

Book Reviews

“Modus et Forma”: A New Approach to the Exegesis of Saint Thomas Aquinas with an Application to the *Lectura super Epistolam ad Ephesios* by Christopher T. Baglow (*Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2002*), 290 pp.

THE SCOPE and aim of this volume by Christopher T. Baglow is neatly displayed in the subtitle: We are given here a new approach to the study of Aquinas’s exegesis, and this new approach will be tested by a thorough review of Thomas’s lectures on Ephesians. Baglow engages his subject with vigor and confident argumentation. Noting that a great deal of attention has been given to Aquinas as an exegete *in theory*, he bemoans the fact that “the biblical commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas remain largely unexamined even while existing in an atmosphere in which they are often recalled, extolled and recommended” (7). By examining the actual text of Thomas’s commentary on Ephesians in some detail, Baglow hopes to exemplify a new approach to Aquinas’s exegesis marked by attention to particular and local detail, rather than by broad, general theoretical conclusions. In his own words: “I propose to consider Thomas Aquinas not as a theoretical exegete primarily, but as a Pauline exegete; specifically as a Pauline exegete of the text of Ephesians” (9). The benefit of such an approach, Baglow tells us, is that we are able to see how Aquinas handles particular texts, which then supply us with new and fresh insights into Aquinas’s overall thought. For Baglow, the unique value of the biblical commentaries lies just here: Due to the given contours of the biblical text, they afford “certain surprises” and novel points of departure that often do not appear in Thomas’s systematic theological works.

Modus et Forma is in fact a study of two distinct but closely related topics. The first is a systematic and comprehensive approach to Thomas’s biblical commentaries; the second is a study of Thomas’s ecclesiology as found in his commentary on Ephesians. The marriage of these two in one study is directly to the author’s purpose. For Baglow, if we are to read Thomas’s commentaries profitably, we must attend both to the structure

of Thomas's exegesis and to the primary theological content within the commentary. This is precisely how Baglow orders his study. The Introduction very capably outlines the question and lays down the key arguments. In chapters 1 through 3, Baglow undertakes the systematic treatment of Thomas's biblical exegesis in three stages: (1) the foundations of Thomas's exegesis; (2) contemporary criticism of Thomas's exegesis; and (3) the author's own proposal for a systematic study of Thomas's biblical commentaries. In chapters 4 through 6, Baglow applies his own approach to the Commentary on Ephesians: (1) a pre-analysis of the Commentary; (2) a study of *In Eph.* 1–3; and (3) a study of *In Eph.* 46. In the closing chapter, the author sums up the contributions the study has made both to an understanding of Thomas's ecclesiology and to a better grasp of the value of his biblical commentaries for us today.

There is a vast amount of ground covered in this study, and it is perhaps best to identify and evaluate certain noteworthy conclusions that Baglow draws in the course of it. Concerning Thomas's exegesis, Baglow makes two primary arguments that call for our attention. The first is his claim that Thomas is better suited to expound biblical texts that are already theological and analytical in form (e.g., Job, John, and the Pauline epistles). Conversely, Thomas is less impressive when handling historical or narrative texts (e.g., the Synoptic Gospels). The difference here is not one of exegetical method, according to Baglow; rather, the difference lies within Thomas himself: He is an analytical thinker and is at his best when handling analytical texts that present theological arguments and conclusions. "This search reaffirmed the judgment that the commentaries on Job, John, and Paul are of a higher quality than the rest, revealing a certain presuppositional bias on Thomas's part for conceiving of Scripture in a non-narrative way" (51). Baglow's case is persuasive, though it would be well for scholars to test this conclusion by further attention to Thomas's commentaries, in order to evaluate how accurate and thoroughgoing this conclusion actually is.

The second key argument concerning Thomas's exegesis, stated in the Introduction, is that the unique contribution of Thomas's biblical commentaries resides not so much in general exegetical method but in the particular conclusions that arise because of the contours of biblical material. In other words, it is in the concrete details of the individual commentaries, rather than in the general principles abstracted from them all, that we grasp the true value of the commentaries. Baglow does not dismiss the value of identifying and appreciating Thomas's exegetical method in general—in fact he invests significant time in describing this—but he presses us to move from general theory to the specific text

to actual exegetical practice. This is, perhaps, the most significant contribution of the volume: the actual display of how one can go about a thorough exegetical study of one of Thomas's commentaries, and how one can draw from it potentially important theological insights that serve to complement Aquinas's wider corpus. Baglow accomplishes this goal with considerable skill.

