

Book Review of *The Catechism of Hockey*

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The Catechism of Hockey by Alyssa Bormes (2013) American Chesterton Society Books, pp. 203.

“This is a right wing book. Of course, it is also a left wing book. And a center book. And don’t forget the two defense men and the goalie. The whole team is represented in these pages. Even the referee. And the commissioner. You will think about them all in a new way, even while you think about them in the same way.” (Pg IX)

Thus, Dale Ahlquist, the President of the American Chesterton Society provided a first paragraph of the foreword following a quotation from G.K. Chesterton in allusion to rules of sports being analogues to spiritual rules of life.

My skepticism turned to amusement and then to delight. And then to a thankful understanding of spirituality reinforced, page after page, of illuminating insights at every level of not only sports, but found also applicable to the rules of science governing the universe.

This book gives basic understandable “metaphors for life”—a phrase I often use now in discussions of the great gaps in education of our children. I learned this while standing in a long line for over one hour. I muttered, “Patience is a virtue.” And the two young men in front of me asked “What does that mean?” They were serious. I did my best to explain both “virtue” and “patience” as both affirmed that they had never heard of either. It dawned on me that schools, especially public schools, probably consider “virtue” as “preaching,” which is not allowed, as I understand it. So, I began to wonder how to teach, not preach, the basic virtues of the Greeks: prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. Just the knowledge of such virtues might provide behavioral metaphors to the violence, disgust, uncivil and unnatural preaching from our contemporary press and media.

Without a doubt, *The Catechism of Hockey* provides sports metaphors for living. The book is a remarkable irrefutable sports paradigm for the good life, naturally Catholic. It uplifts life to full humanity with attention to written and unwritten rules. It helps one understand that playing the transcendent “game” is a deep engagement in the spiritual process in which we are engulfed. This book brings such awareness to anyone lucky enough to read it. Quite frankly, it is a must read for every youth whether they play hockey or not. Getting into sports as participant or spectator will become a deeper metaphor for all living.

Opinion

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Dr. Samuel A Nigro M.D.*

Retired, Assistant Clinical Professor Psychiatry, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, USA

***Corresponding author:** Dr. Samuel A Nigro M.D, Retired, Assistant Clinical Professor Psychiatry, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, 2517 Guilford Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118, USA, Tel: 216 932-0575; Email: sam@docnigro.com

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