



COSMIC CHASTITY IN AN AGE OF TECHNOCRATIC LUST

A Song of Three Popes

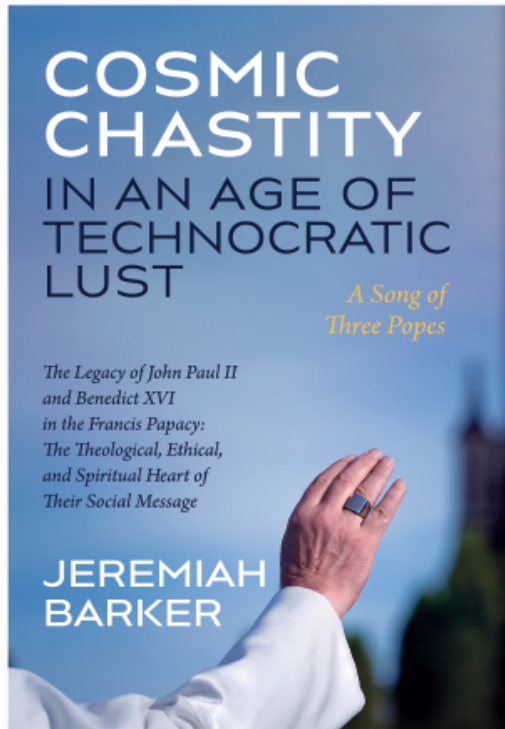
*The Legacy of John Paul II and Benedict XVI in the Francis Papacy:
The Theological, Ethical, and Spiritual Heart of Their Social Message*

JEREMIAH BARKER

This book arises from the conviction that the ways in which John Paul II and Benedict XVI were confused as allies with American conservatism is as misleading, unclear, and confusing as any misapprehension of Francis's genuine orthodoxy. As the author does not have a stake in reacting against a liberal Catholicism that he sees dying out anyway, the bigger threat, in his view, sociologically, for the North American church, is falling into a right-wing tribalism—and Francis resists precisely that.

First Things editor R. R. Reno, highly critical of Francis, has called for a redemption of hints and suggestions of a cogent argument in the Francis message. Jeremiah Barker reappropriates Reno's call as a call to draw out or highlight what he takes to be the underlying rationale of the Francis message. That underlying rationale, he compellingly argues, is strikingly identical to that of the two previous popes. Barker, who has learned much from Reno, is in fact inspired by Francis's call and teaching, and it is the aim of this book to draw out what inspires him and to identify what he hopes Reno and fellow 'John Paul II Catholics' don't miss in the Francis message: the theological, ethical, and spiritual core of his social teaching, which Francis shares with that of John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

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JEREMIAH BARKER is a lay member of Madonna House Apostolate in Combermere, Ontario, where he serves in the maintenance department and H.E.L.P. department (Heating, Electrical, Landscaping, and Plumbing) and in the sugar bush during the spring sap run. At Madonna House, he also oversees the vegetable processing operation in the evenings, is the housefather for the guests, and sings bass in the schola. He has contributed articles to *Communio* and *Plough*.

"For all the 'John Paul II Catholics' who have found the pontificate of Pope Francis to be trying times, here is a carefully reasoned and deeply pious invitation to see Francis differently. It should be welcomed by all who do not like the idea of trying to be more Catholic than the Pope. Jeremiah Barker does us a great service in this book, which will stand as one of the most insightful assessments of Francis's theology."

—**PHILLIP CARY**, editor, *Pro Ecclesia: A Journal of Catholic and Evangelical Theology*

"In a deeply polarized age where convinced positions tend to harden rather than listen, this *Song of Three Popes* is listening to the notes, augmenting the harmonies, and monitoring the dynamics of the melody, inviting Roman Catholics who uphold orthodoxy to do so with open ears. Catholic social teaching is well worth rescuing from the politics of the culture wars. This proposal offers a sound alternative."

—**ELLEN CHARRY**, emerita professor of theology, Princeton Theological Seminary

"Through the distorting lens of American politics, Pope Francis is often cast as an opponent to his predecessors, rather than their faithful heir. Jeremiah Barker's rich and insightful book shows this to be a profound misreading. Compellingly written and theologically profound, *Cosmic Chastity* beckons us away from the siren call of technocratic consumerism to hearken to a different melody: the song of creation-as-gift, one sung by Francis, Benedict XVI, and John Paul II in seamless harmony."

—**ABIGAIL FAVALE**, professor, McGrath Institute for Church Life, University of Notre Dame

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