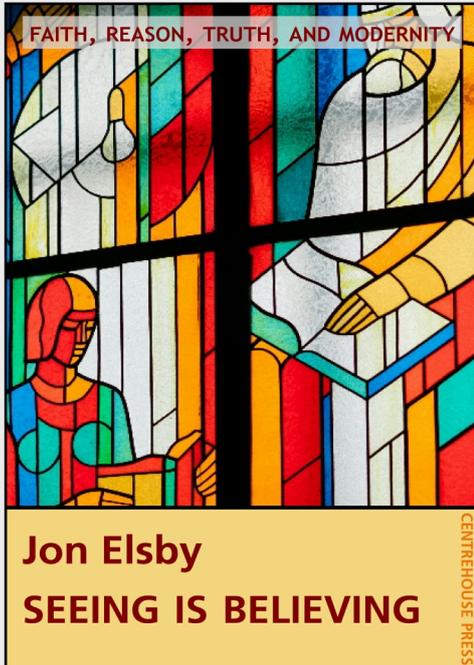


CentreHouse Press Ebooks

Seeing is Believing

Advance Information



Title Seeing is Believing

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Author Jon Elsby

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Category Theology

Who Will Buy This Book? Those with an interest in the practice of Catholicism and conversion

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The Book

Seeing is Believing develops themes touched on in an earlier book by the same author, *Coming Home* (also published by CentreHouse Press), but with greater focus on the relations between faith and culture, in the broadest sense. It's a crucially important issue for our time, addressed by several American apologists, though very few on the UK side of the Atlantic have shown much interest in it. In fact, British Catholics in general - both clergy and laity, with only a handful of exceptions - have been content, in recent years, to leave apologetics to the Americans.

Apologetics raises one fundamental question with the widest implications: exactly how do we form beliefs? Few people are argued into beliefs by any process of reasoning. Arguments are usually *ex post facto* rationalizations of beliefs that have already been arrived at on other grounds. They bolster beliefs, but do not cause us to hold them. The subject of belief - what it is, how it differs from knowledge, what the epistemological status of true beliefs is, and what precisely constitutes a ground or warrant for belief - has been much debated by philosophers, theologians, and others. Perhaps the most important questions are these:

How do we form beliefs? Why do people who are equally rational, equally intelligent, and equally well informed, differ so markedly over what to believe, over what to count as evidence, and over what evidence is deemed sufficient to warrant assent, or is deemed finally probative?

These are not easy questions, which perhaps cannot safely be entrusted to the speculations of the uninstructed. Nevertheless, the views of the laity have their place. They cannot claim any special authority, unlike the views of trained theologians or the Church's *magisterium*, and they must therefore be offered with a proper degree of humility. But, if theology is, as Chesterton said, merely the application of thought to religion, then it is the responsibility of all Christians to engage in theology to the best of their ability, while bearing in mind that their opinions, however sincerely held, are as fallible as the next person's. The ultimate folly is to suppose that anyone, including oneself, possesses a monopoly of truth, wisdom, or rationality.

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