

neglected; and, given the semiotic focus, there is surprisingly little engagement with Schillebeeckx. But little more could be expected from an essay that is as generative and provocative as DeHart's affirmation of God's presence to the world not by leaking through Cohen's 'cracks in everything' but in and *as* the humanity of Christ.

OLIVER JAMES KEENAN OP
Blackfriars, Oxford

THE SPIRIT OF CATHOLICISM by Vivian Boland OP, *Bloomsbury Continuum*, London, 2021, pp. 272, £16.99, hbk

In this elegant and insightful work, Vivian Boland's *Spirit of Catholicism* constitutes a thoughtful dialogue with a deep thinker who has lived and breathed both the intellectual and affective atmosphere of the Catholic faith. Like a fine wine, the reader is invited to savour insights redolent of mind and heart, of body and soul, of temple and household, of sacred and secular, of God and humanity.

It should be said from the outset that addressing such a huge topic in just 250 pages risks superficiality, yet that is never the impression given. After whetting the appetite with a suitably theological introduction, the book proper is organised in four parts with the first being framed as an interrogative – 'A People of God?' This question allows Boland to go beyond the well-known modelling of the Church associated with Avery Dulles, by referencing more subtle and fecund imagery. With characteristic style, Boland arrests the reader's attention with a scintillating quotation from Geoffrey Preston OP offering not 5, but almost 100 images of Church (pp. 27-28). In so doing, he modestly profiles the genius of others while attesting to his own reading and literary leanings.

Having hinted that Catholicism is both 'social and embodied', Part II begins with an extended meditation on Adam and Christ as a portal for consideration of sacramentality. Using his cultural and theological inventory Boland begins:

Around one of the doors of the great cathedral at Chartres are sculptures of Adam and of Christ and they have the same face; they are identical twins. It was a tradition in some places that Jesus had the same physical features as Adam. It is another way of speaking about the first human being created in the image of God and of Jesus restoring that image in humanity (p. 41).

This sacramental 'both/and' approach then allows *Spirit of Catholicism* not only to consider sublime Eucharistic realities but also addresses the

problem of ecclesial corruption. In particular, it allows Boland to reflect upon Catholicism's current lived and painful existential exemplified by the abuse crisis as he identifies the Church sadly, but sensitively, as a community of 'sinners called to holiness'.

Part III sees Boland mixing threefold sequences to help the reader fathom the theological depths such as historical, doctrinal, active; institutional, intellectual, mystical; kerygmatic, liturgical, diaconal. He subsequently engages more with Von Hügel than Von Balthasar when clustering ecclesial insights around Peter, Paul, and John to represent institution, mission, and mystery, respectively. In so doing, he shows a mastery of doctrinal and scriptural grammar which are presented in a consistently readable manner.

Part IV is likewise shaped by three, but this time it is the Trinity as our origin and destiny. Beginning with Christ as 'Head of Humanity' followed by living 'in the Spirit', we are ultimately oriented 'from Glory to Glory' to the Father. While recognizing that in Catholicism we stand with the apostle Philip, asking the kataphatic question: 'Show us the Father?', we recognize apophatically that 'theological language also serves its purpose best in the moment in which it breaks down' (p. 252).

It is difficult to do justice to a book which reads so very well and could just as easily be delivered as a set of lectures. I want, however, to pick out four characteristics of this work by way of illustration.

- Rooted in Scripture. The book always uses its biblical compass to assay salient topics, whether for Christology, St. Paul's paradoxical resolution of morality and freedom, or St. John's eternal Word in earthly context. This means that the reader never loses sight of the *biblical* tradition at the heart of Catholicism.
- Resiliently Thomistic. Beginning with 'the Spirit is in the Body' and appealing to Aquinas at key moments, Boland's work almost acts as an introduction to the Angelic Doctor without risking any inadvertent thirteen-century indigestion. As an example, by using Thomas to walk the reader through issues such as hierarchy in the Church, he manages to navigate that particular minefield with both thoughtful rigour and mendicant charm.
- Almost Musical. The work is very well written, and illustrative choices such as 'Church as Moon' hint at poetic/ literary propensities which include his choice of exemplars such as Newman, Chesterton, Flannery O'Connor, *et al.* If not quite Tallis, Boland manages to conduct a theological chorale, an almost symphonic 'who's who' of Twentieth Century Catholic thought.
- A Maze, in the good sense. This book does not avoid issues but rather draws one into them from unusual angles such that the reader emerges more informed. As an example, a thorny tangle such as 'institution v inspiration' is expertly untied by Boland who affords the reader the opportunity to listen in on de Lubac, Guardini, Congar, *et al.* in a creative

engagement with pneumatology. His extended meditation that links the ecclesial descriptors in the Creed to the Spirit is likewise scholarly and persuasive.

