

Book Reviews

A Trinitarian Anthropology: Adrienne von Speyr and Hans Urs von Balthasar in Dialogue with Thomas Aquinas by Michele M. Schumacher (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014*), xii + 451 pp.

THERE HAS LONG BEEN appreciation of the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar, but lately there has been a growing criticism of his work, often by disciples of St. Thomas Aquinas. Adrienne von Speyr has received little attention in the discussion of Balthasar's work outside of the notes that critics have made that, at key, highly questionable points, Balthasar follows Adrienne. Adrienne von Speyr was a mystic whose works Balthasar, her spiritual director, editor, publisher, interpreter, and stenographer, considered more important than his own, and whose works he largely intended to translate into a more technical expression within his own oeuvre. In fact, Balthasar "maintained that 'her work and mine are neither psychologically nor philologically to be separated; two halves of a single whole'" (7).

Schumacher's book is a welcome addition that brings together Balthasar, Adrienne, and St. Thomas. The goal of this book is to present the theological anthropology of Adrienne in systematic terms supplied by Balthasar's own theological anthropology. By doing this, Schumacher wants to accomplish at least three things. First, she wants to show that Adrienne's mystical insights have theological value. Since Balthasar and Adrienne thought a mystic should be judged based almost entirely on objective content, Schumacher also intends to provide a basis for theologians to judge the objective value and the inspiration of Adrienne's works. Schumacher herself is convinced of their worth and authenticity, finding in her the genius that many think originates in Balthasar's work. Second, Schumacher aims to help readers of Balthasar be more aware of Adrienne's profound influ-

ence on him and to show their unity. Third, and finally, Schumacher intends to initiate a dialogue between disciples of Balthasar and those of St. Thomas. She does this by responding to Balthasar's critics (mostly Thomists) and by showing the harmony between the work of Balthasar and Adrienne, on the one hand, and Aquinas, on the other. She chose St. Thomas as an interlocutor largely because she is concerned with reconciling the doctrine of Balthasar and Adrienne with the Catholic theological tradition. Schumacher is suited well for this work, since she is both sympathetic with Balthasar and Adrienne and a diligent reader of St. Thomas with the aid of important Dominican theologians (Bernhard Blankenhorn, Gilles Emery, Jean-Pierre Torrell, and Michael Sherwin).

In the first chapter, Schumacher compares Aquinas's understanding of how analogy works in theology with Balthasar's and Adrienne's understanding, doing so by arguing for different but complimentary Trinitarian analogies: Aquinas using the psychological analogy and Balthasar/Adrienne using the analogy of freedom. In addition to using analogy, which is characteristic of Aquinas, Balthasar's perspective is often largely *katalogical*, "a perspective proceeding downward from the revealed archetype to the image" (15–16). Then, in chapters 2–6, Schumacher deals with a particular tension, a difference-in-unity that is found within the Balthasarian/Speyrian corpus. Tension (*Spannung*) is not meant to imply conflict, but rather "unity, communion and love," and it is ultimately resolved in the Trinitarian love of God (64). Seen from the perspective of Trinitarian love, the whole and, as a consequence, the inner coherence of the parts is made more manifest. It is not simply Trinitarian love, but "Trinitarian love in the form of the reciprocal surrender of the divine Persons" that sheds light on everything (375). "Surrender" renders the German *Hingabe* and means "an active letting go (or letting be) by way of a generous outpouring, as it were, or a passive but nonetheless willful letting be or letting go by way of availability, consent, and receptivity" (308). The Trinity itself, then, is a difference-in-unity and sheds light on the other differences-in-unities, and therefore the notion of surrender unites the various tensions, just as it does in the Trinity.

Chapter 2 concerns the tension between faith's objective content and the subjective act of faith and, within that the tension, between theology and prayer. Chapter 3 considers the difference-in-unity of nature and grace. Surprisingly, the consideration of nature and grace in this chapter is considered "not so much ontologically as vocationally: within, that is to say, the context of one's God-given

mission" (119). Here Schumacher brings to the fore the differences between Ignatian and Dominican spirituality. Chapter 4 elucidates the body–spirit difference-in-unity, outlining a theology of the body. In chapter 5, Schumacher considers the difference-in-unity of the individual and the community. Noticing a genuinely problematic notion in Balthasar's theology of redemption by substitution, she concludes by offering a re-interpretation of Adrienne's experiences on which Balthasar's teaching on Christ's abandonment by the Father are based. More faithful to Adrienne's experiences, she turns the abandonment of the Son by the Father into the rejection of God by sinners: the Son was "'abandoned' by the Father into the hands of those who will crucify him" (241). In fact, she finds that it is more faithful to Balthasar's own work of interpreting Adrienne's visions to find a better way to understand them in light of traditional doctrine. In chapter 6, Schumacher deals with the tension between man and woman. The sexual difference sheds light, through masculine and feminine forms of surrender, on the relationship of the Father and Son, as well as that of Creator and creature.

After considering the many differences-in-unities in chapters 2–6, Schumacher, in chapter 7, critically appraises Balthasar's own reading of Adrienne. In doing so, she outlines many of the Thomistic objections to his theology, especially on points where it is thought that Adrienne leads him astray. She proposes many objections (multiple wills in God [tri-theism]; receptivity, obedience, surrender, distance, and surprise in God; divine immutability; ability to distinguish the divine and human in Christ; nature as a vacuole for grace; descent into hell) and responds to them from the principles of Balthasar and Adrienne. She mostly does well articulating the objections, albeit in summary form, and she notes a potential point of contact or similar shared goal with the viewpoint of Aquinas.

However, she is not always altogether fair with regard to the objectors. Two examples should suffice. She attributes to Matthew Levering an interpretation of Balthasar that says the hypostatic union is an analogy for the Trinitarian union (319). However, there is no direct citation of Levering's supposed interpretation. The closest reference is to a chapter in which Levering's interlocutors are Reinhard Hüter, Norris Clarke, and John Zizioulas and the text directly cites no one other than Aquinas. Second, she faults Blankenhorn's interpretation of Balthasar's and Adrienne's teaching that Christ deposited or laid up his divinity in becoming man (321). But Blankenhorn merely quotes Balthasar on the matter and actually gives no comment one way or

the other as to whether he thinks Balthasar means this laying up of divinity in becoming man means Christ is no longer divine or is still divine in some way.

Moreover, at times, the response to Balthasar's critics are too brief and insufficient. She could have considered the texts and the metaphysics of Christ depositing his divinity in a deeper way. Even if Balthasar does not mean to suggest that Christ's depositing his divinity or laying up his divinity to the Father means that Christ is no longer divine (which is how Schumacher understands the objection), it does seem to suggest that Christ loses or refuses to "use" some divine characteristics (like knowledge: "his divine knowledge is 'laid up' with the Father out of obedience. 'Everything can be laid up with the Father except obedience itself'" (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 5, *The Last Act* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998], 259 [quoting Adrienne])). Her responses seem to show well how Balthasar would see himself fitting with Aquinas but are not sufficient to show the actual harmony. A deeper engagement with his interlocutors would be necessary to show such harmony. Nevertheless, she does indicate a way forward on many points, and to be fair, she recognizes her work as a beginning to this dialogue (it is a very serious beginning). Another reason some responses are too brief is that there are contradictory strains of thought in Balthasar whereby he holds both a traditional or Thomistic position and some novel position together. For example, in response to Steven A. Long's interpretation that, for Balthasar, nature is a vacuole for grace, Schumacher fails to account for the contradictory evidence in Balthasar (338). Long notes up front that Balthasar seems to affirm the truth of the matter at some points but deny it at other points. If Balthasar indeed says contradictory things, it is not a sufficient response to point to the traditional or Thomistic strain of thought to show that Balthasar is in fact harmonious with the tradition of St. Thomas.

She not only responds to the Thomistic critics in this chapter but also takes issues with interpreters of Balthasar who, to her mind, falsely attribute to him doctrines that are clearly problematic in light of Aquinas, such as Nicholas Healy's understanding that God is receptive of creatures (317). She does not, however, spend much space defending her position on Balthasar vis-à-vis other interpreters at this point.

