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# Book Review: Challenging the Modern World: Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II) and the Development of Catholic Social Teaching, by Samuel Gregg

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## Peer Reviewed

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and in vitro fertilization). Altogether these changes moved medical ethics away from a primary concern with decorum and the good physician toward concern with weighing conflicting consequences and so with who will benefit and who should decide. Thus respect for the autonomy of the patient and questions of social justice mark contemporary bioethics.

This book is to be highly recommended for those working in bioethics, for courses in bioethics, and, more broadly, for those concerned with how a professional ethic is actually formed and constructively developed. In considering the study and development of other professional ethics—such as clergy ethics—this masterful text points to what is required.

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CHALLENGING THE MODERN WORLD: KAROL WOJTYLA/JOHN PAUL II AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING. By Samuel Gregg. Religion, Politics, and Society in the New Millennium. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 1999. Pp. ix + 293. \$65.

Gregg presents in eight chapters a careful study of modern Roman Catholic social teaching and explores John Paul II's/Karol Wojtyla's contributions to this tradition. He addresses the complex question of development in these teachings and creatively analyzes how Wojtyla's own ideas, writings, and life experiences may have influenced such development. G. pursues a "comparative exegetical analysis" (21) of conciliar, encyclical, and other texts in an effort to identify key areas of theoretical development in official Church social pronouncements. G. examines landmark documents, among them *Gaudium et spes*, *Rerum novarum*, *Populorum progressio*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Laborem exercens*, *Centesimus annus*, and others. He also explores Wojtyla's writings before his election as pope, including *The Acting Person*, *Sign of Contradiction*, *Love and Responsibility*, and lesser known selections from his

poetry. G.'s excellent analysis of the Roman Catholic documents and of Wojtyla's writings deepens our understanding of this literature.

The book focuses on economic and business issues and identifies three topics (industrial relations, capitalism, and relations between developed and developing nations) to test its central thesis, that John Paul II has indeed developed Catholic social teaching "via a dialogue with the modern world" (221) and contributes greater depth to its "moral-anthropological" (219) vision of the human person in society. G. contends that Wojtyla's life experiences and writings prior to his election as pope have influenced this development, which envisions the human person as gifted with great moral freedom and responsibility in social life. G. sees him influencing the encyclical *Laborem exercens* in an "almost systematic" way (225). G.'s discussions of capitalism, entrepreneurship, and solidarity are nuanced and insightful, but he is less successful in his critiques of leading Catholic social thinkers (e.g. Gregory Baum) because of inadequate substantiation or development.

This book shows signs of its origins as a doctoral dissertation: many direct quotations from original sources, re-statements of arguments, and a technical style. The unusual bullet-points might distract some readers, but G. has written a very sound book about a complex and important subject. G.'s study and extensive bibliography will assist scholars, graduate students, and others interested in John Paul II's thought and the rich, yet still developing, Roman Catholic social tradition.

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CAPITALISM AND CHRISTIANITY: THE POSSIBILITY OF CHRISTIAN PERSONALISM. Richard C. Bayer. Washington: Georgetown University, 1999. Pp. xvi + 176. \$60; \$19.95.

Weaving together Michael Novak's neoliberalism, Emmanuel Mounier's incarnational personalism, and Martin Weitzman's notions of profit-sharing