heartland, working class population. They themselves need to strengthen links with these people. There could indeed be cooperation, especially at state or local levels, and conservatives and those interested in Catholic social thought should not be averse to it. It will help us, in addition to helping them. It is possible, however, that the current bitter partisan and ideological divide might cause a fear for overt cooperation. This is a matter that will be decided according to local conditions, and the answers will vary.

On the whole, Levin’s analysis and suggested strategy are sound. As friends of Catholic social thought, we should be pleased that non-Catholic conservatives can be in such agreement with us. But the roadblocks are caused by the difficulty in finding practical ways to strengthen the intermediate associations and the non-government sectors. Whether we like it or not, government does have a large influence over that space, and thus we have to keep defending our freedom in it politically and legally.

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Judging from the mass media in the United Kingdom, it would appear that nobody converts to Catholicism. It is deemed a victim of secularization and indifference bar scorn for its child abuse whose outcome is the demonization of Catholicism. Yet, despite this inhospitable ethos, there are entries as well as exits—all singular, and all with testimonies to account for the peculiarity of their transition. For those who have converted, these tales of others are of peculiar interest, not least when the journey is made from an unexpected direction. Such is the case with Oliver, a sociologist who crossed into Catholicism with his wife in 2009. He died in 2015 so that this work is his legacy, his testimony of self-clarification of what was to him a necessary journey. Again, contrary to expectations, other academics have made similar and unexpected journeys and also felt the urge, not only to make sense of their transition, but to also encourage others to follow. Two others come to mind.

Retired recently as Professor of Indian and Tibetan philosophy at the University of Bristol, Paul Williams entitled his account *The Unexpected Way* (T. & T. Clark, 2002). His tale was of apostasy (his term) from Buddhism. The other example is Christian Smith, now professor of sociology
at the University of Notre Dame. Like Oliver, he was received with his wife in April 2010. The title of his work spoke volumes: *How to Go from Being a Good Evangelical to a Committed Catholic in Ninety-five Difficult Steps* (Cascade Books, 2011). Whilst Oliver’s journey seemed to have an expected property, such was not the case with Smith and Williams. They went in the reverse direction to expectations, for many Catholics lapse into Buddhism and evangelical Christianity. This is why the deliberateness of their entry to Catholicism is so interesting.

Oliver’s journey was more a slide rather than a leap into Catholicism. Like Smith and Williams, he deploys an arsenal of reading and scholarship to make sense of his new patrimony. It is appraised in a calm, measured, and thoughtful way. Fleeing a disintegrating liberal Anglicanism, he sought in Catholicism a completeness of faith. For him, Catholicism is not a “cafeteria” religion (11). Having lectured in sociology at the University of Warwick, in a prestigious department, he moved to Scotland to study crofting, and became a farmer. This sense of needing to be totally involved applied also to his need to convert to Catholicism. He wished to live in it and the resulting blossoming permeates this whole work. The notion of a walk, as in the title, comes from his contact with the ways of anthropology. Those in anthropology and sociology who journey into Catholicism are not fellow travellers with liberals but tend to affiliate to highly orthodox forms. Oliver follows that pattern in his reflections. In his testimony, he reflects on the sacrifice of the mass, on music, symbols and gestures, and social and moral teaching; and ends with a slightly baffled scrutiny of the New Evangelization of Pope Francis, about whom he has forebodings, not least in relation to his teaching on the family. The conclusion indicates a movement beyond the rosy hue of initial conversion and a deepening of faith to be worn, but certainly not to be discarded.

