

prescient vision for America. He foresaw the future greatness of America, especially in its westward expansion. He also anticipated the importance of a strong central government for the country to thrive. His advice to avoid foreign entanglements demonstrated his sense of realpolitik which grew from his insight into human nature and how nations operate. Time proved him correct on all accounts. It is fair to say that were it not for Washington, the United States of America as we know it would not exist today.

America has always been deemed the land of opportunity. George Washington is the exemplar and maybe the embodiment of this belief. He took his natural gifts of raw intelligence, strong will, physique, and bravery and used them to excel as a warrior, gentleman, a living national icon, and the Father of our Country. Through his example, he showed us how we as individuals and as a country can reach our potential through personal effort and talent. Perhaps the greatest evidence of these beliefs can be found in his Last Will and Testament. Instead of setting up his family as an inherited aristocracy, he divided up his estate into small parcels so that his descendents would have to rely on their own merit to achieve success in life. The fact is that, after reading Ellis, one gets the sense that he bequeathed to all future generations these same possibilities. For this Washington shall always remain "His Excellency" in the heart of his countrymen.

*Exegetical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, prepared under the Responsibility of the Faculty of Canon Law, University of Navarre, English edition edited by Ernest Caparros, (Wilson & Lafleur / Midwest Theological Forum, 2004).

Five volumes bound as eight, approximately 9,000 pages. List price US \$1,200. Contact: [www.wilsonlafleur.com](http://www.wilsonlafleur.com) or [mail@mwtf.org](mailto:mail@mwtf.org).

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Reflected in the very name of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars is the idea that no single scholarly discipline represents the totality of the Church's contribution to man's welfare, nor can an individual scholar within a discipline speak comprehensively for his or her field, let alone for the Church. In canon law, recognition that many minds are needed to describe the sweep of ecclesiastical legislation has been quietly gaining ground for decades. Once, say, Bachofen, Cappello, Coronata, and Jone, passed from the scene, no lone lawyers remained who could attempt the great multi-volume, pan-textual commentaries that dominated canonistics before the Second World War. Instead, what began to appear in canonical circles were encouraging experiments in scholarly collaboration. The pre-conciliar *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique* and the *Comentarios al Código de Derecho Canónico* come readily to mind, as do some famous canonical pairings such as Abbo-Hannon, Bouscaren-Ellis, and Vermeersch-Creusen.

Since the Second Vatican Council, this collaborative methodology in canon law (applied even to the drafting of what eventually became the 1983 Code) has blossomed into impressive coordinated efforts by teams of experts to produce respectable commentaries on the whole of the 1983 Code. The British commentary (1995), for example, used 15 scholars to treat the revised law. The first American commentary (1985)

represented 24 authors, and the second (2000) drew on an impressive 36 canonists. Similar works in Italian (29 contributors) and Spanish (6 in one, 11 for another, 22 in a third) could be cited.

Prescinding, though, from whether every contributing author's opinion on every canon in each of these works is entirely sound, and notwithstanding the obvious achievement that such pan-textual tomes undoubtedly represent, some in canon law (perhaps especially those who could look at their yellowing sets of Bachofen in eight volumes or Blat or Coronata in five) quietly reminded a new generation of canon lawyers that the canonistics behind most of the norms in the 1983 Code were not being adequately sounded by, in too many cases, a few paragraphs here or a couple pages there between the boards of a thick monograph.

Onto this stage strides the stunning *Exegetical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*.

At five volumes bound as eight, encompassing approximately 9,000 pages of commentary and apparatus, the *Exegetical Commentary* dwarfs all other treatises on the 1983 Code. Moreover, an astounding 115 experts (hailing from some dozen nations) directly contributed to this project, more than triple the number authors contributing to any of the individual works mentioned above. Of course, however impressive, sheer quantity in a commentary is not the dispositive factor in assessing its scholarly worth; there is, of course, also quality.

