

Book Reviews

An Evangelical Adrift: The Making of John Henry Newman's Theology by Geertjan Zuijdwegt (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022*), xii + 365pp.

WHAT DO WE KNOW OF ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN'S LIFE, thought, and theological development before 1833, the year in which the Oxford Movement or Tractarian Movement was launched by Newman, John Keble, and Richard Hurrell Froude? Newman, in his rightly famous and indispensable *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, covers this period in one brief chapter offering at best a rough outline and some central signposts. A more nuanced and somewhat more expansive picture is emerging in Newman's *Autobiographical Writings*, published posthumously in 1956. Wilfrid Ward, in the two immense volumes of his 1912 Newman biography, dedicates one single chapter entitled "Life in the Church of England (1801–1845)" to the first forty-four years of Newman's life, and of those fifty-four pages, only thirty cover the time from Newman's birth in 1801 to the signal year 1833. Ian Ker, in his 1988 biography, arguably still the normative and unsurpassed scholarly Newman biography, acknowledged as such by admirers and critics alike, dedicates one chapter of fifty-three pages to the same time period. Finally, Geertjan Zuijdwegt, in his very well written and equally well-researched and well-argued monograph of 344 pages, offers a detailed and nuanced account of Newman's theological development from his teenage conversion to Calvinist Evangelicalism up to and including the beginnings of the Tractarian Movement from 1833 to 1835. One must go back to Maisie Ward's lovely portrait, *Young Mr. Newman*, from 1948, to find a book that covers roughly the same territory. Ward's captivating biographical portrait and Zuijdwegt's meticulously researched *theological* biography may be read with great benefit as mutually enlightening and complementary accounts—at least in the eyes of this reader. The latter's new work is, however, a commendable and indeed indispensable achievement of its own. For one, what lies between Ward's portrait of the young Newman and Zuijdwegt's reconstruction of Newman's

early intellectual and theological development is Frank M. Turner's 2002 *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion*, a 750-page *ad hominem* attack on Newman's person and character, not only making Evangelicalism (and not theological and political liberalism) the alleged primary if not sole object of the post-Evangelical Newman's Tractarian and post-Tractarian, Catholic polemic, but also insinuating alongside in so many ways that Newman was dishonest about his work and thought, that he cared deeply for money or the security of a "living," that he was a closeted and repressed homosexual, and that he was lying about his conversion experiences—charges advanced by Charles Kingsley and other contemporaries of Newman's day and age and debunked—now warmed up und recycled under the guise of what pretended to be a massive scholarly study of intellectual history published by an Ivy League university press. Much ink has been spilled by Newman scholars in the years since Turner's book appeared to set the record straight, while others thought the time was ripe to form a "Turner school" of critical, iconoclastic Newman scholarship. Unsurprisingly, since 2002, there has been no dull moment in the small world of Newman scholarship, now divided between two well-defined camps, with "iconographers" (so called by the iconoclasts) on one side, and on the other those who aim at advancing a hard-nosed form of critical, detached historical Newman scholarship that at points has a hard time identifying the fine line between historical criticism and barely camouflaged detraction.

Zuijdwegt's book is a considerable achievement first and foremost simply because he escapes to a commendably high degree, albeit not completely, the trench warfare between the warring camps of Newman scholarship. His unavoidable engagement with Turner's work is judicious, balanced, and overall, in a measured way, critical. He is far more frequently disagreeing with Turner's interpretation than agreeing with a limited number of interpretive points about Newman's early Evangelicalism that can be corroborated textually in relatively easy ways. This is the first reason why those whom their detractors would call Newman iconographers should read this book with an open mind. The second reason is Zuijdwegt's careful interpretation of Newman's autobiographical notes in conjunction with his early letters and sermons that creates a quite nuanced and detailed picture, in instructive ways different from Newman's brief account in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. Besides an introduction and a conclusion, Zuijdwegt's book comprises ten chapters reaching from his initial Evangelicalism via the liberal tendencies that he displayed while influenced by the liberal theology of the Oriel Noetics and a turning to high-church tenets to his critique of the religion of liberalism and the beginning of Tractarianism. Zuijdwegt's aim is, from an observer's

