented verdict for an inquest on the unanticipated outcomes of that pivotal Council.

Many items and insights will be familiar, but unfamiliar when brought into a critical narrative backed up by a 33-page bibliography. Very much a researcher whose interests relate to sociology and history, Bullivant is concerned with the issue of disaffiliation, or disengagement from Catholicism. An attraction of the study is that it pairs the United Kingdom with the United States to draw out convergences of similarity thus undermining