When we turn to the subject of ecclesiology, Baglow draws out many and various insights from the pages of Thomas's *Commentary on Ephesians*, which confirm and expand what we know of Thomas's ecclesiology from the *Summae*. But Baglow identifies one insight in particular as the most novel and significant. Following the contours of Ephesians 2:14–16 closely, Thomas offers what Baglow calls an anthropocentric account of the unity of the Church, in which unity between Jew and Gentile is the prerequisite for unity with God:

Once again we encounter the unexpected; Thomas not only posits that peace with God depends on peace with neighbor, but goes so far as to say that the action of God in uniting the two peoples is prior to (and necessary for) unity with God. There is no doubt that the text of Ephesians leads Thomas to a whole new conception of reconciliation in this case—because the text posits a unity in one body prior to a unity with God, Thomas does the same. (178)

For Baglow, this conclusion is immensely significant. What the text of Thomas's *Commentary on Ephesians* shows is that, for Thomas, the *origination of ecclesial unity*—which Thomas names as the theme of this commentary—is grounded in a “peace between fellows as the basis for the Church's witness, increase, and final destination.” And this is true of the Church, “not just at its beginning but at every stage of its pilgrimage through history” (230–31).

While acknowledging the overall excellence of this volume and its contribution to the study of Thomas's exegesis and ecclesiology, I would raise four queries concerning the author's conclusions. The first, a minor point, concerns the ironic contrast between the simplicity Baglow recommends when handling Aquinas's exegesis and the actual complexity of his own account. Baglow very rightly counsels the contemporary commentator on Aquinas to avoid “a commentary on the commentary,” and to simplify the often excessively ordered treatment by Aquinas (101). But the author's own method for studying Aquinas, developed in Chapter 3, is itself quite complex, and it left this reviewer paging back and forth in the attempt to follow the stages of his study (e.g., the outline of his treatment on 139). While such a complex method may be

justifiable, Baglow's own study of the text at times belies the simplicity that he recommends.

A second query concerns what Baglow calls Aquinas's "homogenizing exegesis." By this he means Thomas's tendency to treat the Bible as a monolithic source, and to link two or more passages together in a way that flattens the particular quality of each of them (62). While modifying the critique offered by C. Clifton Black, Baglow does concede that Aquinas succumbs to homogenizing exegesis, and that this is in fact a "dangerous practice in exegesis" (65). I wonder if this is conceding too much to the contemporary preoccupation with distinctiveness, to the detriment of what Aquinas (and in fact all the Fathers) can teach us about the fundamental unity of the biblical witness. Granted, Aquinas and his fellow medievals do not normally identify the particularity of a given passage in ways that modern criticism has enabled us to do—and here modern exegetical practice has something very valuable to offer. But I would suggest that reading one passage in the light of another, without always noting the distinctiveness, is not a dangerous exegetical practice. It is, rather, a right and proper theological reading by the Christian believer, a reading that recognizes and displays the fundamental unity of the biblical witness. If contemporary scholarship has equipped us to recognize the particularity and distinctiveness of the discrete biblical witnesses, perhaps Aquinas can show us how this distinctiveness serves a greater unity, and can teach us how to read the various scriptural witnesses as mutually illuminating.

My third query arises from Baglow's brief comment on the relationship between the biblical commentaries and other works of Aquinas, particular the *Summae*. While admitting that recourse to other works of Aquinas is often justified when trying to understand a given biblical commentary, he cautions against "the tendency to use the synthetic works (i.e., the *Summae*) as primary interpretive guides—these are not necessarily the best works for this activity, especially in the case of the Pauline commentaries" (107). It would have been helpful at this point for Baglow to offer further argumentation for this claim. He rightly insists that "the commentary itself must be given pride-of-place," but does this mean that the *Summae* cannot serve as important guides for understanding the biblical commentaries? I would suggest a somewhat different way of stating the relationship between Thomas's biblical commentaries and the *Summae*. While giving each its own proper interpretation, and recognizing the distinctive genre of each type of writing, they are best viewed as mutually illuminating and complementary. Each is *better* grasped by reading the other. As with the biblical texts mentioned above, the purpose

of recognizing distinctiveness in Thomas's works is most profitably ordered toward the good of grasping a greater and fuller unity of his thought as a whole. I doubt that Baglow would disagree with this in principle, but his brief comment on the relationship between the biblical commentaries and the *Summae* emphasizes distinction rather than complementary unity.