standpoint, to establish what exactly Newman's theological development was and "understand the way it was shaped by his search for appropriate ways of relating to God. The resulting portrait shows that, for Newman, even seemingly arid and arcane theological questions were never detached from questions of individual destiny. His theological questions were religious questions, questions whose answer made a difference" (13). At least this reader found the narrative of the making of Newman's early theology not only quite fascinating but also, in light of Zijldwegt's close reading and acute interpretation of the first versions of sermons, unpublished papers, and letters, quite convincing. I would, however, quibble with the title: the early Newman emerging from Zijldwegt's reading is not an Evangelical adrift, but rather an Evangelical in search of an ever more comprehensive and nuanced theology, one that is able to address the existential, intellectual, and theological challenges of the day in a more satisfying way, hence rather an Evangelical on a quest that arguably comes to an end only with Newman's conversion to Catholicism on November 9, 1845, a development and an event beyond the scope of Zijldwegt's book.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Zijldwegt's account is his careful tracking of the prominent role that Newman's extensive engagement with his two brothers plays. In the chapter "A Brother's Apostasy," he offers an instructive account of Charles Newman's crisis of faith of the mid-1820s, his turn toward anti-Trinitarian deism and utopian socialist Owenism, as well as the extensive correspondence between John Henry and his brother. Zijldwegt analyzes John Henry's early apologetic approach in the dialogue with Charles, an argumentative strategy drawn from John Locke, whom he studied intensely during this period. Newman's engagement with his Evangelical brother Francis, who was also present at the University of Oxford, is more protracted and forms a subterranean thread throughout the book. Yet, in some ways, the critical back and forth between Francis and John is of even greater consequence for Newman's theological development than John's attempt of defending the faith against Charles's deist critique of revelation in general and his derision of the Old Testament and denial of the Trinity, and with it, of course, Christ's divinity, in particular. The upshot is that the theological exchanges with both brothers propelled Newman's theological development forward in significant ways.

From his Evangelical period on, the "principle of dogma," that is, "believing definite things about God because God has revealed them" (22), gleaned in its rudiments from the Evangelical clergyman Thomas Scott (1747–1821), plays an important role initially, recedes somewhat into the background while, under the influence of Richard Whately, he ever so gently

leans toward liberal theology, and with his decisive turning from Whately to high-church tenets, the visible church, and tradition, returns with full force to remain forever after. The other side of the “principle of dogma” is the “principle of mystery,” fully articulated and at play on the threshold of the Tractarian period. As Zuijdwegt astutely observes: “*Religious light is intellectual darkness.*” This phrase is the key to his understanding of religious mystery. . . . Mystery was constitutive of revelation itself. Since God is ineffable, he can never be fully revealed to cognitively limited creatures” (283–84). Newman holds together these two central principles of his theology, dogma and mystery, by way of the real but partial analogy between substances or attributes, an account of analogy he adopted by way of another important influence during his early years, Anglican Bishop Joseph Butler (1692–1752). As Zuijdwegt rightly observes, for Newman, “divine ineffability . . . does not mean that we can predicate nothing of the immanent Godhead but that such predication yields only limited knowledge. . . . Everything that is predicated of God . . . is mysterious, in the sense that we know something, but not all, and that our partial knowledge yields incomprehension” (286–87). Under the influence of Bishop Butler, Newman landed with an account of analogy that shows a striking similarity to that of Thomas Aquinas.

By way of a conclusion to his meticulous and close reading of the relevant sources, Zuijdwegt states the following: “By the summer of 1835, Newman had come to believe that the two formative theologies of his youth, that of the evangelicals and that of the Noetics, converged toward Socinianism. His earlier critique of liberalism had broadened into a critique of most forms of Protestantism, which also instanced reliance on the intellect, doctrinal relativism, and rejection of tradition and mystery” (336–37).