Finally, in the extensive conclusion, she invites disciples of Balthasar and St. Thomas to dialogue. She issues two challenges,

one to the disciples of Balthasar and the other to his Thomistic critics. The disciples of Balthasar are challenged to consider “the often very pointed and well-placed questions of his critics—most of which address (at least indirectly) his appropriation of Adrienne’s experiences or teaching” (394). The major issue that Balthasarian scholars need to contend with, according to Schumacher, is the quantity of images and metaphors in the teaching of Balthasar and Adrienne, many of which seem to be at odds with Catholic teaching. Therefore, in order to situate the Balthasarian teaching within the tradition, it is necessary for these metaphors and images to be articulated with metaphysical terms. It is not sufficient to refer to it as a mystery whenever such metaphors or images are criticized. Metaphor is helpful for the handing on and receiving the faith, but it cannot be used as an explanation of faith. The Church in fact uses “metaphysical language . . . for expressing and preserving the doctrinal truths of her faith” (382). Her choice of Thomism as a dialogue partner is in fact also due to its metaphysical precision, which is the precise thing lacking in Balthasar and Adrienne according to many critics.

Schumacher’s own work in this book begins to render the images given by Balthasar and Adrienne a better metaphysical foundation so as to clear away any misunderstandings. Balthasar himself, Schumacher argues, would support such a cause, since he recognized the need for metaphysics. Moreover, this purging or purifying of certain images or concepts that lead to misunderstanding would serve Balthasar’s theology well, especially with respect to those aspects of his thought that seem to be in contradiction with Catholic teaching: “To be sure, this would entail not so much a ‘purging’ of language, as (more importantly) a vigorous theological interpretation of Adrienne’s mystical formulations which Balthasar perhaps too quickly takes up into his own work without first calming, as it were, the metaphorical language, or without attempting to explain it” (388–89).

Schumacher helpfully lays out how Balthasarian scholars should go about purifying the images and metaphors through metaphysics. She wants them (herself included) to consider certain questionable phrases and understand them within the whole of Balthasar’s and Adrienne’s common work and within the whole of the Catholic tradition, especially the Thomistic tradition (390). This fits with the four standards that Balthasar proposes for judging whether Adrienne’s mystical experiences are authentic: (1) that her teaching be subject to magisterial scrutiny, (2) that it originate within the Church, (3) that it contribute to the Church’s edification, and (4) that it be in consonance with

canonical revelation. Schumacher is open to the fact that Adrienne may have misinterpreted her own experiences: “From this perspective, one might question whether, in interpreting her (presumably) mystical share in the consciousness of Christ, Adrienne—theologically uneducated as she was—did not often pass too quickly from this experience (that of Christ’s *human* consciousness, regardless of the supernatural means of her participation therein) to her doctrine of his *divine* consciousness and thus also to the divine nature” (392–93). If we allow her experiences to interpret her doctrine and vice versa, we are able to see that Adrienne’s intention here is “that of clarifying the Son’s unity with the Father (their common divine will, which she—mistakenly, I would argue—presents as a commonality in suffering) and the adherence of Christ’s human will to the divine will despite the terrible experience of ‘estrangement’ from God” (393).

The challenge to Thomistic critics is to reconsider Balthasar’s teaching in light of Adrienne’s experiences and teaching. It is Schumacher’s hope that their critics would see this teaching as genuinely rich, even if metaphysically imprecise. Schumacher does not mean to cease the helpful task of bringing to light errors or misunderstandings, nor does she mean to be less metaphysical. Rather, she sees it as in the Catholic spirit to not condemn “all that is not immediately graspable by human reason in theological formulations of Adrienne and Balthasar” (395). I wonder whether this is really a strawman. Have theologians simply condemned certain propositions of Balthasar and Adrienne because they are not immediately graspable by human reason? Her own presentation of Thomistic objections did not consider this as the main source of their objections. Nevertheless, it is fair to encourage those who object to Balthasar’s and Adrienne’s teachings to carefully consider them because, when certain teachings seem to be clearly at odds with traditional teaching, it can be very easy to dismiss them.

Schumacher’s work displays an impressive knowledge of the three authors at hand, each of which are particularly prodigious. The unique skill set of being able to move around in the world of Balthasar/Adrienne just as well as in that of St. Thomas makes the book a very effective start to a dialogue. She ably clarifies Balthasar’s thought on many points, especially with respect to certain metaphysical imprecisions, and she takes a very balanced view of the relationship among the doctrines of all three thinkers. This book is well worth reading. It is for anyone interested in delving deeper into

the work of Adrienne von Speyr and how she influenced Balthasar. Every lover of Balthasar should read this book, for it brings together the real insights that Balthasar was trying to express from Adrienne's work and gives the lover of Balthasar a very precise challenge. Every critic of Balthasar should read this book as well to help him appreciate the difficulty of what Balthasar was doing in bringing Adrienne's mystical experiences into theology and to help Balthasarians refine the metaphysics to better express the genuine insights of Adrienne von Speyr. N&V

Matthew DuBroy
Dominican House of Studies
Washington, DC

Defending Substitution: An Essay on Atonement in Paul by Simon Gathercole (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015*), 128 pp.

SIMON GATHERCOLE, senior lecturer in New Testament studies at the University of Cambridge, has previously written on the “new perspective” on Paul, the Christology of the Synoptic Gospels, and gnostic gospel writings. His expertise in soteriology, Christology, and biblical literature is brought together in *Defending Substitution: An Essay on Atonement in Paul*. Gathercole provides the reader with a brief (a mere 128 pages) biblical defense of the concept of “substitutionary atonement” from the Pauline corpus.

In this book, Gathercole argues that Christ's death “for our sins in our place, instead of us, is a vital ingredient in the biblical . . . understanding of the atonement” (14). Christ ought to, therefore, be seen as a substitute for us and for our sins. He states that this does not exclude or supplant other concepts in atonement (i.e., representation or participation), but he believes that substitution can “coexist” along them (14). He underlines the importance of this central claim by stating that a right understanding of Christ's death as a substitutionary act is integral to the “Christian's relationship with God and their communication of the gospel” (14).

Gathercole begins the book with an introduction that helpfully defines and distinguishes his terms. He defines “substitutionary atonement” as “Christ's death in our place, instead of us.” This means that, in his death, Christ “did something, underwent something, so that we did not and would never have to do so” (15). He carefully nuances this definition of substitution from related—and

often conflated—concepts. In each case, Gathercole argues for and provides examples of “penalty,” “representation,” “propitiation,” and “satisfaction” as concepts separate from substitution. In distinguishing “penalty” and “substitution,” for example, he says non-penal substitution exists in the live scapegoat of Leviticus 16:21, which was sent into the wilderness as a substitute for the people (but not put to death). Herein, the sins of Israel are borne away in the goat, not punished. These distinctions, therefore, are not meant to present any one concept as superior to another, but to present the concept of substitution—as distinct from the above concepts—as a viable motif in our understanding of the atonement apart from the complexities of these other concepts.

Gathercole also shows awareness of various theological, ethical, and philosophical objections to this doctrine. He introduces and briefly addresses the objections that substitution implies a legal fiction and that it advocates for “divine child abuse,” as well as Kant’s objection that guilt is too personal to be taken upon another. Yet, for Gathercole, the “most important” criticism of substitutionary atonement is actually that it is unbiblical (28). His response to this final and most important objection constitutes the substance of this book.

In chapter 1, rather than immediately developing a positive account of substitution, Gathercole begins by explicating three of the most compelling explanations of non-substitutionary approaches to the atonement. He aims to show not that these are totally wrong, but that they are mistaken in denying substitution. The first approach (which he associates with Germany) is the Tübingen view propounded by Hartmut Gese and Otfried Hofius. On their account, atonement is undertaken by Christ as the representative of the people. Through Christ’s identification with corrupted people, he opens up to them fellowship with God. Second, (associated with Britain) is Morna Hooker’s “interchange in Christ”: Christ does not swap places with his people, but rather “goes to the place where they are and takes them from there to salvation” (39). Finally, he surveys the model of “apocalyptic deliverance,” which is “gaining currency . . . in North America” (42) through the theology of J. Louis Martyn. For Martyn, humanity’s plight does not consist of sins that need forensic forgiveness, but of slavery that requires deliverance and liberation, a deliverance and liberation that Christ provides.

