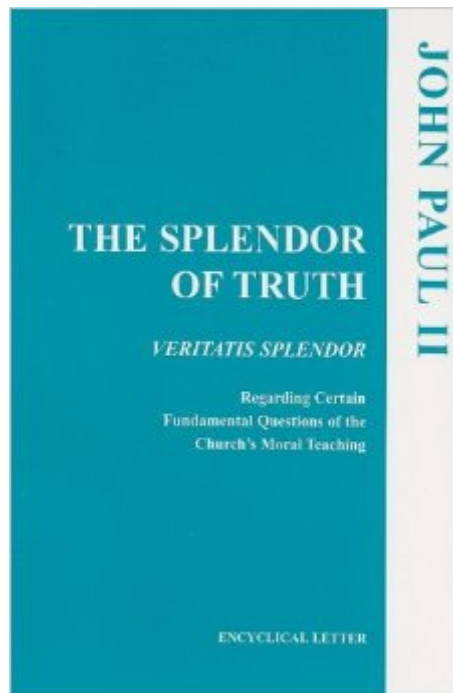


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Splendor Of Truth, The (United States Catholic Conference Publication)



Synopsis

Pope John Paul II proclaims a sense of urgency in challenging moral darkness with the light of truth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A few magnificent excerpts from *Veritatis Splendor* (1993): In his magnificent encyclical on moral theology, Pope John Paul II reminded us that we are "Called to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ...and are made holy by `obedience to the truth' (1 Pet 1:22)." JP II certainly acknowledged that "This obedience is not always easy. As a result of that mysterious original sin,...man is constantly tempted to turn his gaze away from the living and true God in order to direct it towards idols (cf. 1 Thes 1:9)...Man's capacity to know the truth is also darkened, and his will to submit to it is weakened. Thus, giving himself over to relativism and scepticism (cf. Jn 18:38), he goes off in search of an illusory freedom apart from truth itself. But no darkness of error or of sin can totally take away from man the light of God the Creator. In the depths of his heart there always remains a yearning for absolute truth and a thirst to attain full knowledge of it." In *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul II restated the Church's moral doctrine, while critiquing certain errors which have been put forth. As per its Introduction, "It is no longer a matter of limited and occasional dissent, but of an

overall and systematic calling into question of traditional moral doctrine....

In this highly complex encyclical, Pope John Paul sets out his moral vision for the good life, as well as correcting what he sees as serious errors in moral theology and the church's life. Despite the remarks of some other commentators to the contrary, I think it can be said that the focus of John Paul comes down more on the side of Duns Scotus than Aquinas - the way to human fulfilment is ultimately to obey the divine law, rather than following the virtuous life (though he more or less equates the two). John Paul's letter starts with the Gospel narrative of the rich young man who met Jesus. The young lawyer apparently asks Jesus what is necessary to attain eternal life. The reply is to follow the commandments, and then sell all you give, and follow me (become a disciple). The Gospel records the young man left sadly after hearing this response. John Paul's long reflection and meditation on the story might be seen as a 'Yes' to the first part of Jesus's answer - the pathway to life is to be found in obeying God's will, in the form of the law God has revealed to humanity. How is this law revealed and interpreted? The answer, according to the Pope, is of course firstly the Torah revealed in scripture (primarily in the Decalogue), then by Jesus (who is the embodiment of the law and also its fulfilment), and of course the authentic 'interpretation' of the content of the divine law by the authentic magisterium of the church. This is of course where John Paul's letter becomes controversial. As well as appearing to articulate and defend a divine command theory of ethics, John Paul also attacks what he sees as inauthentic dissent from church teaching in the moral sphere.

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