

Scripture, ethics, and the social sciences might bring to a better understanding of sexuality—in all of its rich diversity and moral complexity. Since the issues are rarely simple, neither are the questions raised nor the answers tentatively proffered. While this collection may not propose solutions with the same clarity as Kelly's *Modern Youth and Chastity*, it helps to broaden our perspectives on the morally complex world of sexuality. Theologians and educated lay persons alike should find it a helpful stimulus to deeper reflection on these issues.

COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Edited by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana

2004, xxx, 525 pp., paper, ISBN 88-209-7651-X

Reviewed by James H. Kroeger

For the first time in history, the Holy See has published a comprehensive sourcebook of the Church's social teaching. This is a significant achievement as some statistics indicate. The compendium has a 30-page introductory section and 525 pages of text. One finds 193 pages of references, of which 26 are "source" references (Scripture, councils, papal and church documents) and 167 are "subject" references (themes and topics). There are 1,232 detailed footnotes.

The idea of a compendium was proposed by John Paul II in his 1999 apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, when he noted: "It would be very useful to have a compendium of approved synthesis of Catholic social doctrine... which would show the connection between it and the New Evangelization" (EA 54). The same pope had noted earlier in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*: "The teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church's evangelizing mission" (SRS 41). The pope's dream has now become reality.

The compendium was written by the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice (PCPJ). The endeavor began five years ago under Cardinal François-Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận, then PCPJ president; his illness and death caused unavoidable delays. The project was guided to completion by Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, current PCPJ president. Martino pays tribute to his predecessor by noting that the compendium carries “the seal of a great witness to the Cross who remained *strong in faith* in the dark and terrible years of Vietnam” (xxvi).

This attractively produced and “user-friendly” volume begins with an introduction on “An Integral and Solidarity Humanism” (1-9), followed by twelve thematic chapters (13-325), and a conclusion that advocates “a civilization of love” (326-331). Some examples of the thematic chapters are: “The Church’s Mission and Social Doctrine” (Two), “The Family, the Vital Cell of Society” (Five), “Safeguarding the Environment” (Ten), and “The Promotion of Peace” (Eleven). Although the content is not, in fact, new material (popes have spoken these truths frequently), the creative synthesis in a one-volume, handy compendium is a welcome gift.

This reviewer found several fresh and enlightening perspectives in the volume. Clear linkage is made between the Church’s social teaching and her mission of evangelization (3-4). The text is presented as an instrument for fostering ecumenical and interreligious dialogue (6). The pivotal role of the laity in propagating Church social teaching is emphasized (xxiii). The compendium includes several enlightening thematic sections on such areas as “women and children” (169-170), “globalization” (203-207), “biotechnology” (267-270), “terrorism” (288-290), and the “civilization of love” (329-331). A fitting piece of artwork (Lorenzetti’s “Allegory of Good Government”) adorns the cover and an explanation of its meaning is printed on the inside cover of the book.

This compendium is destined to become a standard reference work for Church social vision and involvement. Already available in Italian and English, the work will be published in other languages, as well as in local editions. It challenges Christians to continue their

personal witness in the social arena; it also encourages the development of new community programs for authentic humanism within today's social structures.

The Church's social teaching has often been described as "Our Best Kept Secret"; this fine volume stands to achieve much in making the rich and profound patrimony of the Church better known, loved, and practiced.

101 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON VATICAN II

By Maureen Sullivan, O.P.

New York: Paulist Press

2002, xiii, 135 pp. paper, ISBN 0-8091-4133-7

Reviewed by James H. Kroeger

Maureen Sullivan's book on the Second Vatican Council forms part of the Paulist "101 Questions and Answers" series, which has reached nearly twenty volumes. This fact already alerts readers to the kind of book and its style that they will meet. Sullivan, a Dominican who holds a doctorate in theology from Fordham University and is an assistant theology professor at Saint Anselm College, arranges her 101 questions and answers into a generally chronological presentation of the "event" that was Vatican II.

The book opens with a brief "Introduction" which notes that a "popular primer on Vatican II" is needed today to show that "the Council's charter is not a dead letter" (3). In addition, the Council, which was "the biggest, most famous, historic adult education project ever held" (2), is not well known or appreciated by many Catholics.

Two foundational chapters present "The Calling of Vatican II" and "The Players, the Tensions, the Media" connected with the Council. In a total of twenty-three questions and answers, Sullivan introduces the background and protagonists of the Council; this material helps ordinary readers and students (one of the book's intended audiences) to understand the "workings" of a Council, Vatican II in particular. It is noteworthy that the author has thoroughly researched