

encyclical on human sexuality, *Humanae Vitae*. According to Warner, natural law was largely jettisoned in favor of secular notions of equality and liberation. The notion of justice found in Aristotle and Thomas, the rightly ordered society with each contributing to the common good, was displaced by justice defined as the battle against inequalities and the meeting of needs. Warner provides a helpful guide to the controversies over the two major pastoral letters of the 1980s, one on world peace and the other on the American economy, and argues that both—especially “The Challenge of Peace”—rested on ideological foundations that have been decisively discredited. Throughout the bishops’ “changing witness,” abortion has had a stated primacy among NCCB concerns but its importance has in fact been sharply relativized by being joined to a farrago of other issues—presented in the name of a “consistent life ethic”—and this has consistently weighted the bishops’ witness toward the left of the political spectrum. Warner clearly does not share the political biases of the bishops conference, but his more telling point is that missing from the many statements is any clear theological witness to Christ as the fulfillment of the human project. This is in sharpest contrast to the social encyclicals and other teaching documents of the pontificate of John Paul II, which Warner says the U.S. bishops should emulate. Because of the bureaucratic structure of NCCB-USCC, the political prejudices of those in charge, and the inability of individual bishops to give in-depth attention to the statements that go out in their name, Warner is not at all hopeful that the problems described in *Changing Witness* will be effectively addressed any time soon.

**SAINTS AND SCHEMERS: OPUS DEI AND ITS PARADOXES.** By JOAN ESTRUCH. Oxford University Press. 302 pp. \$30.

This peculiar book was prompted by the suggestion of our colleague Peter Berger that Mr. Estruch should pursue his hunch that the

role of Opus Dei in the modernization of Spain (under and after Franco) might suggest some interesting variations, on Max Weber’s well-known argument about capitalism and the Protestant ethic. As Estruch got into his project, however, Weber and social theory quickly took a back seat to the author’s interest in how the members of Opus Dei have regularly engaged in radical historical revisionism in telling the story of the organization and its founder, Blessed Josemaria Escriva (who died in 1975 and was beatified by John Paul II in 1992). The author insists that his is not simply another attack on Opus Dei, but he does not successfully conceal his deep suspicion of the movement. Nonetheless, he does make valuable contributions in showing how Escriva and his followers changed their purposes after the founding of Opus (which Estruch says was in 1939, not in 1928, as the official story has it), and in demonstrating the excesses—if not outright prevarications—indulged by Escriva’s hagiographers. Of particular interest is the author’s tracing of the roots of the long-standing enmity between Opus and the Jesuits. According to Estruch, the Jesuits in Spain were the true reactionaries who were threatened by the renewal efforts of Escriva and his companions to challenge the long-standing Jesuit monopoly on tutoring the powerful and promising of Spanish society. In Spain and elsewhere, the Jesuits today have largely abdicated that role, as well as their status as the “shock troops” of the papacy, and Opus has replaced them on both scores. Opus members will not be pleased, however, with Estruch’s further argument that there was very little that was original in Blessed Josemaria’s vision, a great deal of it having been stolen from the Jesuits. Only toward the end does Estruch get a bit hysterical when he suggests that Opus may be exercising undue influence over this pontificate. He notes that Opus people and John Paul II frequently use the same vocabulary, which is hardly surprising since they’re both seriously Catholic. As for Max Weber, Estruch

adds to a thousand others yet another demonstration that Protestantism has no monopoly on the spirit of capitalism. The book is of interest, however, for what it says about the history and current self-understandings of Opus Dei, quite apart from sociological theory.

**A SHORT HISTORY OF AMERICAN CATHOLICISM.** By MARTIN E. MARTY. *Thomas More*. 231 pp. \$10.95.

Pretty much what the title says. A useful and sympathetic overview by one of the leading Protestant observers of the religious scene. Marty’s usual light touch does not fail him as he limns the possible and promising at the beginning of Catholicism’s next half millennium in North America.

**FAITH ALONE: THE EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION.** By R. C. SPROUL. Baker. 221 pp. \$15.99.

Sproul has been the foremost theological polemicist against “Evangelicals and Catholics Together,” the document initiated by Charles Colson and R. J. Neuhaus and issued in the spring of 1994. While Sproul’s rigorist position has isolated him from many evangelical colleagues and contributed to his departure from Reformed Theological Seminary in Florida, he is also viewed by others as a champion of Protestant orthodoxy doing battle with Protestants who have gone soft on Catholicism. The present book, including a glossary of Latin terms for the layman, is a useful exposition of a Calvinist sixteenth-century understanding of justification. Sproul’s argument is deeply flawed by an unwillingness to credit both Catholic and Protestant theological developments since then. If Sproul’s view of justification by faith alone really does define the true church, it is a fast shrinking church, as he seems to acknowledge in his wistful reflections on the decline of what he believes to be authentic Protestantism. A brittle, bitter, and finally very sad book.