The final query concerns Baglow's primary conclusion on Thomas's ecclesiology, namely, that in his commentary on Ephesians 2:1–16, Thomas forges "a very new conception of the Church" (180) that contains "a preeminently anthropocentric refashioning of the process of salvation by Thomas. . . . In this sense it is in the hands of the Jewish and Gentile converts whether Church unity is instituted" (250). Drawing the implications of this, Baglow concludes that, "In the *lectura* Thomas is willing to 'go the distance' with Paul, even to the point that he reverses his usual order of theological priority so as to allow human reconciliation and unity pride-of-place, even over sanctification" (274). And he suggests that one implication of this is that "the soul must seek union with neighbor prior to seeking union with God" (268).

It is difficult to see how these conclusions can be drawn from Aquinas's text itself. Thomas does follow the plain order of the biblical account, "that he [Christ] might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross" (Eph 2:15–16). But Thomas is also very clear that this is all accomplished by Christ himself in his self-offering to the Father. As he says, "whatever peace we possess is caused by Christ himself" (2.5.103). In other words, the origination of ecclesial unity is found in the Person of Christ himself, in the one act by which he united us in himself and reconciled us in himself to the Father. It is a *Christological* origination of unity, not an anthropocentric one—except insofar as he is uniting divided *humanity* in himself. It is not as if unity originated in the reconciliation of peoples first, with ourselves as individuals somehow involved in this, and then we were reconciled to God. Christ accomplished all this in himself in his one sacrificial act. For Thomas, we as individuals were only brought into this reconciliation when it was already fully accomplished in Christ. Though we do play a definite role in maintaining "the unity in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3), it is not within our capability to contribute to the *origination* of unity in the Church. Baglow's conclusion about the anthropocentric locus of the Church, in which human reconciliation in some sense precedes reconciliation with God—whatever its merits might be otherwise—does not easily square with Aquinas's commentary itself.

Notwithstanding these queries, Chris Baglow has given us a very fine and detailed study of Aquinas's exegesis and his teaching on the Church from the *lectura* on Ephesians, and it is warmly recommended as advancing our understanding of how The Angelic Doctor can enrich our understanding of the mystery of the faith. N.V

Daniel A. Keating
Sacred Heart Major Seminary
Detroit, Michigan

Kirche in der postmodernen Welt by Andreas Eckerstorfer (*Innsbruck-Vienna: Tyrolia Verlag, 2001*), 403 pp.

THIS IS THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION at the University of Salzburg of Andreas Eckerstorfer, now Frater Bernhard, OSB, of Kremuenster, Austria. The topic is postmodern ecclesiology as exemplified and articulated in the theology of the emeritus Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology at Yale Divinity School, George Lindbeck. Lindbeck is Lutheran, Eckerstorfer is Catholic, and one of those to whom the book is dedicated is Geoffrey Wainwright, who is Methodist. The book, quite rightly, has a very strong and informed ecumenical feel to it, and it is warmly recommended for advanced work in courses in ecclesiology or modern theological thought.

The first section of the book, pages 26 to 69, is taken up with the relationships between "Church" and "World," as a backdrop to Lindbeck's theology and ecclesiology. The line is traced from Schleiermacher to Lindbeck, but it is "eine kurze Problemgeschichte." Eckerstorfer carefully makes his way, but painting with broad brushstrokes, from Schleiermacher through Albrecht Ritschl to Karl Barth; and then from Paul Tillich through Dietrich Bonhoeffer and various secular/death of God theologians to the so-called "Yale School," associated in the main with the late Hans Frei and George Lindbeck. At the end of the book, pages 362 to 363, Eckerstorfer provides a sketch of the Yale School, reaching out to sympathetic theologians elsewhere. He deals with Schleiermacher's 1799 *Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, admittedly a seminal text, but even though the treatment must necessarily be kurz, one misses something of the magnificent sweep of what Schleiermacher is up to in the later and comprehensive *The Christian Faith* (1821–22). This seems to me a not unimportant lacuna given the relationship between Schleiermacher and the ecclesiology of Johann A. Möhler, the Catholic Tübingen theologian. After all, ecclesiology is the subject, and in Schleiermacher–Möhler, though differently, we find the emergence of communion ecclesiology

that is omnipresent in contemporary treatments. The treatment of Barth is much better, though here also one does not read about the *Church Dogmatics*, but about a mediated version of Barth—though a very fine mediation—through such contemporary systematicians as the Scots Presbyterian, Alasdair Heron, and the American Lutheran, Robert Jenson.