If there is a weakness in the book, it lies in a certain diffidence as a convert, but also in a degree of diffusiveness. It is a solitary account but all the more credible for being so. Intermingling the work are reflections on the many illnesses of his final years. These are presented not so much to elicit sympathy, but as part of his struggle to find the right place with God. His illnesses over twenty years involved a transplant, liver failure, and even retinal detachment in both eyes. In his acknowledgements, virtually an entire medical faculty is thanked for their services. Despite, or maybe because of many visits to hospitals and clinics, this book emerged. Whereas for some, such illnesses would have been an incentive to chuck away the pen, for Oliver they necessitated taking it up and this lends a peculiar, ironclad integrity to the work. These reflections generate a beautifully written section, aptly entitled “Illness: a life broken and renewed”
There are three properties to the work which make it unusual. Although he makes only a passing and grateful reference to her, Professor Margaret Archer, then chair at the University of Warwick and currently President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Science, seems to have influenced the journey. She was also associated with the celebrated conversion and baptism of Gillian Rose, a distinguished Jewish sociologist and philosopher also at Warwick. Oliver’s sociological work was mainly completed in the 1970s and 1980s and was marked by a high degree of astuteness. He recognizes his academic background in sociology as an aspect of his conversion, though he does note that exploration of its influence would require another book (27–33). Like others, once he treated sociology as incomplete in relation to the truth, its inheritance made his interest in religion stronger. This sociological resonance is amplified most especially in chapter 5 on liturgy and in chapter 7 on “custom and practice; symbols and gestures.”

Oliver observes wryly that “the topic of symbolism almost automatically invites me to put on the sociologist’s, or probably better, the anthropologist’s hat” (144). His call to take symbols and gestures seriously would seem to echo the pleas of Guardini on the same topic. Oliver cites Guardini well in his concluding reflections on liturgy (253). Not for the first time are sociological resonances felt in Ratzinger’s writing. Responding to his belief that liturgy should be marked by beauty, Oliver responds in the argot of sociology to suggest that “it may put the point too starkly but it could be said that the more ‘ordinary,’ the more ‘everyday,’ the more ‘secular’ the liturgy, the less use it is in building up our devotional life” (95). All the time Oliver is looking for liturgical certainty and it was the endless liturgical experimentation of Anglicanism (amongst other factors such as the ordination of women) that drove him out of that church. His fidelity to the Book of Common Prayer is shared with the British sociologist of religion, David Martin. This leads to the second point.

In the end parts of the book, Oliver is concerned with the need for clear answers in the context of the moral and social teaching of Catholicism. Sadly, he seemed to encounter the lack of these in the context of the present papacy, yet he walks along. He captures a good point, one that could also be applied to sociologists, but in this case to the young: that in a disordered world they want “quality, formality, structure and order,” not concessionary forms of chaos, but in the mass, awe and devout reverence (136–37).
It is perhaps in the third point that the value of the book emerges. Weaving in the way he was shaped by his Anglicanism, notably its music and formal language, with his sociology, the walk into Catholicism conveys a sense of disenchantment. He finds some of its music banal, the understanding of his sociological trajectory slight, so that what emerges is a slide from a sense of theological depth into the raw modernism of much of Catholicism, as in Scotland, where the legacy of the misinterpretation of Vatican II lingers too long. But what saves the book is the conclusion, the sense of depth when he realizes that his life and his world view is now bound into his Catholicism. Despite its flaws, where the dreams of enchantment seem so elusive, he comes to settle with the notion that it is the completeness of Catholicism that is the source of its wonder.

Eclectic and perhaps lacking the drama of journeys of others into Catholicism, Oliver, in highly adverse circumstances, has produced a unique account of a journey of self-reflection, influenced by sociology but more pertinently shaped by theological concerns. There are no dramas here, though tragedies of the loss of his son and son-in-law are noted. What might have occasioned bitterness is ignored, so rendering all the more credible the sense of grace, calm reflection, and realization of a deepening faith. Oliver did not need to write this book; he wanted to share what he found with others.

How he died is not clear. What is clear is that somebody who loved him much enabled his legacy to go to press. He or she undertook for him the duties of copy-editing, indexing, and cross checking, thus enabling a fitting memorial to a good man who found his faith and wanted others to hear about it.

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Colin Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalsim: Rethinking the Human*. Peter Lang, 2016.

In an article on the theological notion of the person, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) wrote, “The contribution of Christian faith to the whole of human thought is not realized; [the notion of person in Christ] remains detached from it as a theological exception, although it is precisely the meaning of this new element to call into question the whole of human thought and to set it on a new course” (“Concerning the No-