I am not on the extremely short list of beati who can claim (say, in the course of editing this massive set) to have read the entire manuscript yet. Indeed, my present reading schedule suggests eligibility for that fraternity only about the year 2012. Instead, I begin an assessment of scholarly potential by examining the

List of Collaborators for the *Exegetical Commentary*. There one sees that something over half the authors are Spanish (see below), a fact that still left room for dozens of other canonists from throughout Europe and the Americas. Generously scattered through the predictable designations of faculty members, moreover, one sees listed many Vatican officials, tribunal judges, sitting diocesan bishops, and officials of or consultants to many particular churches. In short, academe and the chancery have come together in this work.

The plurality of Spanish contributors to the *Exegetical Commentary* is explained thus: the present English edition grew out of and largely represents a translation of and updating to the original *Comentario Exegético al Código de Derecho Canónico* published by the University of Navarre in 1996 (a project it took on in addition to producing and continually updating its *Código de Derecho Canónico edición bilingüe y anotada*, albeit in only 2,000 pages.) But, notwithstanding Spain's rich tradition in canonical sciences (second only to Italy's) and despite the fact that Spanish remains a primary reference language in canon law, too few researchers outside of Spain knew of its latest canonical accomplishment. The decision to move the *Comentario Exegético* into English assures, of course, a world-wide distribution—and bolsters the claim I have made elsewhere that English has become the leading modern language in canonical studies. Finally, concerns among non-Spaniards that a mere translation of the original *Comentario* would import excessively Iberian issues or approaches into a treatise proposed for universal consultation were anticipated—and as far as I can tell, were admirably resolved—by the editorial decisions made in producing the English text of the *Exegetical*

*Commentary*.

Producing the English version required more than six years of labor, and even that speed was possible only because the task of directing this project was accepted by one of the few men in the world today who could carry it off, Dr. Ernest Caparros, emeritus of the Faculty of Law, University of Montreal. With dual doctorates in canon and civil law, pentalingual, and with an astounding array of juridic publications and legal leadership positions to his credit, Caparros' early commitment to the project (even amid several other major canonical publications he was overseeing for the Series Gratianus) assured the many others who would be needed to bring this massive project to fruition of eventual success. And so it has happened. The *Exegetical Commentary* is now complete; it rightly takes its place as the most extensive study of the 1983 Code of Canon Law available today.

There remains but to sketch the straight-forward structure of the work. Each canon is set out first in Latin, then in English (using the Great Britain & Ireland translation, but following mostly American spelling). Rome's vitally important footnotes (fontes) immediately follow, and unofficial but quite useful cross-references within the 1983 Code are suggested. Then begins the scholarly comment (each article is signed). Observations might run less than a page if the material warrants no more, but often cover several pages if such is needed to paint a sufficiently detailed picture of the norm and its referents. Additional footnotes vary by scholar, but they tend to be "European" in style, i.e., lighter and less frequent than North American lawyers are inclined to use. The actual commentary is clearly ordered toward the great task of applying canon law within the Church today and in that sense

it seems to avoid extended historical treatments of topics. Those who need that kind of information (and in complex cases the best canonical answers might well require such understandings) do best to master the law as given us today with the help of resources such as the *Exegetical Commentary*, and then follow the fontes supplied by the Legislator back to Pio-Benedictine predecessors, and even to decretal law where that is appropriate.

The *Exegetical Commentary* is a gift to the Church. These beautifully printed and bound pages, offering competent and faithful explanations of modern canon law, will be consulted for centuries, inspiring others to deepen their own appreciation of and cooperation with the laws of Christ and His Church.

***Catholic for a Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass***, edited by Scott Hahn and Regis J. Flaherty. Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2004. Pp. xiv + 203, soft-cover \$15.95

Review by Daniel G. Van Slyke, S.T.L., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Theology at Ave Maria College, Ypsilanti, MI

This volume contains twelve well-written and clearly organized essays or "chapters" authored by a group of the most energetic and talented lay catechists and apologists in North America. Dedicated to elaborating the connection between the Mass and Sacred Scripture, this collection follows two previous *Catholic for a Reason* volumes: the first, sub-titled *Scripture and the Mystery of the Family of God*, covering a broad range of topics; the second, *Scripture and the Mystery of the Mother of God*, being, like the third, more focused. Nine of the twelve authors who contribute