The second section of the book, pages 70 to 236, is devoted to “George Lindbeck on the Church in Today’s World,” and here Eckerstorfer really comes into his element. The structure, the analysis, and the detail of this section easily make it the best part of the book. There are too many good things here to note, and so only a few that especially appealed to me will be picked out for comment. Eckerstorfer avoids the temptation immediately to attend to Lindbeck’s very influential book of 1984, *The Nature of Doctrine*, but rather traces with great care his involvement as a Lutheran theologian in two phases of ecumenical dialogue: first, as an observer at Vatican II, and subsequently his role in the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogues in the United States. Lindbeck cannot be understood without this background in ecumenical conversation. Indeed, it was his very participation in ecumenism that propelled him into an exploration of the meaning of doctrine, and of the presuppositions different theologians brought to the enterprise. For one who is coming new to Lindbeck’s theology this is an excellent analytical account. With the same care Eckerstorfer moves on to *The Nature of Doctrine*. He provides an equally excellent account of Lindbeck’s three types of approach to Christian doctrine: the cognitive-propositional, the experiential-expressive, and the cultural linguistic models. In respect to the latter, he demonstrates his awareness of the foundations of Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic approach—a.k.a. “postliberal” approach—not only in the neo-orthodoxy of Karl Barth but also in the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein and the cultural anthropology of Clifford Geertz. His treatment of the regulative function of doctrine on pages 124 to 128 is a model of precision. For Lindbeck, Church doctrines are rules of speech, a second-order use of language, that regulate and direct the community’s beliefs and practices. Appropriate connection is made with Hans Frei’s postcritical approach to scriptural interpretation, from *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* to the posthumously published *Theology and Narrative*. Not only is Eckerstorfer quite at home in the theology of Lindbeck and Frei, he is thoroughly immersed in and familiar with the secondary literature also.

In 1970 Lindbeck wrote of the Church: “There are good empirical reasons for believing that Christians will be a minority (a ‘diaspora’) of declining numbers and influence in the foreseeable future. The world will be served by their *diakonia* and witness, but many will be hostile and the

Church's income and membership may well decline. It is simply impossible to argue persuasively for the Church's secular mission, as the incarnationalist tends to do, on the grounds that this is a means of converting the world and making it explicitly Christian."¹ Here may be found the nucleus of Lindbeck's postliberal ecclesiology, in reaction to conciliar and postconciliar theologians such as Karl Rahner. This ecclesiology has become known, not entirely unfairly as *sectarian*, over against an incarnationalist or correlationalist perspective. It is finely outlined by Eckerstorfer on pages 283 to 298, along with the standard critiques of this ecclesiology. Further, he relates to such other so-called "sectarian" ecclesiologists as Stanley Hauerwas of Duke University. Having spent some time studying theology at Duke Divinity School, Eckerstorfer is well placed to comment with accuracy, and he does so.

In my judgment, Eckerstorfer establishes in his description of Lindbeck the weaknesses of second-rate incarnationalist or correlationalist theologies and ecclesiologies, which tend down to downplay the rich Christian tradition in a reductionist fashion. However, whether Lindbeck's, and perhaps Eckerstorfer's, perspective stands up to Rahner himself (as incarnationalist) or David Tracy (as correlationalist) is another question. It seems to me that they have the upper philosophical hand without which theology and ecclesiology are impossible. Finally, one must choose between a postliberal theology and some form of correlationalist theology, and their consequent ecclesiologies. My sympathies lie with the correlationalists for the simple reason that postliberal theology necessarily rests, it seems to me, on a form of theological positivism. If a theology or ecclesiology is dependent on my recognition of its value, in however minimalist a fashion, then a move has been made toward correlationalism from postliberalism. But to plot this further would take us from a review of an excellent expository book on George Lindbeck into the murkier realms of philosophical theology. N V

Owen F. Cummings
Mount Angel Seminary
St. Benedict, Oregon

Thomas Aquinas: Theologian of the Christian Life by Nicholas M. Healy (*Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003*) xiii + 168 pp.

FERGUS KERR RECENTLY noted that the book market is flooded with new introductions to St. Thomas Aquinas. I wish to propose that Nicholas

¹ Lindbeck, *The Future of Roman Catholic Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 45. [See page 3 of review]

Healy's work has a number of virtues that make it well worth choosing from amongst the crowd. Healy uses a rather impressive power of synthesis and a lucidity of style to guide the student of Aquinas away from the still-common misconception of Thomas's thought as a dry Aristotelian philosophy detached from history. Instead, the author moves the reader toward the vision of a theology that has deep roots in Scripture, a biblical hermeneutics centered on the doctrines of the Trinity and Christ, and the sole aim of Christian discipleship and evangelization.

The book includes a brief overview of Thomas's life and a short history of Thomism (Chapter 1); a summary of St. Thomas's religious context and an interpretation of his doctrine of the nature of theology (Chapter 2); approaches to knowledge of God's existence, divine naming, the Trinity, and creation (Chapter 3); an overview of Thomas's Christology (Chapter 4); a summary of the doctrines of grace, merit, and the theological virtues (Chapter 5); and an overview of the key elements in the Christian response to the call to follow Christ, including the law, virtue, the nature of human action, the sacraments, and the Church (Chapter 6).

Healy's brief introduction to the life of St. Thomas in Chapter 1 focuses on the work of a *magister in sacra pagina*. He argues that Thomas's *Summae* must be read in light of his Scripture commentaries. These manifest the biblical roots of theological positions that the scholastic question format of the *Summa theologiae* or the organization of the *Summa contra Gentiles* may often obscure. Furthermore, the commentaries on philosophical works like Aristotle's *Metaphysics* must be read in the context of Aquinas's apostolic and theological aims (2–5). Healy also highlights the pastoral and evangelical aims of the *Summa theologiae*.

The author's opposition to neo-Thomistic approaches (i.e., late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Thomism) is present throughout the book. He also offers a critique of contemporary Thomists who continue to maintain a strict distinction between faith and reason, between theology and philosophy. The author is convinced that Thomas has no philosophy that is independent of Scripture (ix–x, 5). A short history of Thomism focuses on the tendency to separate theology and Scripture (Capreolus) or grace and nature (Cajetan, Suarez) (11–14).

Chapter two begins with a fine introduction to the Dominican Order and St. Thomas's defense thereof. This allows Healy to highlight the richly contemplative, liturgical, pastoral, evangelical, and biblical environment in which Thomas taught and wrote. Healy shows that critiques of Aquinas's thought as detached from history and daily Christian life are themselves ahistorical in their understanding of the Angelic Doctor. Thomas's theology explicates the way to lovingly follow and obey Jesus Christ.

The author then offers a marvelous synthesis of Aquinas's theological method. Instead of simply reviewing the major conclusions of the *Summa's* first question, Healy takes a more sophisticated approach. First, the author points to Thomas's theological practice to argue that the most important conclusions in the science of theology are provided by Scripture and the Councils. Thus, one of Thomas's major tasks as a theologian will be to make these conclusions intelligible. Thomas's own conclusions do not attain the same level of certitude as those of Scripture or the Councils. This prevents any authentic Thomism from ever claiming to have arrived at the last word on a topic in theology and respects the legitimate plurality within theology. It also explains the significance of the argument from fittingness. Aquinas's sharp distinction between fittingness and necessity manifests his rather limited confidence in the power of theological reason, especially in comparison to other great scholastics like St. Anselm. Second, the author looks to the context of the *Summa's* direct treatment of sacred doctrine to remind the reader that the knowledge (*scientia*) of God whose participation makes scientific theology possible is mediated by the Incarnate Word through the witness of Sacred Scripture. The "treatise on Christ" in the *tertia pars* is thus not an appendix added to the *Summa's* other parts but essential to the whole work. The distinction between the Word and the witness of the Word also differentiates Aquinas from fundamentalism. Finally, the author presents an excellent introduction to Thomas's biblical hermeneutics. For Aquinas, the literal sense is above all the meaning intended by God, and only secondarily the one intended by the human author. Thomas is also quite comfortable with multiple and incompatible interpretations of Scripture that do not threaten the essentials of the faith.

Chapter three begins with an explanation of the famous five ways to God's existence, followed by an interpretation of the doctrine of transcendence. Here the author emphasizes Thomas's negative theology and his rejection of a human concept of divine being (a Scotistic doctrine that many theologians continue to attribute to Aquinas). Healy insists that Scripture and the Creed continually guide the narrative of the *Summa theologiae* on these issues (59). This is a crucial interpretive move that allows him to argue that Karl Rahner's critique of Aquinas's doctrine of the Trinity misses the mark, since Thomas's theology is never detached from salvation history (69–70).

Chapter four begins with a beautiful synthesis of the doctrines of the Trinity and creation. Following the lead of Gilles Emery, the author gives an exposition of the intimate connections between the life of the immanent Trinity, the nature of God's creative act, and the structures of creation

and salvation history. This provides the ideal background for an impressive introduction to Aquinas's Christology. Healy demonstrates the many delicate balances that Thomas strikes: between justice (recompense for sin) and the manifestation of divine love as the reason for the Incarnation, between an explication of Chalcedon and the narrative of salvation history in the *tertia pars*, between Christ's divinity and the real instrumentality of his humanity (especially in the later Aquinas), and between Christ as viator and Christ as *comprehensor*. Healy even follows the structure of the *tertia pars* in his own method of presentation by concluding with the major events in the life of Christ as seen by St. Thomas.

Chapter five offers a masterful introduction to Thomas's teaching on grace and merit. The integration of Christology and pneumatology, the careful balance between the gratuity of grace and the real merit of eternal life, and the distinction between habitual and actual grace are all very impressive. Healy concludes with "Life in the Body of Christ" (Chapter 6). He shows that law and freedom are not in competition. He then offers excellent summaries of Thomas's teaching on the sacraments and the cardinal virtues. Finally, the author emphasizes the importance of obedience to Christ and his Church.

Overall, Healy's work is an impressive accomplishment. It is this general evaluation with which I wish to frame the following critiques. First, Healy's claim that Thomas's theological method does not depend "upon philosophical principles that could stand apart from Scripture" (x) seems hard to reconcile with Aquinas's own conclusions about the ability of ungraced natural reason. Thomas clearly acknowledged that natural theology can have knowledge of God and some of his attributes (*ST I*, q. 1, a. 6; q. 12, a. 12). It seems that some of Thomas's foundational principles are attainable without supernatural revelation. Healy proposes that for Aquinas "the incarnate Word is the ground and norm of any analogy between God and creatures. Christ is the *analogia entis* in person." (83). But this sounds like Hans Urs von Balthasar or Karl Barth, and not at all like Aquinas. One has the sense that Healy is sometimes reading Aquinas as if he were Bonaventure. The emphasis on Scripture's central place in Aquinas's theology is a healthy corrective of neo-Thomism, but it seems that the author is sometimes overreacting to this outdated version of Thomism.

Second, Healy's interpretation of divine transcendence in Aquinas seems to go too far. The author states: "Although there is indeed some kind of analogy between divine cause and created effects, the analogy flows, so to speak, only one way, from God to creatures, but not at all the other way. One cannot establish any knowledge of God—even theological—by means of the *analogia entis* alone . . . the analogy of

being makes it possible to claim that only in knowing something of God can we really know *creatures* as they truly are, as created and thus as more than merely natural. Clearly that is a theological claim, one not grounded upon natural reason alone" (61). This is confusing at best. At worst, the statement tends toward a kind of agnosticism (which I do not think the author intended). If creaturely effects do not allow us to ascend toward an analogous knowledge of God, then we know nothing of God, and all theology is meaningless. But for Aquinas, "we know God insofar as he is represented in the perfections of creatures" (*ST I*, q. 13, a. 2, ad 3). The analogical knowledge of God that Thomas describes is precisely the kind that the author rejects. The phrase "God is only known from creatures" comes up so often in questions 12 and 13 of the *prima pars* that it is almost a kind of mantra. Healy's second claim, that the knowledge of things as created is strictly theological (he means theological in the strict sense of *sacra doctrina*), is also contradicted by St. Thomas, who was so firmly convinced that the existence of a Creator God could be proven by natural reason that he even attributed this teaching to Aristotle (*ST I*, q. 44, a. 1). Perhaps the root of the problem is Healy's virtual silence on St. Thomas's metaphysics. While he does discuss divine naming and some of the divine attributes, Healy virtually ignores the doctrines of act/potency, *esse/essentia*, participation, and the transcendentals. Yet, it is precisely his metaphysics that helped to make Thomas such a unique theologian. It was also an indispensable part of his biblical hermeneutics.

Finally, the author virtually skips Thomas's account of the soul in the *prima pars*, (questions 75–89). While he does devote some pages to Thomas's anthropology toward the end of the book, he never mentions the doctrine of the unicity of substantial form. Yet Thomas's first followers and critics recognized this to be one of his most unique contributions to theology, as is clear from the topic's dominance in the Correctory disputes of William de la Mare, Richard Knapwell, and other late thirteenth century friars. Healy also skips Thomas's controversial doctrines of Christ's body in the tomb, of the separated soul and its radically incomplete state, of the resurrection of the body, and other key theological issues that are intimately connected with the unicity of substantial form. Healy's overview of Aquinas's Christology thus remains somewhat unsatisfying, mainly because of what it is missing.

Still, Nicholas Healy deserves high praise for his engaging style and impressive synthetic abilities. He skillfully highlights many of the most important lessons in Thomas's rich theology and presents them in their historical context in a concise manner. This book is a delightful read that

takes many of Thomas's theological gems and weaves them into a beautiful tapestry. N-V

Bernhard Blankenhorn, OP
Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology
Berkeley, California

Women in Christ: Toward a New Feminism, edited by Michele M. Schumacher (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004*), xvi + 342 pp.

IN HIS ENCYCLICAL *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II calls on women to promote a "new feminism," one in which "a person is recognized and loved because of the dignity which comes from being a person and not from other considerations, such as usefulness, strength, intelligence, beauty, or health" (no. 99). Michele Schumacher has gathered in one collection an array of essays that will serve for years to come as a foundation on which to build the New Feminism. The contributors are competent and well-known scholars who seek to propose a viable alternative to patriarchy on one side, and mainstream feminism (in some ways, matriarchy) on the other, a feminism that will "forge a way through the impasse" that exists between the two competing ideologies by beginning with the concept of the dignity the human person, man and woman, made in the image and likeness of God.

In her Introduction, Schumacher warns the reader not to read too much into any author's use of the term "gender." Traditionally, mainstream feminists have used this term to describe that which is socially and culturally conditioned; the authors in this volume also use it to refer to metaphysical realities, or what is part of human nature itself. Schumacher admits it is "relatively impossible to draw a line between what, in sexual differences, is attributable to nature and what to education and culture." It is not surprising, then, that the majority of articles in the collection address anthropological issues. What exactly does it mean to be a woman, that is, a female person?

Part I contains essays on philosophical anthropology. Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz's "Gender Difference: Critical Questions concerning Gender Studies" addresses the issue of the role of the physical body when considering gender, offering the phenomenology of Edith Stein as a method which she claims respects both "being" a woman (by nature) and "becoming" a woman (by nurture). Sibylle von Streng also writes on Stein in "Woman's Threefold Vocation according to Edith Stein," using the essentialist and personalist aspects of her thought to discuss the original unity of the human vocation (to be in God's image, to multiply, and

to be master of the earth), the effect of sin on this unity, and the possibility of living an authentic life as human, woman, and individual.

Schumacher's own contribution to this section, "The Nature of Nature in Feminism, Old and New: From Dualism to Complementary Unity," gets to the heart of the New Feminism. Rejecting both a social construction of nature that denies sexual difference, and an essentialist view that could isolate the sexes from each other, she proposes a relational model of human nature, wherein one's personal good is achieved through participation in the common good (not against or in spite of it), opening up the possibility of men and women working together toward personal fulfillment.

In "New Feminism: A Sex-Gender Reunion," Beatriz Vollmer Coles provides a helpful overview of the progression of feminist thought, with special attention to the use of the term "gender." Pointing out some problems that result from separating sex and gender, she proposes an analogy between the body/soul relationship and the sex/gender relationship, with gender being the transcendental dimension of sex. Her essay concludes with Pope John Paul II's thought on the acting person, a theme taken up by Sr. Prudence Allen, RSM, in her essay, "Philosophy of Relation in John Paul II's New Feminism," in which she sets forth the personalism of John Paul II as the underlying source for the New Feminism. Allen's work in this field is unparalleled, and her two-volume *The Concept of Woman* is required reading in new feminist research. Relying heavily on *Evangelium Vitae*, she offers a comparison between the old and new feminisms, giving special attention to the soul/body relation and interpersonal relation.