What I appreciate greatly about this work is that Zuijdwegt shows in detail how Newman understood not only the implicit entailments of the positions his interlocutors held but also, if spelled out consistently along their respective principles, how they would end in one or the other heresy: “Ultimately, what liberalism, rationalism, or Socinianism (depending on the angle) jeopardize is the relationship of responsible selves to a personal God. . . . They failed to take God seriously, as a being with his own integrity and freedom to speak and act, transcending nonetheless, all he says or does. If God is the supremely real person, as Newman believed, to deny him this is to virtually deny his existence, and thus to undermine any genuine relationship between God and self. This explains the *Apologia*’s charge that religion without dogma is ‘a dream and a mockery’” (342). If Zuijdwegt is right—and I think he is—his claim invites what one might call a “Newmanian” reading of his book. *The Arians of the Fourth Century* may be read as a commentary

on what Newman astutely regarded as the heresies of the “spirit of the age,” a spirit well and alive in the Oxford of his day and articulating itself in what he unmasked as “The Religion of the Day” (arguably one of Newman’s most famous sermons, preached on August 26, 1832). Analogously, Zuijdwegt’s book may be read as a theologically most pertinent commentary on the travails of contemporary theology *intra et extra muros Catholicae ecclesiae* held captive by the most recent instantiation of the “spirit of the age,” the religion of the day in which it articulates itself, and the heresies it breeds. Newman might identify this most recent “religion of the day” still as “that shallowness of religion, which is the result of a blinded conscience.” In response to any protestations from representatives of our “religion of the day,” Newman would observe that “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; till you see Him to be a consuming fire, and approach Him with reverence and godly fear, as being sinners, you are not even in sight of the strait gate. I do not wish you to be able to point to any particular time when you renounced the world (as it is called), and were converted; this is a deceit. Fear and love must go together; always fear, always love, to your dying day” (*Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. 1, *The Religion of the Day* [London: Longmans and Green, 1907], 322). N.V

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Social Justice and Subsidiarity: Luigi Taparelli and the Origins of Modern Catholic Social Thought by Thomas C. Behr (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2019*), ix + 259 pp.

THE STATUS OF LEO XIII’S *RERUM NOVARUM* as the origin point of what has come to be called Catholic Social Teaching (CST), or Catholic social doctrine, has been reinforced on the magisterial level by the commemorations of the encyclical by Pius XI, Paul VI, and John Paul II. It should be noted, then, that the tradition of CST is comparatively recent. Indeed, it is nearly coextensive with the twentieth-century. Nevertheless, this short tradition already calls for a *ressourcement*. As Russell Hittinger has pointed out, reflections on CST often move swiftly to the particulars of social issues without an adequate grasp even of its basic concepts: subsidiarity, solidarity, the common good, and the dignity of the person. Further, historical

developments have had dramatic impact upon the ways in which these principles have been received and developed in the course of this young tradition.

In his book *Social Justice and Subsidiarity: Luigi Taparelli and the Origins of Modern Catholic Social Thought*, Thomas C. Behr provides a major contribution to just such a *ressourcement*. He does this by presenting an introduction to the thought of the Jesuit scholar whose revival of Thomistic thought in a modern register formed the basis for Leonine social teaching. As Behr explains, Taparelli has remained a somewhat hidden figure in accounts of the genesis and development of CST. He goes unmentioned in the major social encyclicals of Leo and Pius, despite the fact that Leo himself was Taparelli's student. Because of his rhetorically and philosophically potent critique of Enlightenment thought and its effect on mid-nineteenth-century Europe, available to a popular audience through his frequent contributions to the Jesuit periodical *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Taparelli's name carried baggage for a Church that sought to move beyond the posture of reaction to liberal political orders.

However, as Behr shows in the introduction, Taparelli hardly rejected the methods and insights of modern political thought *tout court*. Behr describes Taparelli's system as a "realist social science." This terminology speaks to the promise which Taparelli found in the sociological analysis of Montesquieu in particular. Though Taparelli judged that Montesquieu held a questionable preference for a republican political form, he greatly admired Montesquieu's ability to, as Behr puts it, "bring political theory into relationship with social theory and historical contingency" (8). Though Taparelli was not familiar with the work of Alexis De Tocqueville, Behr also notes the resonances between Taparelli's work and Tocqueville's political sociology and defense of "intermediary institutions." Yet Taparelli makes up for what the sociological approaches of Montesquieu and Tocqueville lack in the way of natural, teleological principles of politics. Behr alerts the reader from the very beginning of his work that, in approaching Taparelli, he will not find a simple recapitulation of Thomas, but rather a creative approach to political thought which aims to set what is worthy in the modern empirical methodologies on firmer foundations through the recovery of Thomistic-Aristotelian principles.

