

being represented. While the example of long meditation on a crucifix or a painting of the tortured savior leading to the physical impression of the stigmata is extreme, it illustrates the late medieval belief in the transforming potency of images.

While this volume will especially appeal to specialists in material history, liturgy, and spirituality, it also can serve those in other theological specializations as an introduction to how devout late medieval people practiced rich bodily engagement with mediated theological doctrines. As one of the anthology's authors notes, in the post-Reformation era we tend to assume that mediation alienates and secularizes, but the late medieval period reveals an alternative possibility. In our media-saturated age, this is worth exploring.

Mary Frohlich, RSCJ
Catholic Theological Union, Chicago

Indissolubility and the Synod of Bishops: Reflections of a Canon Lawyer. By John A. Alesandro. New York, NY: Paulist, 2015. Pp. ix + 71. \$12.95.

Halfway through this insightful and clear monograph, distinguished canonist John A. Alesandro articulates the dilemma at the heart of the matter: "Sacramentality and indissolubility are stifled in today's world by the austerity of the church's canonical construct of marriage" (34).

The "canonical construct of marriage" is described as the "central theological and juridical propositions about marriage" collected into a unified whole (15). These include but are not limited to sacramentality, indissolubility, consummation, intention, the proper object of marital consent, and canonical form.

In part 1, A. presents the development of the construct through history, and does so in a concise and informative way. Although certain elements are familiar to the experts, the presentation is accessible to all and a valuable summary. The history of the canonical construct of marriage is a striking application of the maxim *lex sequitur esse*. The Magisterium leads in resolving theological debates, while canon law attempts to minimize the obstacles to further discussion and indeed has been known to foster it.

Given the fact that the book was written between the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 2014 and the Ordinary General Assembly of 2015, and thus without the benefit of post-synodal magisterial pronouncements and juridical provisions, part 2 is happily already outdated. A. will no doubt take comfort in this fact inasmuch as many of his recommendations for the streamlining of both substantive and procedural law have been approved, one might say *in forma specifica*, by Pope Francis in the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* and especially the *motu proprio Mitis Iudex*. Issues such as the competence of tribunals, the use of single judges and lay judges, the right of defense and the role of the defender of the bond, and finally the review/appeal of an affirmative decision have all been attended to. We can hope that an updated second edition of this book will be forthcoming.

Michael P. Hilbert, SJ
Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome