

proclaim that God is dead and religion has no future in Western society. There are many signs of a religious revival in the world; hence, it is important that Catholics better understand the vision of Pope John Paul II in imagining how Catholicism with its entire heritage of beliefs, sacraments and practices might better make present and incarnate the teachings of Christ in our culture today.

Thus, this book is highly useful for priests, teachers, and lay persons who want to understand better the significance of events in the past and present life of the Church. I would highly recommend this volume for bishops who are perplexed about what path the Catholic Church in the United States should take regarding politics and moral and social issues.

Edmund W. Majewski, S.J.

*St. Peter's College  
Jersey City, New Jersey*

## Judaism and Catholicism

SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS. By Roy H. Schoeman (Ignatius Press, P.O. Box X1339, Fort Collins, CO 80522, 2003), 392 pp. PB. \$16.95.

Ambitious and comprehensive in scope, this book examines the role of Israel in religious history from the time of Abraham to the Second Coming. It is a work of fresh, illuminating thought that offers startling, original insights and a penetrating exploration of the ideological causes of the Holocaust by a Jewish convert to the Catholic faith. *Salvation is from the Jews* reflects a magisterial view of the relationship between Judaism and Catholicism, contrasts Israel's relationship to God before and after the Holocaust, examines the inspiring lives of many Jewish converts such as the Lemann brothers, Rabbi Zolli, and Edith Stein, and explores the insidious evil of anti-Semitism as a diabolical ploy to prevent the Second Coming.

A scholarly, erudite work of the highest quality, the book is always compelling both by its breadth and depth of knowledge and by its extraordinary logic. For example, why did God choose Israel to reveal the Messiah? "The Scripture makes it clear that it was Abraham's behavior during this test [the sacrifice of Isaac] that would earn for him, and hence for the Jewish race, the honor of bringing forth the Messiah." While pagan nations defiled themselves by their worship of false gods (the fallen angels), the Jews in their covenant with God "would have to be free from all involvement with other deities" to reach a higher moral ideal of purity to fashion "an individual of such devotion and virtue that she could give her flesh to be the flesh of the God-man." While the Jews' rejection of the Messiah brought salvation to the Gentiles, the return of the Jews is crucial to the Second Coming: "Almost every Jew who enters the Catholic Church feels deeply the sense of 'return' that St. Paul captures in his image of the olive branch grafted back on to its original, natural root." If the conversion of the Jews were not essential to God's plan of salvation, why is Satan so intent in preventing it by the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust? This is just one of the many astute perceptions in the book.

In the chapter entitled "Judaism and the Holocaust," Mr. Schoeman asks other probing questions: if the Israelites are God's chosen people and God is all-loving, how does one explain the Holocaust? While some Jews like Elie Wiesel renounce their orthodox Jewish faith ("I believe during the Holocaust the covenant was broken"), Mr. Schoeman argues, "Judaism was founded on Abraham's fidelity to God . . . in the face of what appeared to be the most unjust and cruel act of God imaginable—his requirement that he sacrifice his son Isaac." God demands noble, heroic suffering of his faithful servants from Abraham to the death of the Son of God to the martyrs and saints. While Elie Wiesel depicts God

as unfaithful, Jewish converts like Edith Stein—a victim of the concentration camps—see the suffering of the Jews in World War II as Christ's Cross “being laid upon the Jewish people.” Just as Christ's first coming resulted in the slaughtering of the Innocents, “There is a symmetry in the idea that the final return of the Messiah, the Second Coming, would be preceded once again by a slaughter of the innocents, centered on the Jews.” A human birth is preceded by suffering. The grace of conversion is also often foreshadowed by suffering. Grace itself is purchased by suffering. Thus Mr. Schoeman reasons, “Suffering is the coin that brings heaven to earth”—a fact that hints that the Holocaust is possibly “a harbinger of the Second Coming,” an event not far off according to the revelations of Sister Faustina in 1936–1938. This is another of the remarkable epiphanies the book offers.

In his chapter “The Ideological Foundations of Nazism,” the author relates the war crimes of Hitler and the Third Reich not only to Margaret Sanger's eugenics policies but also to diabolical influences, pagan religions, and new age cults. The sexual degeneracy of Hitler, the storm troopers, and the Hitler youth—their casual acceptance of homosexuality, sadism, and other perversions—Himmler's preoccupation with black magic and occult mediums, the Nazi neo-pagan religion that glorified the orgies of Walpurgis Night, and Hitler's involvement in Satanism and his suicide on April 30, the very day of the Walpurgis Night bacchanal all provoke another searching question: why was Satan through Hitler and the ideology of Nazism perpetrating this atrocity on the Jews? Because the first coming of the Messiah came from the Jews and because the Jews will play a major role in the Second Coming as St. Paul explains in Romans 11, then “the eradication of the Jews might have been an attempt to prevent the Second Coming.” A second diabolical strategy to thwart the Second Coming, which depends on

Israel's conversion (“and so all Israel will be saved” as St. Paul writes in Romans 11), might be the prevention of Israel's conversion by destroying the Jewish people through the atrocities of Nazism or by forcing Jews in the aftermath of World War II to doubt the goodness and love of God. For everything about Nazism, according to Mr. Schoeman, evinces diabolical forces: the barbaric cruelty, the blatant hatred of God and Christianity, the obsession with paganism and occultism, the sexual perversions, and the vicious hatred of the Chosen People reflect Satan's handiwork. To eliminate, damn, dehumanize, or make atheists or skeptics of Jews through the Holocaust directly undermines the Second Coming.

These are just a few of the heart-searching questions and reflections that the book poses and addresses with utmost clarity, detailed thoroughness, and intellectual rigor. The book uncovers telling facts (the virulent anti-Semitism in the Koran), integrates biblical revelation with modern history (the Second Coming with the Holocaust), and penetrates mysteries (Satan's hellish role in World War II) that elude modern theologians and historians. It is a book of outstanding caliber, the epitome of both faith and reason at its highest.

Mitchell Kalpakgian, Ph.D.

*Mt. Royal Academy  
Sunapee, New Hampshire*

## Insight into Wilde's soul

THE UNMASKING OF OSCAR WILDE.

By Joseph Pearce (Ignatius Press, P.O. Box 1339, Ft. Collins, CO 80522, 2004); 1-800-651-1531; 412 pp. HB. \$19.95.

Distinguished classical scholar in his college days at Trinity College in Ireland; gifted poet, dramatist, and author of fairy tales like