

A Catholic Response to the Jehovah's Witnesses

Jennifer Moorcroft

Westwood Books Publishing

(288pp)

978-1-64803-876-1

A Catholic Response to the Jehovah's Witnesses is a confident, faith-based guide that seeks to arm Catholics with knowledge that they can use when meeting Jehovah's Witness evangelizers.

Jennifer Moorcroft's perspective-driven religious handbook is designed to help Catholics counter the arguments of Jehovah's Witnesses with confidence.

Driven by personal experiences of having witnessed Catholics become Jehovah's Witnesses, and aiming to counter that, this book comes from the perspective that, while it's best to avoid engaging Jehovah's Witnesses when they appear at one's door, if they are invited in, one should be prepared to argue with them. It suggests that door-to-door Jehovah's Witness evangelizers are dogged, determined, and trained to seek out any signs of discontent. Without a confident grasp of Catholic teachings, the book warns, it is easy to be persuaded.

The book aims to arm people with the strategies necessary for resisting Jehovah's Witness evangelism and countering shared teachings. These include creating distance between the individual evangelizer and the organization; recognizing up front that Jehovah's Witnesses are trained to see counterarguments as coming from the devil; and knowing the Bible well enough to throw the evangelizer off. An acknowledgement that Catholics tend not to be "chapter and verse" Christians is made, but the book also states that Catholicism's liturgical cycle, which exposes Mass attendees to all of the books of the Bible, is beneficial. Its brief, thorough discussion of the criteria that went into canonization is a helpful exercise in apologetics, as is its explanation of the importance of the oral tradition in Catholicism.

The book includes a clear and easy-to-understand history of the Jehovah's Witnesses and their Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, including the sources of their teachings. It is compassionate in saying that Jehovah's Witnesses are controlled by fear, and with the suggestion that questioning published teachings merits removal from the fellowship and shunning. It contrasts this understanding with the assertion that Catholics can trace their teachings to the apostles. As a support, it encourages personal Bible reading and study. It also critiques the fact that Jehovah's Witness translators were not fluent in Hebrew or Greek, and asserts their translations are self-serving.

While it is assertive in defending Catholic teachings, the text also concedes that the Catholic Church is not perfect; it raises the example of sexual abuse by priests. But throughout, its clear statements, direct tone, and thorough approach make it easy to use for fellow Catholics, while its references to history and ample source list make it helpful to its target audience.

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KRISTINE MORRIS (December 23, 2021)

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