In chapter 1, "Taparelli and the Age of Ideology," Behr situates Taparelli within the political conflicts of the early nineteenth century. Behr sets the scene for Taparelli's renovated Scholasticism by explaining the opposition between Catholic traditionalism (represented especially by Joseph De Maistre and Donoso Cortés) and Catholic liberalism (represented especially by Henri Dominique Lacordaire and his more radical associate Félicité de Lammenais). While the Catholic liberals aimed to convince both

the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the anticlerical, postrevolutionary governments of Europe that Christianity upheld liberal and republican ideals, the traditionalists argued that Europe's moral and political derangement was the result of a rejection of the norms of tradition—especially of papal and monarchical authority. Remarkably, Taparelli entered neither of these camps. In the opening chapter, Behr stimulates the contemporary reader's interest by showing how Taparelli responded to a crisis of ideologies—progressive and reactionary—by rediscovering the Scholastic commitment to philosophical realism and the priority of metaphysics.

In chapter 2, "Taparelli and the Revival of Scholastic Natural Law Reasoning," Behr outlines Taparelli's appropriation of the Thomistic scheme of the order of the sciences. One of Taparelli's great insights, which found its way into the magisterial pronouncements of Leo, was that the conflict of social, economic, and political ideologies and movements could be resolved only on the basis of trustworthy speculative truths. As the advocates of socialism, capitalism, monarchism, and liberalism continued to debate which way of ordering social life secured the greatest advantage, Taparelli argued that answers to questions in the practical order depend on fundamental metaphysical and anthropological principles. He objected to the paradox proper to post-Cartesian philosophical inquiry: that all reasoning must begin with doubt and obtain certainty on either empiricist or idealist grounds. For Taparelli, this modern prejudice led to bifurcations of reality into matter and spirit, soul and body, or experience and idea that ultimately led only to greater confusion in the order of political and social life. Yet Taparelli's most interesting innovation in his appropriation of the Thomistic order of the sciences was what Behr describes as the "dialectic of theory and fact" (61).

Taparelli's largest work was a compilation of his lecture notes in seven volumes, entitled *Saggio teoretico di dritto naturale appoggiato sul fatto* (Theoretical treatise of natural right based on fact). Taparelli did not simply replace post-Cartesian epistemological doubt and its resultant dualisms with so-called "foundationalist" principles to be taken on faith. Rather, he argued that, while Thomistic first principles could be regarded as "immediate" and "co-natural" (60), they could also be confirmed in the dynamic order of contingency and particularity. In other words, Scholastic first principles held up in the court of experience and proved their trustworthiness by their ability to account for empirical truth in its complexity. He thus does not forward a purely deductive theoretical apparatus, but rather one in which first principles are reinforced by evidence and application to concrete particulars, or in Taparelli's terms, where "thesis" is confirmed by "hypothesis."

Chapters 3 and 4, "Social Justice and Subsidiarity" and "Social Justice

and Subsidiarity as Complementary Principles,” provide extensive accounts of signature ideas in Taparelli’s *Saggio* which found their way into CST at its origins. Particular difficulties are encountered in framing the question of the nature of “social justice.” While the term is of Taparellian coinage, Behr notes that its precise sense is not maintained even in Pius’s 1931 *Quadragesimo Anno*, penned by one of Taparelli’s great admirers. The deployment of the term has only expanded in the years following the Second World War (and the Second Vatican Council), but has also come under harsh criticism by conservative and libertarian thinkers. As Behr notes elsewhere, the economist Friedrich Hayek’s description of “social justice” as a “hollow incantation” calls for a retrieval of its original meaning in Taparelli’s work. The overwhelming tendency is to understand “social justice” as distributive justice. By this understanding, everything which a central political authority distributes to members of a political community is owed by “social justice.” Yet, for Taparelli, “social justice” is in fact more architectonic than this. It does not point toward a gigantic field of distribution to a mass of individuals, but rather to the very virtue by which any member of a society relates to others “simply on account of their participation in that society” (86). For Taparelli, then, “social justice” is not akin to “distributive” justice, but rather to “legal” or “general” justice.

