

reports, and designing brochures, and implementing recommendations, and overseeing compliance, and so on—all of which is necessary for increased awareness, transparency, and oversight—if not administrators? The implication is that either the current batch of administrators will have to add to their job descriptions (unlikely), or more will have to be hired (likely), which risks the creation of yet another fiefdom and yet another level of complexity to an increasingly byzantine organization, not to mention increased cost. Likewise, leveling out hierarchical structures sounds attractive; but who will take on the additional responsibilities? If faculty is the answer, then that could diminish the quality of teaching, which, after all, is, or used to be, the primary reason for the university's existence.

In the end, few readers will likely doubt that the university needs and will benefit from a greater culture of ethics. But many will likely have questions, especially those already tasked with administration, who are generally negatively portrayed in the book, on how to build that culture effectively and, yes, efficiently. Perhaps that is a perfect discussion topic for *University Ethics 101*, coming soon, K. hopes, to a course catalogue—or, better yet, employee-orientation seminar—near you.

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Catholic Theology of Marriage in the Era of HIV and AIDS. By Emily Reimer-Barry. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2015. Pp. viii + 229. \$90.

In a new book on marriage, Emily Reimer-Barry does what the Extraordinary Synod on the Family of 2014–15 set out to do but did not quite achieve. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) Pope Francis characterizes evangelization as a process in which “the first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns” (EG 28), and stresses that people need to “find in their Church a spirituality which can offer healing and liberation” (EG 89). The synod responded to the pope’s challenge by beginning a process of open dialogue and pastoral response, but found it difficult to move Catholic theology forward. In this book, R-B. engages in ethnographic research, listening closely to what lay Catholic women living with HIV and AIDS say about the joys and challenges of being married, and responds with a theology of marriage marked by mercy.

R-B.’s constructive contribution is contrasted to a traditional Catholic theology of marriage, exemplified by the USCCB’s 2009 pastoral letter, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*. According to R-B., contemporary Catholic theological thinking on marriage stresses procreation, indissolubility, and self-giving. R-B. allows that Catholic theology of marriage has become less patriarchal and more attentive to the loving partnership, but stresses that this theology still “privileges the procreative over the unitive” meanings of marriage and has no allowance for divorce.

What R-B. finds in her ethnographic research leads her to challenge this vision. Central to book are R-B.’s conversations with eight women living with HIV or AIDS

in Chicago. While her method is unusual, R-B. claims that moral theology needs ethnography in order to “learn from people’s experiences and announce the gospel in the real world in a way that it can be heard, understood, and lived” (7). The women she interviewed share the difficulties of just trying to survive, getting medical care, overcoming stigma, and being good partners and parents. Given this situation, R-B. stresses the need “to affirm for married women their inherent dignity, their equality with their husbands, and their obligation to care for themselves” (150).

The heart of the book is R-B.’s “Marriage for Life” that aims to correct the deficiencies of traditional theology by emphasizing dignity, equality, fidelity, conscience, finitude, life, and the common good. Most significant are R-B.’s focus on dignity, equality, and conscience, which shape a positive vision of mutual love and flourishing while allowing for contraception and divorce. The reality of human finitude and limits to self-sacrifice ground a “Christian realist” approach to marriage.

The stories in R-B.’s book might be seen as simply adding to decades of critique by married Catholics, but the vulnerability of the women she interviewed makes her challenge especially strong. The women in her book speak poignantly about how sickness reshapes intimate relationships. Their heroic struggles to care for and love their families (often at great personal sacrifice) raise questions about Catholic descriptions of contraceptive sex as selfish and dishonest. Similarly, though other theologians have argued that legitimate marriages can fail, R-B.’s claims have a special poignancy because she recounts the stories of women who stay and tolerate abuse as well as those who leave and find new life in healthy second marriages.

Still, readers might also wonder about whether the stories of eight women are enough to justify reconstruction of Catholic theology of marriage. Evangelization involves dialogue, yet it also requires conversion. Faithfulness to tradition can include faithful dissent but also requires a believer to act against what experience might be telling her. At the synod, accounts of experiences from the USA and Europe sometimes differed from accounts from Africa. Surely all of these accounts deserved a hearing, but as the divisive debates at the synod revealed, it is often not clear how to reconcile conflicting accounts or how much weight to give to tradition. A more in-depth consideration of the use and limits of experience in moral theology would allow for a richer analysis of these questions. If complemented by a richer consideration and recovery of the tradition, the reconstruction would be that much more compelling.

Nonetheless, R-B.’s reconstruction of Christian marriage deserves to be read alongside more traditional theological texts. Her accessible language and willingness to trace the pastoral implications of her theology for parish ministry and marriage preparation give the book a pastoral dimension that makes it ideal for students and lay Catholics. But anyone concerned about the viability of marriage would do well to study this book for what it tells us about how to listen well and preach the Gospel with mercy.

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