Perhaps Boland's patient assessment of a Church which is in different stages in different parts of the world at the same time is his most applicable insight. We are wandering and settled, exiled and coming home. Whichever Church we are experiencing, we belong *as* Catholic and are *being* Catholic.

Obviously, there are limitations to the work. Although there are attempts to imagine what the Church looks like from the outside, this book is the fruit of insider ruminations. It does not use a historical spine which can help order things, and so is likely to appeal most to readers already familiar with the theological idiom rather than beginners. Catholic markers whether of practice and piety, or disciplines, such as celibacy and contraception, could have been explored more. Likewise, the way it deals with Covid19 is arguably under-developed whereas conversely, Cyprian's definition of the Church as 'a people brought into unity by the unity of Father Son and Spirit', is perhaps aired once too often.

Withal – this remains a treasure trove of theological jewels, and Boland is a master of his material. Just to take one example, his 'mixing' of the concept of dialogue with olfactory sensibilities again demonstrates the 'both/and' nature of his work which mirrors the 'both/and' mystery of the Incarnation:

The name 'Christ' means the anointed one, the Messiah, and those who came to believe in him were also counted among the 'anointed'. A Christian, a 'christened' one, ought therefore to have a particular smell about them. It is the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ (2 Cor 2:14), the smell of the Holy Spirit ... [Paul's] metaphor of the aroma of Christ. Depending on people's disposition, will be experienced as a very welcome perfume or as a very unwelcome stench' (pp. 236-7).

The tone is thus challenging yet amiably lucid throughout, and we are accompanied by a cast of Catholic characters that are recognizable to any churchgoer. The bishop who summed up Vatican II as 'we are all equal, from me down'. The aunt who describes a nephew as 'a saint'. The dying cousin who thinks she must have done something very wrong. In this way, Boland demonstrates, time and time again, that Catholicism may look like a command and control society from the outside, but at its best, it feels like a family from within.

This is a book that may bear several readings, but from my first visit to this theological well, two thoughts remain most vivid. First, the insight of Aquinas that the Word is not a static reality, but rather '*verbum spirans amorem*' – 'a Word breathing love'. The second is even more consoling.

That we are not alone in the universe, we are not alone in our search for God. No, 'We love because God first loved us' (p. 240).

ANTHONY TOWEY

St Mary's University, Twickenham

THE UNSUSTAINABLE TRUTH by David Ko and Richard Busellato, *Panoma Press, St Alban's, Herts, 2021, pp. 270, £18.99, pbk*

Before writing *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II hosted a conference of world-famous economists. He remarked afterwards that he had been deeply impressed by their concern for the moral dimensions of economic life. Since then, there have been exciting moves to reembed into morality what had become a detached and amoral 'science', with focused attention to the needs of the poor, the dangers of inequalities, ecological health and biodiversity, social well-being, and the interconnectedness of systems. It has been fascinating to see how often these developments have converged on key concepts of Catholic Social Teaching, such as solidarity, subsidiarity, civil society, social virtues, integral ecology and human flourishing. Such rooting in the deeper meaning of what it is to be human has allowed some economists to think in ways that are radically fresh and humane.

Sometimes, however, what looks like a good idea has not been examined radically enough. One example is 'sustainable investment'. David Ko and Richard Busellato spent many years together as investment bankers, trying to understand how this might work. This book explains their conclusions, and for all its gentle style, it pulls no punches. Here are a few of its key points.

The world of investment is so vast and complex that even good intentions, especially when massively multiplied, can have terrible effects. They give the examples of electric cars and wine, both apparently innocent investments. However, Tesla made so much money so suddenly that they invested huge amounts in Bitcoin. Bitcoin not only uses more energy to function than the Netherlands, it is also a major funder of cyberattacks. All that, without worrying about the politics of mining lithium. Wine, as we know, is traditionally grown in Europe, without the need of irrigation, and, of course, has good and bad years. But once you start to grow wine to make both immediate and regular annual profits, in countries with low rainfall, not only will the vines be drenched in chemicals, but also the groundwater will be depleted, in California, for example, to the point of poisoning the freshwater systems. A significant contributor to this has been the pensions of schoolteachers.