Part II turns to the area of theological anthropology. Francis Martin, author of *The Feminist Question*, an essential work in response to modern Christian feminist thought, contributes "The New Feminism: Biblical Foundations and Some Lines of Development," in which he offers an exegesis on Genesis 1–3 and Ephesians 5:21–33, followed by some thoughts on how these texts understand the concepts of identity and difference, and that of relationality. In "Feminist Experience and Faith Experience," Schumacher takes up the question of the relationship between experience and faith, challenging the way traditional feminist theology has made use of women's experience as a foil against the objective dimension of faith, which it has deemed patriarchal and, therefore, wrong, in light of women's experience. Her aim is to appreciate both the objective and subjective aspects of faith, the experience of God and the *experience* of God, as she puts it, in such a way that, rather than being at odds with each other, together form a fullness of faith. One can see the

influence here of Martin's work on interpretation of experience.

In "The Unity of the Two: Toward a Feminist Sacramentality of the Body," Schumacher responds to the feminist challenge to an all-male priesthood. While traditional feminists deny any theological significance of the masculinity of Christ, she offers a sacramental understanding of the human body in general, followed by a sacramentality of male and female bodies, at the heart of which is the Bride/Bridegroom relationship. She relies heavily here on the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar and John Paul II. This section concludes with a piece by Anne-Marie Pelletier, "The Teachers of Man, for the Church as Bride," in which she also explores the idea of nuptiality, especially from a biblical perspective.

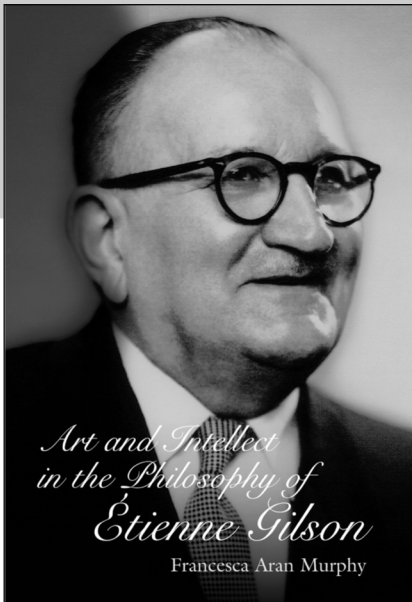
Part III considers ethical and practical consequences of the New Feminism. Allen's second contribution to the volume, "Can Feminism be a Humanism?," explores Renaissance, Enlightenment, Marxist, existential, pragmatic secular, and personalist humanism, and their influences on modern feminism. "Ethical Equality in the New Feminism," by Jean Bethke Elshtain, gives a brief description of the three models of relation found in feminist thought (sex polarity, sex unity, and sex complementarity), concluding with the value of John Paul II's Theology of the Body for the third. It is, in essence, a summary of Allen's work on the subject.

The final essays address some practical issues. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, author of *Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life*, notes in "Equality, Difference, and the Practical Problems of a New Feminism" that the problem to be dealt with at the practical level is the reconciliation between equality and difference. Though the New Feminists can theoretically reconcile the two and be confident that men and women are equal in the eyes of God while maintaining legitimate differences, it still needs to be seen how that will look in real life, and how the New Feminists will avoid falling into the practice of stereotyping. In "A Creative Difference: Educating Women," Marguerite Léna considers the meaning of the education of women in a world of coeducation.

Shumacher's aim in this collection is a theoretical one, laying a foundation for praxis. The contributors do not dismiss mainstream feminism, but engage it, and are even sympathetic to it when possible. Patriarchy is not denied or played down, but is acknowledged as a reality in need of response. The response of the new feminism, however, is not one of reverse domination, but of mutual respect for the dignity of the human person, male and female. It is in this respect that the New Feminism differentiates itself from mainstream feminism, without ignoring the legitimate concerns for women it has brought to light.

Women in Christ is an excellent resource for those interested in feminist issues, both in and beyond the Church. It also serves as an introduction to various scholars in what is a relatively new field of research, the New Feminism. Schumacher's own contributions are among the best in the collection. Though some essays overlap in content and cited sources, this proves helpful to the reader in becoming acquainted with seminal works in the field and in seeing an integrated picture of the New Feminism. An appendix containing a new feminist bibliography is also valuable. **N-V**

Carmina Magnusen Chapp
Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania



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