While he gives at least three evaluative comments to each proposal, Gathercole notes that they all share in minimizing “sins” (individual transgressions of the divine will) in favor of “sin” as universal human

plight. He shows the need for a remedy of these “one-sided” perspectives through the Pauline emphasis on plural acts of disobedience and even references to individual acts of transgression. He says that the solution to the various perspectives on the human plight is not an “all-encompassing” theory, but rather a variety of perspectives (e.g., representation, sacrifice, redemption, and reconciliation) that ought to include Christ’s death as substitutionary.

Chapters 2 and 3 are dedicated to Paul’s understanding of Christ’s death as substitutionary in order to add “substitution” to the list of various concepts in the atonement. Chapter 2 focuses primarily on the claim in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” He begins his exegesis of the passage by noting the primacy of “the gospel” in Paul, within which Christ’s death “for our sins” is central. Rather than a marginal thought, this message is the proclamation of the breadth of the apostolic witness (1 Cor 15:11) and is “according to the Scriptures” (i.e., the Old Testament). To support this latter claim, he engages with several specific Old Testament texts while treating in depth Isaiah 53 and Pauline references to it. Specifically, he uses Isaiah 53 to support the presence of substitution in 1 Corinthians 15. Rather than viewing Christ’s death as merely a historical consequence of sin (“he died because of our sins”), he states that the purpose of Christ’s death is to deal with sins. Therefore, the death of Christ was “for our sins” in the sense that it was a “consequence of our sins and not his own” (85). He says that the default Old Testament position would be “*he* died for *his* sins” or “*we* died for *our* sins,” yet “the miracle of the gospel . . . is that *he* died for *our* sins” (73). Therefore, “Christ’s substitutionary death and his resurrection, is primary in Paul’s proclamation” of the Gospel (78).

Chapter 3 focuses on the vicarious death of Christ in Romans 5:6–8 and parallel deaths in classical literature. Gathercole claims that, in Romans 5, Christ’s death “for us” (Rom 5:8) is in contrast to other heroic deaths in his cultural environment, to which Paul alludes in Rom 5:7 (86). He introduces literary and historical examples of vicarious deaths (e.g., Alcestis, Phintias and Damon, and Philonides), some of which were “part of the common culture” in Paul’s day (97). He then breaks these down into three main contexts for “vicarious or substitutionary deaths” in the Greco-Roman world: conjugal love, friendship, and family ties (103). The common ground between these ancient figures and Paul’s presentation of Christ’s death is that: “There is a death of one person for others. The sacrificial death of the one aims at rescuing the other from death” (104). In contrast to these

figures, however, Paul emphasizes the uniqueness of Christ's death as creating a relationship where there had once been enmity (106). Thus, in Romans 5 (alongside the ancient examples), the death "for another" is not merely "for the benefit of another" or "for their sake," but a death that averts the death of another (106–7).

Gathercole concludes the book with brief summaries of each chapter that together make the case for the death of Jesus "in our stead" (109). "In sum, substitution can and should be regarded as integral to the biblical picture of atonement" (111). He does not view the atonement as an either–or choice between substitution, representation, or liberation. Rather, we can recognize the way various perspectives resolve the various facets of the human plight because of sin(s).

By way of evaluation, I think this book does provide a clear and helpful defense of "substitution" as a viable way of understanding Christ's death. At just 128 pages, its brevity is its greatest asset, but also its greatest downside. Gathercole's logical and exegetical precision, his clear prose, and his careful argumentation make the reading experience quite enjoyable and readily understandable for a variety of audiences. He carefully and charitably positions his arguments in relationship to other studies of Pauline atonement theology and returns to these conversations in the conclusions of his own positions.

Yet, omissions abound in a 128-page book, as Gathercole is well aware (10). The two elements that I would have found most helpful if he had added another few dozen pages to the book for them are both introduced in the essay, but neither is elaborated on further. The first is his interdisciplinary engagement. The introduction of the book interacts with (primarily Protestant) historical theologians such as Calvin, Luther, and Barth, contemporary dogmaticians such as Holmes, Crisp, and Zahl, and philosophers such as Kant, yet this interdisciplinary dialogue all but disappears as the book proceeds into its primary chapters. Therefore, the vast majority of his interlocutors are contemporary biblical theologians and his method of investigation largely focuses on the historical and literary context (with some helpful canonical references) to the exclusion of larger dogmatic and ecclesial contexts. He displays an awareness of the historical and theological issues in the introduction, but he rarely (likely for the sake of space) reconnects his exegetical conclusions to discussions outside of contemporary biblical studies. Secondly, Gathercole argues for "substitution" alongside representation, liberation, sacrifice, and so on but does not come to a synthetic conclusion that draws them together or explicates their relationship (although he briefly acknowl-

edges a few possibilities [111–12]). For example, if substitution is an important aspect of atonement, is it foundational to sacrifice? Does representation logically precede substitution? How do penalty and propitiation fit within this understanding of substitution?

However, these omissions do not evidence shortcomings as much as they illustrate that Gathercole's ultimate aim was not to develop a comprehensive defense of substitutionary atonement in all its complexities, but to make room at the table for the concept of substitution in our discussions of atonement. Toward this primary and worthwhile aim, Gathercole's book is a success. N&V

Ty Kieser
Wheaton College
Wheaton, IL

Revelation and Authority: Sinai in Jewish Scripture and Tradition by Benjamin D. Sommer (*New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015*), xviii + 419 pp.

BENJAMIN SOMMER'S new book raises a host of fascinating questions. In my review, rather than unfolding his argument chapter-by-chapter, I will focus on the two central proposals that he makes. I will describe his proposals and offer a preliminary response to each of them. My responses concur with Sommer's appreciation for the approaches of Franz Rosenzweig and Abraham Joshua Heschel, while also proposing that their approaches should moderate the bolder conclusions reached by Sommer.

The first central proposal made by Sommer in *Revelation and Authority* has to do with "minimalist" interpretations of the cognitive content contained in the revelation at Sinai. Could it be that, at Sinai, God revealed a commanding sense of his presence but no actual propositional or cognitive content, no teaching or commandment? Sommer describes the minimalist position of the nineteenth-century Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Rymanov as follows: "The ears of the Israelites, then, did sense a noise, but, by itself, it was nothing other than that: a pure noise, without any meaning—a rush of air without even a consonant. At Sinai, Israel heard nothing specific, but it did experience a revelation, a wordless signification of God's commanding presence" (90). In this case, Israel's cognitive participation in the experience would have had very minimal cognitive content—"I hear a noise" or "that's wind." In *Revelation and Authority*, this minimalist view of divine revelation is Sommer's position (although during a

panel at the 2016 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Sommer modified his position to accentuate the presence of some cognitive content).

I note that, for Israel to identify that “rush of air” as “God’s commanding presence,” a simultaneous revelatory cognitive event would need to have taken place—for example, an infused cognitive (and thus, in the broad sense, propositional) apprehension that “this rush of air is God’s commanding presence.” Since this is so, minimalism of the kind that Sommer favors in *Revelation and Authority* does not work. On these grounds, I suggest that the early Rosenzweig, as presented by Sommer, follows a more persuasive path, even if, in my view, divine revelation contains more cognitive content than Rosenzweig thinks. Explaining Rosenzweig’s portrait of the Sinai event in *The Star of Redemption*, Sommer notes: “Rosenzweig’s formulation allowed two fundamental elements of content: God’s self-identification, ‘I am the Lord,’ and God’s command, ‘Love Me’—that is, the content found in various biblical verses including the opening of the Decalogue (Exodus 20.1 and Deuteronomy 5.6) and the beginning of the central text of Judaism’s daily liturgy, recited each morning and evening, the Shema (Deuteronomy 6.5)” (104). The revelation of precisely this cognitive content would indeed be a divine revelation that communicates God in a way in which humans can understand and participate.

