

her particular religious tradition. Those whom Maguire has chosen to explain what the Judeo-Christian tradition has to teach about contraception and abortion are, shall we say, predictable: Laurie Zoloth for the Jewish, Beverly Wildung Harrison for the Protestant, and Christine Gudorf for the Catholic representation.

Perhaps a text in his (or is it Zoloth's?) chapter on "Judaism and Family Planning" sums it up best: "We see again that the right to choose an abortion has deep religious roots. Laws that deny women this right are unjust and violate religious freedoms.... Since there are good religious authorities on both sides of the debate, government has no right to intrude" (105).

It may seem a quibble, but given the nature of the volume (namely, Maguire reporting what others have said), criticism is difficult. In the "Catholic" chapter, for example, we read: "The Bible does not condemn abortion" (35). And a few pages later (37), Maguire writes of Antoninus, a fifteenth-century archbishop of Florence: "Many Catholics do not know that there exists a pro-choice Catholic saint who was also an archbishop and a Dominican" (37). To whom does one attribute the liberties taken with the use of the expression "pro-choice": Maguire or Gudorf? Read John Connery, S.J.'s account of Antoninus in *Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective*, and one comes away with a rather different view.

"Abortion frees women." That is at the heart of what Maguire and his RCPRHE cohorts are saying in *Sacred Choices*. Cut through the rhetoric and the talk of "pro-abortion Catholic saints" and one finds a starkly pessimistic message: if the child wins, the woman loses. Theirs is an either/or with a vengeance: *either* life for the woman *or* life for the child. Since they have defined abortion into the very essence of what they consider a just social order, guess who wins every time in Maguire's world?

Far sounder and much more human is the view taken by those who presumably pay Maguire's salary at Marquette: "To be pro-life is to be pro-woman. Because we support women, we oppose abortion" ("Standing for

the Unborn: A Statement of the Society of Jesus in the United States on Abortion," March 2003, <http://www.jesuit.org/images/docs/8V5ZWA.pdf>). Are the American Jesuits dreamers in seeing that *both/and* is so much more human than *either/or*? Maguire would do well to take his own words to heart: "Tread softly if you would tread upon that dream" (150).

Rev. Germain Kopaczynski, O.F.M. Conv.,  
Ph.D.  
Director of Education  
The National Catholic Bioethics Center  
Boston, Massachusetts

---

***The Encyclicals of John Paul II. Edited with introductions by J. Michael Miller, C.S.B. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2001. 960 pp. Indexes.***

The twenty-five-year pontificate of Pope John Paul II has brought to the Church many and invaluable graces. Biographers, especially the respected George Weigel, have recounted these supernatural gifts and pointed out as well their overflow into the political order in which the Successor of Peter always enjoys a fixed authority. Any careful observer of the past quarter century could not fail to realize that John Paul II considers himself, rightly, as Pope for the whole world.

It would be impossible in a review focused on a particular collection of his encyclicals to mention, even briefly, the ecclesial achievements of Karol Wojtyła. They are too many. It also would be impossible to summarize the contents of the thirteen encyclicals that Pope John Paul II, between 1979 and 1998, has delivered over to the Church and, when the theme warrants, to all persons of good will. These are too rich, and complex. I will therefore restrict myself to introducing the invaluable work of Fr. J. Michael Miller, C.S.B., who has prepared an edition of the present pontiff's first thirteen encyclicals that will remain for some time the authoritative presentation of these "circular" (11) letters.

Even now after the appearance of the Pope's fourteenth encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, this handsome OSV volume will be appreciated for its informative introductions, indexes, and bibliographical references.

In his preface to the volume, Fr. Miller, who currently serves with distinction as president of the University of Saint Thomas in Houston, places the thirteen encyclicals in their historical context. He interprets them as a unified and comprehensive response to the challenges that faced humanity as the third Christian millennium approached. "The Pope," says Miller, "has undertaken to admonish, inspire, and encourage men and women as they cross 'the threshold of hope'" (9). The preface also informs us that this edition includes those "authoritatively approved editorial corrections" (10) that in a very few instances have been made after the initial publication of a given encyclical.

It would be difficult to find a person who has read the *New York Times* or another secular newspaper of standing that would not at least recognize the word "encyclical." It would, on the other hand, also be difficult to find someone, even among Catholics, who knows much about the Church's custom of sending and receiving encyclicals. The twenty-two-page "Introduction to the Papal Encyclicals" offers a comprehensive overview of the papal practice of using the word "encyclical," and of the distinctive features of those written by John Paul II. We learn about the history of the custom, which in modern times dates from the pontificate of Benedict XIV (1740–1758), about the audiences for and kinds of encyclicals that exist, and about the authority they possess among believers. Miller also discusses the influence that encyclicals exert in the Church. Occasional references in the introduction to "twelve encyclicals" (e.g., 27, 32) may be explained by the fact that the present (2001) edition comprises an augmented version of the original volume published in 1996, that is, before the issuance in 1998 of *Fides et ratio*.

Each encyclical comes with its own "Editor's Introduction." I found these essays a most helpful feature of the volume. Father Miller supplies short study guides to each of

the Pope's encyclicals which include summaries, key themes, and suggestions for further reading. There are two carefully prepared indexes. The first gives the biblical references found in the thirteen encyclicals. The second index offers students of the thought of Pope John Paul II a very helpful tool to begin their research into the massive intellectual achievement of this scholar-Pope. The forty-page subject index covers topics from "abortion" to "youth" and enables the pilgrim approaching for the first time this compendium of the Holy Father's postconciliar magisterium to find pathways into the heart of its saving instruction.

The issuance in April 2003 of the Pope's latest encyclical should deter no one from availing himself of this extraordinarily useful edition of the Pope's encyclicals. It is the book needed in order to read with full comprehension what the Pope has to say about the Eucharist, the priesthood, and the Church. Catholics in the English-speaking world should be doubly grateful to Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division for making Father Miller's work available. They should wait neither for him to prepare a second augmented edition nor for the Pope to compose his fifteenth encyclical. All should buy this volume now. Too many persons in the Church need to catch up on what Pope John Paul II has taught over nearly two decades in his first thirteen encyclicals. Then they will find themselves well prepared and ready to read what he has to say about the Eucharist and whatever subject may occupy his next encyclical.

Rev. Romanus Cessario, O.P.  
Professor of Theology  
Saint John Seminary  
Boston, Massachusetts