

Mary in both the monastic and the secular world. As the author points out, the popularity of Marian devotions and the resulting stereotyping of the Jews were not limited to the time and place that are the focus of this study. Anti-Semitic propaganda of this nature continued to flourish into the twentieth century, with dire consequences.

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A Culture of Engagement: Law, Religion, and Morality. By Cathleen Kaveny. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016. 305 pages. \$32.95 (paper).

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A Culture of Engagement is a collection of *Commonweal* essays by law and religion scholar Cathleen Kaveny. The main point of the book is to draw distinctions between a “culture of openness” (3–4) and a “culture of identity” (4–7) affecting—and too often polarizing—American Catholics today. A third possibility, which these essays sketch in various ways, is the “culture of engagement” (7–9), which bears many resemblances to Pope Francis’ “culture of encounter” (9–11).

In fact, the difference between the culture of openness (as well as encounter and engagement) and the culture of identity largely tracks the difference between “Pope Francis Catholics” and “JP II Catholics,” the latter being a reference to the theologies of Pope John Paul II and, to some extent, his successor Pope Benedict XVI. The culture of openness, as Kaveny describes it, is characterized by *aggiornamento* (updating) and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, emphasizing “optimism about the possibility of cooperation across religious, cultural, and national boundaries” (4) to combat various moral infamies in the culture and the world. By contrast, the culture of identity has “tended to stress the practices and beliefs that set Catholicism apart from contemporary American culture, not points of consonance” (5). Indeed, “JP II Catholics” foreground “the importance of a full-bodied, distinctively Catholic commitment that permeates and orders all aspects of one’s life, including one’s political activities” (5).

Kaveny’s culture of engagement draws on the work of philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre and his idea of “translation” between traditions, as well as Thomas Aquinas’ borrowing from Greek and Muslim philosophy (8). It likewise coheres with Pope Francis’ concern “not to preserve the church’s boundaries in pristine integrity, but to reach out to encounter human beings made by God in Christ’s image” (9). As Kaveny further describes it,

“The importance of personal ‘encounter,’ particularly encountering those who are different and who are suffering is a key theme of his papacy” (9). These themes also pervade Kaveny’s essays, which cover a range of topics: the pedagogical function of law, religious liberty, culture wars, American Catholic division, and the moral practice of casuistry in various cases and controversies, alongside the more standard controversies pertaining to contraception, abortion, same-sex marriage, and other issues of the day.

Some of the key insights that emerge have to do with such matters as the need for judges to interpret rather than merely apply the law (31). At another point, Kaveny subtly points to a fact known to many in law, but few outside it: namely, the possibility that in some cases, the law may operate to “exacerbate conflict over core values rather than ameliorate that conflict” (39). Much as when one has a hammer, everything looks like a nail, so too when one has a law on point, especially if it is the Constitution, people may be inclined to make a federal case of their differences and divisions. Another key observation Kaveny makes is that “times change, and with them our moral sentiments” (51).

On questions of moral theology, Kaveny insists repeatedly in her essays that “the Roman Catholic tradition ... has steadily presented its moral teaching ... as part of the natural law, and therefore as accessible to and applicable to everyone” (68). Kaveny makes this point not to force Catholicism into a Rawlsian “overlapping consensus,” but to remind the reader of the power of the universality at the heart of “catholic” faith. The other “C” word that Kaveny takes up to great effect is “conscience” as the basis of new moral claims and appeals. In one timely essay, Kaveny observes, “in our society, both increasingly pluralistic and increasingly centralized, questions of conscience are bound to become more prevalent and to cover a wider array of topics” (72). But she also notes that some recent claims seem “provisional” (72), and the resort of groups too inclined to use power when they have it, while seeking the protections of conscience when they don’t.

Kaveny’s book suffers only from the issues that any essay collection of its kind faces—namely, a certain amount of repetition and lack of novelty for those who read the essays in their original form. Even so, there is tremendous power in seeing them all together and in being able to trace the many sources, themes, and issues that inform Kaveny’s “culture of engagement.”

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