It is important to add that, although Sommer suggests that divine revelation may have had almost no cognitive content, he certainly does not argue that there was no divine revelation. He finds that the reconstructed original authors P, E, J, and D attest to the Sinai revelation in quite distinct ways, with D responding to and correcting the diverse versions of P, E, and J. But he holds firmly to a historical revelation to Israel at Sinai: “The event that transpired at Mount Sinai some three months after the Exodus belongs to the threefold cord that is fundamental to all Jewish existence. Along with the redemption from slavery and the gift of the Land of Israel, the experience at Sinai created the amalgam of religion and ethnicity that we now call Judaism” (30). Sommer does not challenge the historical grounding of this threefold cord. He does not propose that these events were simply invented by the ancient authors. Indeed, he points out that “the Pentateuchal sources speak with one voice in regard to the centrality of divine command in the religion that the event at Sinai created,” a way of phrasing the matter that makes sense only if there was an “event at Sinai” (9).

In this regard, Sommer observes that “there are no archaeological

or historical reasons to doubt the core elements of the Bible's presentation of Israel's history," among which elements he includes the following: "that the ancestors of the Israelites included an important group who came from Mesopotamia; that at least some Israelites were enslaved to Egyptians and were surprisingly rescued from Egyptian bondage; that they experienced a revelation that played a crucial role in the formation of their national, religious, and ethnic identity" (17; cf. 204 and 349n67). He grants that the lack of evidence against these "core elements" does not "prove that one *should* believe them" (17), but he himself does believe them. Thus, he cautions firmly against an exegetical "reductionism" according to which "the Priestly texts and Deuteronomy are not really about religion or God at all," but instead "merely encode social, political, and economic claims" (18). Indeed, his advocacy throughout *Revelation and Authority* for a "participatory theory of revelation" has to involve the action of the living God, or else there could be *only* human authors constructing things, rather than a participatory "dialogue between God and Israel" (2) whose definitive locus is Sinai.

Let me now turn to the second central question of Sommer's book. This question is whether there is or should be a distinction between Written Torah (Scripture) and Oral Torah. Sommer persuasively demonstrates that later authors of Scripture were interacting with earlier ones in ways characteristic of Oral Torah: "Modern biblical scholarship (especially in its analysis of the composition, redaction, and transmission of biblical texts and in the study of inner-biblical exegesis) recovers the Bible's multivocality and thus helps us to see the way that scripture behaves like Oral Torah" (181). The conclusion that Sommer draws is an intentionally strong one: "Biblical criticism and the work of theologians like Rosenzweig and Heschel prompt the realization that for modern Judaism, there is no such thing as Written Torah; there is only Oral Torah, from which the Bible itself emerges and to which it belongs" (182).

I grant that at least some, and perhaps many, of the authors of the diverse texts of Written Torah (Scripture) were writing according to the modes of Oral Torah. Am I therefore compelled to grant, as a corollary, that "all of Jewish tradition, including the Bible itself, constitutes what the classical rabbis call Oral Torah" and that we should "[do] away with the distinction between the two Torahs of classical Judaism" (146)?

I think that the answer is no, but without denying the fruitfulness of Sommer's raising of the question. Granted that divine revelation

actually happened in history at Sinai, then it seems to me that the Written Torah, insofar as it contains the primal narratives that describe this historical event of divine revelation, has a privileged status vis-à-vis the texts of Oral Torah. These primal narratives, certainly, bear the marks of internal “Oral Torah.” They bear the marks of interpretation and re-interpretation. In this sense, there are no narratives that stand outside the traditioning process of the community. But these primal narratives are nonetheless distinct from the later “Oral Torah” because their testimony to the historical event of divine revelation at Sinai serves as an anchor for other interpretations in a manner that reflects the unique historical specificity and decisiveness of the Sinai event itself. The “Written Torah” that includes and builds upon these primal narratives contains a great deal of “Oral Torah,” as do the primal narratives themselves. But I think that retaining the status of “Written Torah” or “Scripture” is a necessary and appropriate way of retaining the historicity, specificity, and determinedness of Judaism as arising from an actual Sinai event (and from other less fundamental but also important revelatory events involving the prophets, building upon and further interpreting the Sinai event).

To reiterate for the sake of clarity, the distinct status of “Written Torah” does not mean that we can extract it from the characteristic processes and modes of “Oral Torah.” There are no texts that lack the imprint of human interpretation and traditioning. In this specific sense, certainly, everything can be said to be “Oral Torah.” There is no Scripture outside the Tradition. And we can also still affirm, with Heschel, that “parts of Oral Torah are older than parts of Written Torah” and that, from the standpoint of Judaism, “the sages responsible for the Oral Torah complete and perfect the Written Torah” (183). With Rosenzweig, too, we can still affirm from the standpoint of Judaism that Scripture is “the Oral Torah’s version of the Written Torah” and that “what matters most is the Written Torah as learned through the Oral Torah” (183). From this standpoint, Oral Torah even has a certain “priority” (183) of its own to match that of Written Torah, a priority found in the fact that Written Torah (Scripture) does not contain its own definitive interpretation, but relies upon Oral Torah for that interpretation. But in my view, Written Torah (Scripture) is still rightly distinguished from Oral Torah because of the historical specificity and decisiveness that Sommer himself upholds with regard to Sinai, even if the meaning of Sinai requires unfolding in Oral Torah and even if the texts of Written Torah bear the characteristic marks of Oral Torah.

Arguably, the grounding of the historical specificity of Sinai in Written Torah is what gives Written Torah its privileged status in the Jewish liturgy, even though (as Sommer points out) the Jewish liturgy proclaims Written Torah in a manner deeply shaped by Oral Torah (see 159 and 220–21). Arguably, too, the distinctive function of Written Torah explains why both Rosenzweig and Heschel continue to insist upon two Torahs rather than contending (as does Sommer) that “there is only Oral Torah” (181). As Sommer observes, Rosenzweig “does not subsume the Written Torah under the Oral Torah; he avers that both are wonderful, not that they must be taken as a unity to be seen as wonderful” (183). Regarding Heschel, Sommer similarly notes: “Heschel comes closer to acknowledging that all Written Torah is Oral Torah in his famous assertion, ‘As a report about revelation the Bible itself is a *midrash*.’ Midrash, after all, is a form of Oral Torah. But even here Heschel does not write that the Bible has the same status as rabbinic literature” (183). I think that Heschel does not do so because the biblical narratives ground the actual event of divine revelation at Sinai (no doubt in modes characteristic of Oral Torah). In saying this, I am affirming—not denying—the truth of Sommer’s point that, from a Jewish perspective, one constantly sees “the fluidity of the border separating the Torahs” (156).

I think that the distinction between Written Torah and Oral Torah also supports the distinction—important both for Sommer and for me—drawn by Rosenzweig and Heschel between “the historical fact that revelation occurred at a particular moment in the past” (200), on the one hand (this aspect is upheld by the category of Written Torah), and the contemporary “presence of that moment in the life of a Jew” and “the fact that divine command must occur in a person’s present” (200), on the other hand (this aspect is upheld by the category of Oral Torah). The point is that the play of interpretation is not its own ground, but rather is grounded concretely in particular historical revelatory events.

Sommer’s book, even if I would modify his proposals a bit, makes a fruitful contribution to Jewish–Christian dialogue. His efforts to show that his proposals fit the Catholic view of Tradition are generous and inspiring. For a Catholic, it is crucial to insist that believers inherit not only biblical texts, but the living community in which these texts have been written and lived. Texts themselves would not be enough; we need to be immersed in the “subject” of these texts, the ongoing people that, according to the texts, has been called forth by God in relationship with God and from whose participatory

relationship with God these texts and their true interpretations have arisen over the centuries. Catholics and Jews disagree, of course, about the correct interpretation of the “Written Torah” and about whether God’s people Israel has been reconfigured around the Messiah (so as now fully to include the Gentiles who believe in Christ), but Catholics today affirm that God has not revoked his covenants with the Jewish people, as though God had ceased to love the Jewish people.

