

much evidence, that economic development will necessarily lead to secularization and the decline of religious belief and practice.

Again, such reflections are meant to illustrate some of the lines of argument present in this fine book, without claiming to exhaust the rich variety of themes and observations its contributors have to offer. *Toward the Common Good* will be useful to both Catholic and non-Catholic scholars. The former will find in it many useful suggestions for how they might integrate the Catholic intellectual tradition into their own professional studies. The latter will learn that there is nothing to be feared and much to be gained from returning once again to the moral realism of which the Church is still the most persistent and persuasive teacher. And for those teachers who wish not only to survey political science as it is currently practiced but also to invite students to critical reflection on its limitations, the book would make a useful addition to the reading list for an undergraduate introduction to political science course or a graduate scope and methods course.

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**Stephen M. Krason, *The Public Order and the Sacred Order: Contemporary Issues, Catholic Social Thought, and the Western and American Traditions*. Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, 2009. 1144 pages. \$200, cloth.**

This two-volume work is a must-read collection. The first volume includes forty-five writings by Stephen Krason over the past twenty-five years. Some of the pieces were written specifically for this work. The second volume consists of twenty-three documents ranging from encyclicals, court opinions, ancient and American classics, and other writings cited in volume one.

Volume one includes a brief six-page preface that outlines the three parts to the book and previews the specific chapters. All of the topics could be described as “must-reading” (or rereading if one has had the good fortune of coming across them previously). My inclination is to recommend beginning with the last (forty-paged) chapter (“Thoughts on Basic Questions and Fundamental Change in American Culture and Political Life”) since it gives detailed integrative reference to many of the chapters, making the study of all chapters that much more compelling. Essential ele-

ments of Catholic social thought including adherence to virtue, natural law, morality, justice, prudence, the rule of law, and the common good are shown as the path to restoring American “good” character. Change is demonstrated as needed in private life, public leadership, the legal profession, the media, education, business, and worker-management relations among other areas. To reverse the deterioration of public life recommendations are made about corrections in policy and practices in many areas including immigration, abortion, feminism, pornography, homosexual marriage, bureaucratization of public affairs, and affirmative action.

An important dimension throughout the last chapter is the restoration in the practice of the law, particularly, but not limited to, the courts and prosecutors. The plague of runaway legal practice dominates chapter 30. Krason makes one shudder about professional practice in showing how vague law, the criminalization of what used to be civil matters, the explosion of Federal regulations from 2411 pages in 1936 to 75,000 today, the abuse of prosecutorial powers, and the shift of emphasis from serving justice to law as a business have transformed American law. Vague law and its compounding harm is manifest in chapter 9, which deals with the topic of child abuse and neglect. Krason, who has both a law degree and a Ph.D. in political science, points in the area of child abuse to the undefined fundamental terms, the acceptance of hearsay evidence, the use of anonymous hotlines, the lack of due process, false complaints not discouraged, and the criminalization of civil matters as grave concerns.

The decline of both religion and of moral sanctions is mentioned as an explanation of increased abuse and neglect. Part of the problem is that religion is neglected in recent and contemporary education dominated by the state at all levels. This neglect is a function of a small minority claiming to be offended by any suggestion of religion. The only reality considered, Krason points out with specific reference to the social sciences but applicable to all education, must be examined empirically and be quantifiable. This skewed perspective can only be reversed through education properly directed.

Understandably, Krason gives Catholic education a great deal of attention. He would have it as a vehicle for renewal of American political, cultural, and moral life. Catholic education must have a solid foundation. He elaborates on Catholic higher education and its needs. In two separate chapters (20 and 21) he even outlines a vision of reform for a Catholic law school and for an innovative approach to graduate education. Needless to say, he expects faculty to be orthodox and of sound moral character. In chapter 19, on “Catholic Social Teaching, the Integrity of Academic Life, and the Structuring of the Catholic University,” he stresses the need for

productive, active scholars who are spiritually serious. He likewise holds administrators to these high standards, and he maintains that for them the secular university should not be a model with its corporate, consumerist, and authoritative culture. He expects professors to receive a just family wage and laments excessive teaching loads and the growth in paperwork. He sees Catholic social teachings to be applied in decision making, even hiring. He repeats the latter point in chapter 44. It is an area in which I would take exception since it may have been the source of the problem he wants to correct. That aside, I agree wholeheartedly in his criticism of the student evaluation culture, the consumerist mentality in the university, and the undue influence of secular accrediting agencies that Catholic administrators too quickly follow.

Beyond these principal areas of law and education, Krason has chapters that deal with censorship, health care, the rights of labor, international political life, women in the military, liberalism and conservatism, executive power, and statesmanship. Throughout, he treats of these subjects in the light of Catholic social teaching and especially the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. Solidarity means brotherhood, mutual respect and working together, with justice and charity, while keeping higher things in focus. In losing sight of the hereafter, the here-and-now becomes everything, which says a lot about our culture.

Attention is given (chapter 38) to executive power as a weapon in these cultural wars. Through the use of the veto, the budget, appointment powers, executive orders, the bully pulpit, recess appointments, and other devices the president can bring about change while the legislature procrastinates or acts ambiguously. Unfortunately, as recent experience with the Obama administration shows, the proposal can be used to effect the opposite of what is desired.

Subsidiarity, the other bedrock of the encyclicals in addition to solidarity, is the most fundamental challenge to the mindset that would always turn to government or some larger organization for change. Krason makes it clear that the encyclicals are directed to individual responsibility. In one chapter (43) he writes about working together in a “civilization of love” beginning with Catholic institutions, adding that if we shirk responsibility we implicitly turn away from full Catholicism. He advises that individuals within organizations, the Church, and in politics must resist the “wrecking ball of egos”; they must be steadfast in adherence to principles and avoid the morality of consensus.

Krason sees rejuvenating the Church as the means to rejuvenating American culture (chapter 42). Obedience to the Church’s rightful authority, faith in the Real Presence, and sacramental confession are primary in

faithful discipleship and strengthening social involvement. Local parishes need to be revitalized, not consolidated, staffed with priests from other countries if necessary, and every parish should have a school. Only with the Church's guidance of ultimate truth can the social gospel of secular humanitarianism (good works without reference to God) be corrected. Bishops must lead as shepherds and teachers and function in front of a bureaucracy, not behind it. Krason speaks of the scandal of appointments needed to see the bishop.

Abortion is clearly an area where unrelenting leadership must exist. It is a constant point throughout the book and is the subject of a number of the chapters (5, 6, 7, 37, and 40). American leaders like Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, the drafters of the Constitution, Tocqueville, and others all saw the imperative that liberty is not secure without inclusion of God as a law higher than man. The Court allows abortion on demand and turns the First Amendment into the defender of pornography and the opponent of religion and the family. Krason observes that laws exist against vagrancy, drunkenness, race prejudice, harassment, assault, theft, tobacco usage, endangering certain animal species, and the regulation of the local restaurant, but protecting the unborn remains out of the law's domain. In this struggle the Church and its Bishops must lead others to lead.

The Court has contributed much to the shift in American public life and morality. Krason shows how the Court has been influenced by the secular humanist perspective that values derive only from human experience. From this perspective the Court built a wall of separation between church and state, a wall with only a contrived constitutional base. The public has no grounding to resist what the Court declares in its role, replacing the Church, as the authoritative interpreter of natural law.

Krason correctly observes that when God is ignored the state itself becomes god. Perhaps a foretelling of the Western decline may be found in John 5:42, "I came in the name of my Father and you received me not; if another comes in his own name you receive him." Too many come in their own name. Stephen Krason is not one of them.

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