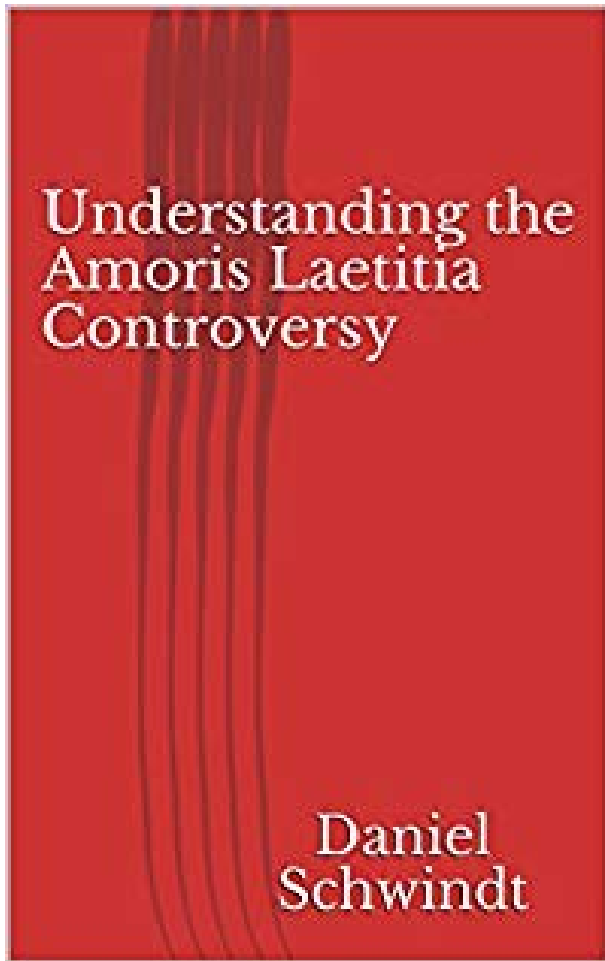


# Understanding the Amoris Laetitia Controversy



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As children of liberal democracies, we struggle to regard our leaders with anything other than the habitual skepticism with which experience has taught us to regard our own politicians. This pessimistic attitude toward authority presents a serious problem for Catholics, because as Catholics we owe the Church, and in particular the Holy Father, a degree of filial trust. It is, at least in part, this sort of inherited attitude of insubordination that has given rise to so much confusion surrounding the publication of Amoris Laetitia, and, for that matter, Pope Francis in general. He has divided Catholics since he took his office, and it says more about us than about him that we are so easily divided. In this essay Daniel Schwindt, author of Catholic Social Teaching: A New Synthesis, explains that Amoris Laetitia is a powerful pastoral document, and while it does not change either discipline or doctrine--as this essay will show--it does attempt to nudge the Church in a more dynamic, human direction in accordance with the "theology of encounter."