In making his argument, Sommer quotes Joseph Ratzinger: “These authors are not autonomous writers in the modern sense; they form part of a collective subject, the ‘People of God’ from within whose heart and to whom they speak. Hence, this subject is actually the deeper ‘author’ of the Scriptures. And yet likewise, this people does not exist alone; rather, it knows that it is led, and spoken to, by God himself, who—through men and their humanity—is at the deepest level the one speaking” (143–44, citing Joseph Ratzinger / Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, vol. 1, *From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans. Adrian J. Walker [New York: Doubleday, 2007], xx–xxi). All those who, like myself, are indebted to Ratzinger will find significant benefit in Sommer’s book. He has indeed accomplished the ambitious goal that he set for himself, a goal that all Christian theologians and exegetes should emulate within Christian contexts: to create a “dialogical biblical theology, which compares, contextualizes, and contrasts the Bible with postbiblical Jewish tradition” (5). N-V

Matthew Levering
Mundelein Seminary
Mundelein, IL

The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas by Kevin E. O’Reilly, O.P. (*Leuven, BE: Peeters, 2013*), 309 pp.

IN THE REALM OF contemporary Thomistic moral theology, Kevin O’Reilly notes a “tendency on the part of some theologians to question what John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* describes as the ‘intrinsic and unbreakable bond between faith and morality’” (19). In particular, O’Reilly singles out Jean Porter’s works for failing to substantially incorporate Thomas’s Trinitarian theology and Christology into “the fabric of her ethical deliberations.” O’Reilly’s own treatment can be understood as an alternative to such treatments, offering an account of moral theology more faithful to Thomas and reflecting more deeply

the interrelatedness of his thought by recourse to hermeneutics.

Contemporary hermeneutics has highlighted the failure of the Enlightenment ideal of “pure reason.” O’Reilly quotes Hans-Jorg Gadamer’s important recognition that there is, in Enlightenment thought, “prejudice against prejudice itself” (20). It is thanks in part to hermeneutics that Enlightenment “neutrality” has been brought into question. Positively, what is hermeneutics? O’Reilly understands hermeneutics, most generally, as “the idea that human understanding is conditioned by factors that lie beyond its control” (1). Typically, hermeneutics focuses on the interpretation of texts, but O’Reilly wants to take Gadamer’s insights and apply them to “the text of life and of reality in general” (4). It is here that Thomas’s teaching on knowing and willing enter the picture.

O’Reilly appeals most of all to the *circulatio* (105) between the intellect and will (the act of understanding being conditioned by the will and vice versa) that appears in Thomas’s work. The “dynamic interaction” between intellect and will forms a way to understand the hermeneutical circle in a way that is formed by Thomas’s thought. To be clear, O’Reilly does not think Thomas himself would have considered his project in the *Summa theologiae* to fall under modern hermeneutics, but he nevertheless believes that it is a worthwhile endeavor to see whether certain insights can be gleaned from the work of the Angelic Doctor. For those interested, O’Reilly has already treated Gadamer explicitly as a dialogue partner for Thomas in another work.

In the present monograph, he attempts only to explore how the Thomistic conception of knowing and willing, framed within the *nexus mysteriorum* (the interconnection between the various mysteries of the faith), provides a fresh insight into Thomas’s theological synthesis in the *Summa theologiae* (12). By an appeal to Thomas’s teaching on knowing and willing, O’Reilly is able to find an entry point into the *Summa theologiae* that does not require the bracketing of Aquinas’s teaching on Trinity or Christology. Rather, to speak of the rational creature’s knowing and loving at the same time involves the entirety of Thomas’s *theological* thought, and explicitly so.

It is precisely because the rational creature knows and loves that he can be said to be created *ad imaginem Dei*, to the image of God. More than this, insofar as the rational creature knows and loves God, he can be said to be created to the very image of the Trinity. O’Reilly highlights the dual aspects of the human creature’s likeness to the triune God: there is the likeness of analogy and the likeness

of conformity. The two cannot be separated, as the former is the basis of the latter and the latter is the goal of the former. As O'Reilly writes, "the image of God in man is the ineradicable capacity in man for participation in the life of the Holy Trinity and that this capacity is realized in so far as the soul imitates the inner life of the Trinitarian God in the activities of knowing and loving God" (44). This means that any discussion of the human capacity for knowing and loving (i.e., likeness of analogy) that precludes the formation of the creaturely subject to attain to the supernatural object through knowledge and love (i.e., the likeness of conformity) is incomplete. More radically and controversially, O'Reilly holds that the human knower is rendered more or less enlightened based upon his likeness of conformity to the triune God: "The greater the degree of charity with which the believer is blessed, the greater the degree of his intellectual enlightenment" (281).

Let us discuss two significant ramifications of O'Reilly's reading of Aquinas, the first having to do with Christology and the second to do with grace. Both show how the theme of knowing and loving can be used to bring together all of Thomas's theological thought, the *nexus mysteriorum*. First, likeness of conformity to the Trinity takes on a concrete shape in light of the Incarnation of the Word. As O'Reilly notes, "human attainment of Beatitude can be accomplished only Christologically" (131). It is through the imitation of Christ that "we habituate our ways on knowing and loving not to any kind of human exemplar but rather to the perfect human exemplar." O'Reilly's understanding of the importance of the likeness of conformity highlights concretely the importance of *imitatio Christi*. One cannot attain to beatitude apart from the human model of knowing and loving provided by the Word Incarnate. This habituation to Christ, however, is not merely dependent on Christ as moral exemplar; it is first based upon the gift of grace through the Holy Spirit.

Thus, the second ramification is that one's conformation to God, and therefore one's degree of "objectivity" in judgment, corresponds to the degree to which one is graced: "Objectivity in judgements concerning reality and human conduct is directly related to the degree to which a person is animated by the Gift of Wisdom" (282). This does not mean that one without grace cannot know any truth, but that "living faith . . . intensifies reason's metaphysical vision" (287). What the practical consequences for such a view are or how this plays out concretely is not entirely clear. Does one with charity necessarily know more about reality than one who does not?

One might, at this point, pose the question of the significance of Thomas's teaching on the habit of faith in question 4 of *Summa theologiae* II-II. In article 4, Thomas argues (against the opinions of William of Auxerre and Alexander of Hales) that a living faith and a lifeless faith remain nevertheless the same habit precisely because faith, considered in itself, pertains to the intellect while the distinction of its being living versus lifeless belongs to the will. In which case, it does not appear that one's "objectivity in judgment" must necessarily be affected by the absence of charity. Moreover, in the realm of ethics, Thomas teaches that it is possible to have virtue that is ordered to particular goods. This does not contradict O'Reilly's purpose, but it does indicate a place for more overtly "philosophical" examination on questions of morality and ethics within Thomistic scholarship. In this vein, the attempt to capture the unified *theological* aim of Thomas's thought, while certainly worthwhile, sometimes appears to too quickly run over the important and careful distinctions that Thomas makes between the natural and the supernatural. These are a few questions that arise from O'Reilly's text that might have been dealt with at greater length.

Whether one agrees with all of O'Reilly's emphases or conclusions, he has certainly shown possibilities latent in a "theological hermeneutics" based on Thomas's *Summa theologiae*. It would be a mistake to consider his monograph as aimed solely at those interested in the crossroads of Thomism and philosophical hermeneutics. While this is O'Reilly's primary focus, he also creatively and impressively synthesizes major elements of the *Summa theologiae* under the broader theme of knowing and loving. In the process, he also displays his familiarity with a great deal of the secondary literature while offering his own interesting insight on Aquinas's teaching on the image of the Trinity in creatures, Christological questions, and grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Finally, and most importantly, O'Reilly highlights the importance of the unity of the Christian life: one must strive, by lived faith, to be more and more like Christ according to the likeness of conformation. N&V

Joshua H. Lim

University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame, IN

Contemplative Provocations by Donald Haggerty (*San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013*), 200 pp.

The Contemplative Hunger by Donald Haggerty (*San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2016*), 259 pp.

IMAGINE THAT YOU HAD the opportunity to spend a few months with an authentic *starets*, only he was not a bearded hermit from the Russian steppe, but a middle-aged American priest serving in Manhattan. Suppose, further, that you managed to take copious notes of his wise sayings, which you later arranged in as orderly a manner as possible. You would have something very like these two precious volumes written by Father Donald Haggerty, *Contemplative Provocations* (CP) and *Contemplative Hunger* (CH).

