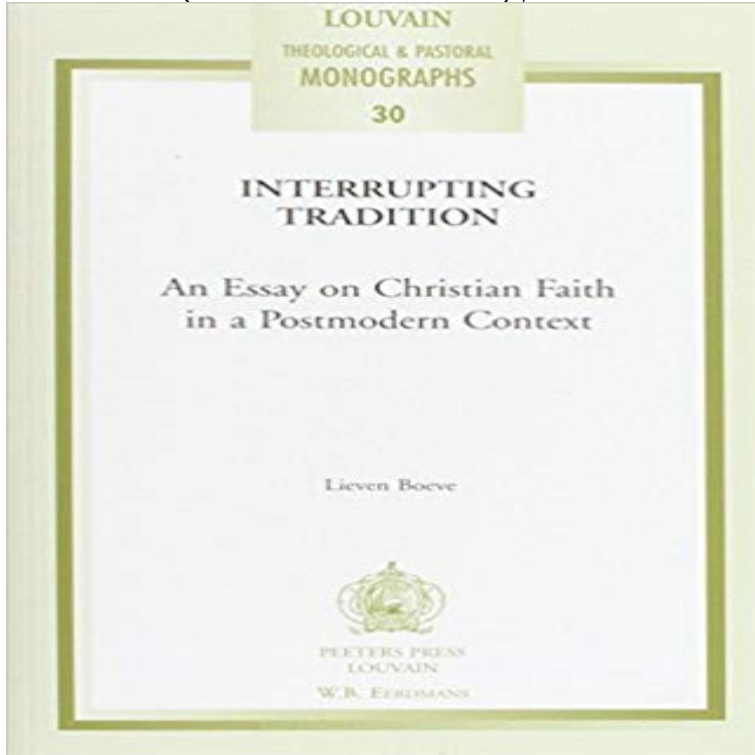


## Interrupting Tradition: An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context (Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs, 30)



Not so long ago it would have been fair to say that the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith determined human life and social existence, more or less unquestioned, in Flanders and in a large part of Western Europe. The Catholic faith community in Flanders today, however, is struggling with the fact that the transmission of the Christian tradition has been flagging in recent years. This has not only led to diminished faith engagement and a massive decline in church attendance, it has also had its effects in the cultural domain: culture has become de-traditionalised; traditional Christian culture is worn out. Even convinced Christians are having problems reflecting on the plausibility of their faith, precisely because of the chasm that has opened up between faith and culture. The author of the present study argues that every new context challenges the Christian tradition to recontextualise its presentation of meaning and purpose in a cogent and credible fashion. Christians today do themselves a disservice when they withdraw into a world of absolute self-justification. At the same time, however, the author avoids any form of appeal for an extensive adaptation to the postmodern context. Only a new dialogue between tradition and culture, respectful of (and indeed thanks to) the growing division between both, can claim to offer a future. The author provides a pithy description of the vicissitudes of the Christian tradition in modernity and postmodernity. Against this background, he attempts to clarify the situation in which the Christian tradition finds itself today. The second part of the book is devoted to an analysis of the actual context with a view to establishing points of intersection on the basis of which the dialogue between faith and culture may be revived. The third part of the book endeavours to provide this dialogue with concrete form. The reader is introduced to a challenging image of Jesus, an image that

is contextual and theologically motivated, prior to being invited by the author into a reopened reflection on God. The volume concludes by drawing renewed attention to the place of the Christian faith in relation to the other world religions. Christians do indeed have the capacity to reflect on their faith in a credible and relevant manner in relation to the actual context in which they find themselves and without relapsing into the extremes of traditionalism or relativism. Lieven Boeve is professor of Fundamental Theology at the Faculty of Theology, K.U.Leuven (Belgium). He is also co-ordinator of the research group Theology in a postmodern context.

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