One phrase seems representative of the whole work: “Taking God seriously is costly, of course” (CP, 67). In these seven words, we get a sense of the author’s audience, purpose, and style. The audience is anyone wishing to take his or her faith “seriously,” to live out the full consequences of being offered, really and truly, a relationship with the almighty and infinite God. Clear, then, is the purpose: to help such a person enter into this friendship as profoundly as possible. While not hiding the cost of a deep spiritual life—a cost that is no less than total self-emptying—the author does not frighten away the would-be contemplative, but indicates that the path is open to all. So his style is unassuming, simple, and straightforward: his goal is to attract and encourage, but without hiding the daunting nature of the quest.

Arguably, there is no more urgent or important task than to kindle the desire and support the progress of contemplatives in the modern world. Nor, perhaps, is there a more challenging one. Yet it is performed masterfully and seemingly effortlessly by Fr. Haggerty. A diocesan priest, he has also served as professor of moral theology, missionary in Ethiopia, and spiritual director and retreat master, especially for the Missionaries of Charity. He speaks from experience, but not necessarily his own. The author is an observer, a connoisseur of souls, who has an artist’s eye and the wisdom to perceive essential realities.

As the image of the *starets* indicates, the word “I” rarely appears in these books, for the author wishes to remain hidden. Rather, “we” is used a great deal. There is not the expected author–reader relationship in which the former tries to instruct or persuade the latter in a systematic fashion. Rather, it is a sharing of insights and musings with

a certain diffidence (“it may be that”; “perhaps”; “often”; “it seems”; etc.) that, nevertheless, does not allow the reader room for doubt. Fr. Haggerty seems confident that the evident truth of his statements will suffice to convince those who are able to grasp them. There is no effort to argue, marshal authorities, or make a case. He speaks with the authority of a spiritual director, justified by the fact that you have come to listen.

The two books are clearly one work, and perhaps a work that is ongoing. While they are treated here together, *Contemplative Provocations* should definitely be read first and could be considered complete by itself.

This first book focuses on the “paradox central to all contemplative life” (CP, 46): that God can be known only “as one who is unknown.” This is possible through the obscurity of faith and the intensity of love. Love can grasp what the mind in this life cannot. Especially chapter 3 invites the reader toward “the different mode of awareness [that] is a form of knowing” (CP, 54). It is a great tragedy (“one of the more hidden tragedies in the Church”; CP, 72) when the “concealment” of God becomes the occasion for those serious about prayer to give it up. The book aims, therefore, at encouraging perseverance: “One of the necessary tasks of prayer is to persevere in an interior offering to Our Lord in the silence of prayer, even if the meager results of our scattered efforts outside prayer incline us to a periodic discouragement” (CP, 181). Fr. Haggerty also encourages the reader with the thought that, in some way, the hiddenness of God increases along with our love for him (CP, 54).

Despite the fact that it is in nowise a systematic work, there is an order. Moreover, it is evident that the author has a clear and profound knowledge of the material. For instance, while he never goes through St. John of the Cross’s three signs of the beginning of contemplative prayer, they are subtly presented in chapter 4 (“Contemplative Beginnings”), where he admits that “the early symptoms of contemplative prayer are so common and regular that they amount to a fixed, predictable pattern” (CP, 68). Both books have the word “contemplative” in the title, which indicates the author’s interest in leading souls toward higher states of prayer, “mystical” states in the technical sense of the word, even if that word never appears. Again, without ever indulging in academic discourse, the author reveals that he has a very clear and precise idea of contemplation. It is neither meditation nor centering prayer; it is a gift from God for which the soul can dispose herself, but no more.

Subsequent chapters continue to address general themes relevant to the quest: the role of emotion in prayer and that of the mind, aberrations that may arise, the need for self-denial, and the purpose of suffering and trial.

It is remarkable to find a work on contemplation containing so much material on life *outside* the chapel, especially on relations with the poor. That the poor will be always with us is interpreted as Christ's promise to be with us until the end of time (CP, 160). "If we do not realize [that Jesus] waits for our answer even in small sacrifices toward the poor, we soon forfeit the path toward a deeper love for God" (CH, 107).

The author makes clear that the seeker of God must also become a poor beggar. "It is the only way we can pray, trusting that he waits on every sincere word released from our heart" (CP, 52). It not an easy path to be emptied and purified, but we are reassured: "Impoverishment in prayer means always to fall more deeply under the loving gaze of God" (CP, 64). Indeed, "this poverty is what God loves most in our soul" (CP, 112).

The second book, *Contemplative Hunger*, focuses not so much on the concealment of God luring a soul to seek him as on the desire of every soul to go in search of God. This desire or hunger is under attack especially today in a culture that leads to "self-imposed restrictions on intelligence [with the consequence] that God is never sought, never encountered" (CH, 48). However, as indicated in the introduction to the volume, God seems to be calling many lay persons to deeper prayer precisely because of the secularism that one is bound to breathe. Thus, while consecrated persons will be a natural audience for Fr. Haggerty, he is not writing for religious only. Rather, he addresses himself to all those who are "serious" about God. It is an elite group, but not an exclusive one: all are called to strive for union with God, and there is no other path than contemplative prayer.

The seeker of God is hoping for a gift. "The idea that contemplation could be at one's personal disposal and available on demand is an obvious misconception" (CH, 92). The one who receives the gift will never feel a "sense of success or achievement." Rather, "the contemplative life requires . . . the abandonment of all pretense of personal accomplishment" (CH, 92). Costly, indeed.

The second volume also speaks of the poor and their vital role in the life of a contemplative soul, dedicating two chapters to the topic. Other chapters treat of surrender, silence, and the "deportment" of

soul suitable for encountering God. The book concludes with discussions of obstacles to prayer and of its effects on the rest of one's life.

These books are to be considered spiritual reading, books to be read slowly, a little bit each day, as a nourishment for the spiritual life. They will be usefully reread in this manner many times.

Certainly, this is not a work about prayer that can be read to gain information about the subject in a detached manner. Rather, it is designed for use, to accompany the one serious enough to search out the *starets* and enter his hut. Either the reader will view it as a personal challenge and invitation, discovering therein the help that he was seeking (perhaps unconsciously), or he will put it aside. Many, surely, will be attracted and sustained by statements such as this: "The vast separation between the good life and the holy life is always far more than we realize. . . . The good life will always be observable to some degree, but whether or not a life is truly holy can easily be concealed in its essential truth" (CH, 252).

Reading through *Contemplative Provocations* and *The Contemplative Hunger*, one may have the impression that one has never read a book like them, at least not one recently authored. As one of the commendations on the back cover of the first volume aptly states: "The work has the feel and style of a spiritual classic." We must thank Ignatius Press for having published them. They can never be bestsellers, because the number of those who are "serious about God" will never be great. Nonetheless, among those fortunate few, the work of Fr. Haggerty will become well known and well loved. N&V

Andrew McLean Cummings
Director of Spiritual Formation
Mount Saint Mary's Seminary

From Passion to Paschal Mystery: A Recent Magisterial Development concerning the Christological Foundation of the Sacraments by Dominic M. Langevin, O.P. (Fribourg, CH: Academic Press Fribourg, 2015), vii + 403 pp.

IT IS COMMON FOR theologians and historians of religion to document the ebb and flow of doctrinal, moral, and spiritual accents throughout the history of the Church. Sometimes by accident and sometimes by necessity, the treasures of one epoch can be underappreciated or neglected by a later one. It goes without saying that, as St. Paul insists in 1 Corinthians 15, without the doctrine of Christ's

resurrection from the dead (and the Ascension into heaven) the Christian faith is null. Accepting the centrality that the resurrection has for the Christian profession of faith, however, does not of itself make it evident today how the resurrection relates to the Church's doctrine of the seven sacraments and the significance of the sacramental life in the economy of salvation. In *From Passion to Paschal Mystery*, Dominican theologian Fr. Dominic Langevin wrestles with the question of the efficacy of the Church's sacramental worship in relation to the major events of Christ's life. That the risen Christ acts in the Church in and through the sacraments is hardly an object of theological dispute. What is more difficult to explain, however, is which events of Christ's life on earth established the sacraments of the New Law as *ex opere operato* causes of grace. In pursuit of answers to questions such as these, this book "explores [the] appreciation granted to the Paschal mystery by the Second Vatican Council and the succeeding magisterium" (1).

It is important to note that Langevin's work is not simply a liturgical consideration without reference to the Church's sacramental doctrine. Rather, he seeks to track identifiable emphases in magisterial teaching precisely with reference to the sacraments. By means of this sacramental focus, he documents a development in magisterial teaching: "The magisterium over the last fifty years has emphasized that the sacraments are founded upon and communicate the entire Paschal mystery of Christ's Passion and Resurrection" (1). Furthermore, by accentuating the recognition of both the Passion and resurrection in more recent magisterial teaching in relation to the sacraments, Langevin provides a "contrast with an earlier focus upon the Passion of Christ as the proper locus of sacramental attentions" (1).

The book is divided into two sections. Part I identifies the teachings of the magisterium in Pius XII's *Mediator Dei*, the Second Vatican Council's *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Part II provides a reflection on this data through the resources of speculative, historical, and dogmatic theology.

The first three chapters make up part I and document "a transformation with regard to" the teaching of the magisterium in "its understanding of the foundation of the sacraments in the life of Christ" in the fifty years between *Mediator Dei* and John Paul II's promulgation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (225). The transformation that Langevin uncovers pertains to the precise manner in which the sacraments are related to Christ and his incarnate life. In *Mediator Dei*, the Church's liturgy is cast in relation to the virtue of religion, by which the Church shares in Christ's worship of the Father. As a

result of this ordering, “the Passion of Christ is the event of greatest importance for human salvation, both objectively and subjectively, including in the sacraments’ participation in that salvation” (225). Vatican II’s Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, provides an implicit nod, Langevin demonstrates, toward viewing the sacraments in relation to the entirety of the Paschal mystery. For example, he points to §61, which teaches that “divine grace [flows] from the paschal mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, from which all of the sacraments and sacramentals derive their power” (227). This affirmation stands as an important springboard from *Mediator Dei* to post-Vatican II magisterial teaching. Moreover, Langevin demonstrates that the *Catechism* takes Vatican II’s advertence to the entirety of the Paschal mystery further by indicating that “in the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present” (CCC §1085, cited at 227). What the *Catechism* adds, therefore, to the relation between the sacraments and the saving events of Christ’s life is, Langevin argues, that they “do not just benefit in ‘their power’ from the Paschal mystery,” as indicated by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, but rather also “‘signify and make present’ the Paschal mystery” (227). The end result of this developmental sequence is the argumentative conclusion that “the sacramental aspects of the Passion have been retained, and the Resurrection has been retrieved from relative obscurity” (233). There is more at stake here, however, than mere evidentiary considerations about which events happen to be mentioned in particular Church documents. Langevin’s careful study of the recent magisterium, which cannot be fully recounted here, uncovers a theological *ratio* for the soteriological significance of the Church’s sacramental liturgy. Without this wider connection to the Paschal mystery, the saving power of the sacraments would not be fully intelligible in light of the Christian kerygma.

What is to account for this subtle but significant development in Church teaching? Langevin argues convincingly that a broad theological *ressourcement*—broad in the sense that it included a Thomistic component—took place in the period leading up to the Council. This work of *ressourcement* helped to unearth a previous tradition accentuating the relationship between the sacraments and the Paschal mystery. In particular, Langevin identifies four broad theological initiatives that contributed to this clarified awareness: the liturgical movement, Patristic studies, works on the theology of Christ’s resurrection, and Thomistic studies on sacramental theology.

Part II of *From Passion to Paschal Mystery* comprises two chapters in pursuit of a speculative account of the causal efficacy of the sacraments in relation to the Paschal mystery. After carefully documenting a general causal soteriology of the Passion, Langevin observes: "A further step is necessary. What has been made available by Christ in general must be conveyed to an individual person" (245). It is precisely at this juncture that Langevin, by focusing primarily on baptism and the Eucharist, incorporates the sacraments formally into a soteriological argument. With reference to the Eucharist, for example, Langevin appropriates both Trent and Aquinas to draw parallels between the general effect of the Passion "in the world" and the specific effects associated with the Eucharist "in man" (253).

What of the resurrection in this account? In relation to baptism, to cite just one example, it is worth quoting Langevin at length:

By the fact that baptism justifies, baptism appropriates the Resurrection. Within this justifying effect of baptism, we may locate its effect of filial adoption. Being baptized into Christ's Resurrection, being united to the Son of God as a member of his Body, the person receiving this sacrament becomes derivatively a living son of the living God. Although the symbolism of baptism . . . and its imaging of the Paschal mystery . . . suggest a baptismal priority for the negative effects of the Passion (i.e., forgiveness of sin), the positive baptismal effect of justification suggests a reversal of baptism's signification. (267)

The operative power of the grace of the Eucharist on the soul likewise produces a "delayed effect," in Langevin's words, that is fully consummated with the resurrection of the body (285).

The Catholic theologian is one who is accountable to a good many things, at least when the Catholic theologian consciously works as a Catholic theologian. By following the thread of engagement with the relationship between the Paschal mystery and the sacraments in recent magisterial teaching, Langevin models the theologian's accountability to a hierarchy of sources and the fruit that can be harvested when theology is practiced in this way. He realizes no small accomplishment in the carefully reasoned and researched pages of this book. By tracing the teaching of the Magisterium on the relation of the Paschal mystery to the sacraments from Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* through the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Langevin indicates a noteworthy

development in magisterial teaching. Discovering and documenting a development in Church teaching is no small accomplishment, and Langevin makes a convincing case that this development has most certainly taken place. Moreover, in addition to vindicating his central thesis and exploring the speculative dimensions of this doctrinal development, the book has other benefits too. The chapter on *Mediator Dei*, while not treating every aspect of the encyclical's teaching, provides careful commentary and interpretation on a large number of important passages. The Latin text of the key passages is reproduced in the book, and Langevin provides important insights into the document's teaching by means of this careful textual analysis. The same is true with the treatment of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: Langevin's interpretation is informed by an advanced knowledge of the evolution of the draft schemas and important written and oral interventions by the Council fathers. Thus, in addition to its argumentative originality, the book can also be used as a scholarly guide by those wishing to carefully study *Mediator Dei* and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Finally, by focusing his argument on the sacramental implications of the Paschal mystery, Langevin's work provides a needed theological counterweight to the regnant liturgical studies that often supplant sacramental doctrine with historical accounts of Christian worship.

Scholars and advanced students who teach and research in the area of sacramental and liturgical theology would be negligent not to familiarize themselves with this work. The author's careful research, focus, clear-minded prose, and speculative acumen have provided a tome of lasting significance that fills a niche and points the way to future studies. There is indeed little to disagree with in this volume and much to be learned from it. N&V

Roger W. Nutt
Ave Maria University
Ave Maria, FL

Mary's Bodily Assumption by Matthew Levering (*Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015*), 152 pp.

MATTHEW LEVERING'S TREATMENT of Mary's Assumption into heaven, body and soul, is a welcome contribution to Catholic theological discourse, not least because it is the first work to appear in English on the subject in some thirty years (2). Levering engages the topic from the inner heart of the Church's faith, but in a way that frankly acknowledges the difficulty non-Catholics have in seeing the

grounds for this Marian dogma. Thus, Levering seeks to unpack the principles underlying the Church's faith—a truth not just about Mary but also about how Mary uniquely exemplifies God's plan for human participation and glorification in and through the work of the Son.

Three principles underlie the Church's faith and also provide the structure of the book: the importance of typological exegesis; the importance of the Church as interpreter of divine revelation, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and the fittingness of the Assumption within the entire economy of salvation (2). The book functions in two parts. In the first, Levering treats twentieth-century magisterial teaching on Mary's Assumption by recourse to Pius XII's *Munificentissimus Deus*, the Second Vatican Council's *Lumen Gentium*, and John Paul II's *Redemptoris Mater* (ch. 1), then treats early to mid-twentieth-century theologians on the topic, such as Garrigou-Lagrange (ch. 2), and then turns to *ressourcement* theologians such as Bouyer, Balthasar, Ratzinger, and even Rahner (ch. 3). Part II seeks to demonstrate the legitimacy of typological exegesis (ch. 4), the authority of the Church as interpreter of revelation (ch. 5), and the fittingness of the Assumption within the whole plan of salvation (ch. 6).

Because of a lack of early historical evidence for this belief, Levering writes: "Rather than being manifested publicly in a manner accessible to historians, Mary's Assumption was an event whose historical reality the Holy Spirit taught the Church over time. For this reason, the testimony proper to Mary's Assumption is to be *in Scripture* and no new public testimony is required" (1–2; emphasis original). Similarly: "Mary's Assumption was a hidden event, one that becomes knowable with the eyes of faith through the New Testament's typological portraits of Mary as interpreted by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (47).

The first and third of the three principles listed at the outset (typological exegesis and fittingness) readily come together in Levering's analysis: just as the New Eve, Mary, participates in the work of her Son on the Cross, as anticipated by Simeon (Luke 2:35), so it is also exceedingly fitting that she would participate in her Son's glorification. Thus, Mary goes before us as the first fruits of redemption, receiving what we all hope to receive at the end of time, the resurrection of the body: "The Assumption of Mary does not compete with her Son's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection, but instead displays for us the goal of these mysteries in which Mary uniquely shares" (144). And similarly: "The doctrine of Mary's Assumption

teaches that Mary, continuing her holy and unique participation in the mysteries of her Son, shares uniquely in Christ's victorious suffering and thus also uniquely in Christ's Resurrection" (136).

Adverting to the second and third principles above (the Church as interpreter of revelation and fittingness), in criticism of certain *ressourcement* movements, Levering is quick to note: "Biblical-typological arguments cannot stand alone; they require an appreciation of doctrinal fittingness as well as a sense for the Church's role as 'the pillar and bulwark of truth' (1 Tim 3:15), guided by the Holy Spirit 'into all truth' (Jn 16:13)" (32). Similarly: "By themselves, the typological connections in Scripture could not have sufficed for the dogma of Mary's Assumption. The reality of her Assumption had to be confirmed by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (129).

Here Levering sees the abiding value in certain strands of neoscholastic Marian theology that do not ignore typological exegesis, but rather tend to emphasize both the importance of the authority of the Church and the mystery of grace unfolding in Mary: "Garrigou-Lagrange's . . . greatest strength is perhaps [his] account of Mary's predestination and [his] insight that her motherhood has to do with the 'hypostatic order'" (47), an order that transcends even that of grace and glory, whereby Mary "has a unique relation—the relation of motherhood—to the Son" (142). Levering of course sees the weakness of Garrigou-Lagrange's treatment in his historical analysis (47).

While utilizing many of their typological arguments, Levering criticizes *ressourcement* thinkers on the Assumption principally for flattening out the mystery of Mary by pointing to her as undergoing merely what happens to all human beings when they die. In other words, Mary's "Assumption" became, in some circles, simply an anthropological truth, wherein each human being receives the resurrection of the body *immediately* upon death, with no need of an intermediate state whereby each of us (Mary excepted) awaits the full flowering of redemption in the resurrection of the body at the end of time. Levering writes:

Fruitfully, many of them [*ressourcement* thinkers] explored Mary's Assumption through typological exegesis of Scripture. . . . Less fruitfully, some of them explored the notion that the Church's traditional teaching on the intermediate state between death and bodily resurrection could be changed so as

to hold that all humans, of whom Mary would be the exemplar, enter at the moment of death into resurrection life. (51; see 55–59 for Rahner and 63–64 and 66 for Balthasar)

Levering treats Ratzinger's criticism of this analysis. Among other points, Ratzinger brings out the tension between this account and the biblical narrative of Jesus's death and resurrection. Levering explains: "It would seem that Jesus' death would accomplish his resurrection immediately on the eternal level. . . . His burial and 'descent into hell' would have no real meaning. By contrast, for the New Testament, Jesus does indeed undergo an intermediate period between his death and resurrection" (73).

Overall, Levering does a tremendous job honing the precise principles that underlie the Church's thinking on the Assumption: typology; the Holy Spirit leading and guiding the Church ever deeper into the fullness of revelation; and the coherence of each aspect of the faith in light of the whole, meaning the way in which one aspect sheds light upon another (fittingness).

Again, for Levering, the Assumption is not something that the Church came to historically *per se*, but is rather a development based upon what was already implicit within Scripture itself. It is a *theological* development, not a merely historical one, and one that took flight especially after the *Theotokos* pronouncement in 431 at the Council of Ephesus (see 126). Nonetheless, Levering maintains that the Assumption is implicit in the apostolic deposit of faith (15).

On the whole, Levering gives us a *tour de force* on the makings of a biblical theology pertaining to Mary and her Assumption, taking us through (among others) the likes of: Genesis 3:15; 2 Samuel 6:14–16; Psalms 45:13–15 and 132:8; Exodus 25:10–16; Isaiah 60:13–14; Song of Songs 3:6, 11; Proverbs 8:22; 9:1–11; Luke 1:28, 42; 2:35; John 14:26; 16:13; 19:25–27; 1 Corinthians 15; Ephesians 5:27; 1 Timothy 3:15; and Revelation 11:19–12:6, 17; not to mention a treatment of the Elijah narrative in 1 Kings 19 (118) and the connection between holiness and life in the early chapters of Genesis (132–37). In addition, Levering's discussion is eminently ecumenical, interacting with, for example, Richard Hays, Peter Enns, Peter Leithart, Kevin Vanhoozer, Jaroslav Pelikan, and Hans Boersma. This leads to a very careful and honest discussion—one no doubt chastened and refined by his interlocutors.

One can only laud Levering's attempts here, especially since the topic has been virtually ignored by Catholic thinkers in the post-

conciliar period. But one might raise the question as to whether Levering has conceded too much. For example, as he notes, by the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, the liturgical celebration of Mary's Assumption had spread far and wide, both to East and West. Is it not fair to assume that there must be some historical cause that led to such universal celebrations, more than simply the theological sanctioning of the title *Theotokos*?

Levering seems willing to concede the standard critical account of Christian origins, but he appeals to development as a way to rescue the project:

Many scholars today do not think that the first Christians worshipped the Son. . . . The reality of God's triunity cannot be demonstrated by historical research. What is needed instead is an appreciation for the Church's ongoing life as the authoritative matrix in which Trinitarian doctrine developed. (125; see also 151)

What Levering says is no doubt true: the Trinity is a revealed doctrine of faith, and as Newman demonstrated so clearly, doctrine develops over time. Yet there is a danger if we overdo this dynamic: Catholic thinkers might buy into the standard critical account so readily that the supposed development becomes something foreign to the earliest Christian witness. In other words, development notwithstanding, Catholic thinkers need to show that such developments are organically rooted in the apostolic faith. Similarly, the Assumption is certainly a development in theological thinking about Mary, but if it is just that—a theological development, with *no* historical basis—it seems to me we have gone too far.

This is simply a difficulty with respect to the Assumption, since early testimony is fairly thin. But the rise of liturgical celebrations—celebrations which are generally conservative and do not introduce a *novum*, but express a pre-existing faith—and the absence of Marian relics (from an early Church that was absolutely absorbed by the importance of gathering relics) suggests to me a historical foundation at the origin of this theological development. Admittedly, we do not have as clear historical witness to the Assumption as we do the resurrection (see 77). But there must be an adequate cause for this widespread liturgical development. The essential historicity of the Assumption is part of the Church's faith. Levering does not deny this, but he generally steers clear of it. He is quick to note that the

Church's faith did not arise from legendary/apocryphal treatments: "Rather, the Church's faith generated the legends" (1).

The epistemic and theological principles underlying the Church's faith are excellently articulated by Levering, but the essential historicity of the Assumption must be maintained. Again, Levering does not deny this, but I think it needs more emphasis than his treatment provides, even if the public, historical witness in the early centuries is somewhat lacking. As Catholic theologians, we must still defend the *historical* happening of Mary's bodily Assumption, even if witnesses are few and far between.

Nonetheless, Levering's text is an absolutely welcome addition. The Church needs theologians to reclaim our Marian past in a manner as faithful and rigorous as he does here. N·V

Andrew D. Swafford
Benedictine College
Atchison, KS