Taparelli shows us that it is equally hollow to reduce social justice to a virtue exercised toward the gigantic other ordinarily denoted by the term “society.” Rather, Taparelli views social life as composed of *numerous* “societies,” each with distinct ends, authorities, and relationships to one another. As Behr notes at numerous points in his work, Taparelli’s social science resonates with Tocqueville’s call for the preservation of intermediary societies or Edmund Burke’s “little platoons.” But Taparelli improves upon these thinkers by articulating both the natural *necessity* of the existence of distinct societies and the distinct *kinds* of societies which are found within the larger political community. Taparelli’s Scholastic influence helps him to distinguish between *voluntary* societies, *natural* societies, and *dutiful* societies. Burke and Tocqueville’s empiricism, on the other hand, runs the risk of equivocating between these forms of society or of defining all societies that are smaller than the national political communities as “intermediate”—thus relegating them to the role of power-checking devices vis-à-vis the state.

Behr provides us with an archaeology of the term “subsidiarity,” which is a Latinization of Taparelli’s *dritto ipotattico*. While the Latin *subsidium* refers to auxiliary troops, the Greek *hypotaxis* refers to the grammatical relationship between words in a sentence. Taparelli does indeed use the term *sussidio sociale* to indicate the role distinct societies play in providing the necessary

“help” in obtaining human goods. *Dritto ipotattico*, or hypotactical right, according to Behr, “conveys the idea of the cooperative ordering of parts in society, and the duties and rights pertaining to the interdependent, necessarily coordinated integrity of social relations” (103). Hypotactical right is thus also an architectonic principle of social relations; it is that principle which orders the complex arenas of *sussidio sociale* or “social help” which the variety of associations provide. Taparelli is also clear that with each “society” or “association” comes a distinct common good, and therefore a distinct authority to order the association’s members toward that common good. He devises a distinction between *deutarchies*, *protarchies*, and *ethnarchies*. Deutarchies are those many associations within a political community which “can unite themselves to obtain an end of common good,” while protarchies guide the deutarchies with their distinct ends toward a common end. Though Behr does not offer expansive remarks on the concept of “ethnarchy,” it is clear that Taparelli envisioned the possibility of what he called a “wise cosmopolitanism” (6).

The final chapter of the book, “Taparelli’s Realist Social Science,” recapitulates the arguments of the book in order. Though the concluding chapter offers little new information, Behr reminds the reader how Taparelli charted a course which took debate on social thought in Catholicism beyond the intractable conflicts of liberals and reactionaries. Appended to the book are several translated passages of Taparelli’s *Saggio*, serving as a beginning for the reader’s engagement with Taparelli’s own texts. Finally, Behr is careful to note once again that Taparelli’s thought cannot be reduced to a straightforward exposition of Thomas’s own political thought. For example, Taparelli offers a distinct view of the right to private property which influenced Leo’s views in *Rerum Novarum*. As Behr affirms, the book is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis of Taparelli’s work and its impact on CST, but rather an introduction to a critical but overlooked figure.

Behr develops a strong case that the recovery and reinvigoration of the social philosophy of Taparelli may bear fruit for twenty-first-century scholars. Not only does the reading of Taparelli provide key insights into the meaning of the principles enunciated by Leo and Pius, but his philosophical moderation in the face of competing ideologies may prove its value once again in our age. Taparelli found a coherent way of uniting the sociological and philosophical, avoiding the “fact–value” distinction endemic to sociological research, as well as philosophy’s tendency to abstract from political reality. In addition, he offers us the means for a more careful consideration of the distinction between different societies and clarifies their mutual relations. These core elements of Taparelli’s thought can lend assistance to an

age in which such distinctions are overshadowed by the claims of the “global community,” the global market, and an overly generalized use of the term “civil society.” A recovery of Taparelli’s work could provide an occasion for Thomistic philosophers and theologians to engage a figure who anticipated Leo’s Thomistic revival, albeit with a somewhat idiosyncratic appropriation of the ideas of St. Thomas. Further, Taparelli’s innovative concepts of *dritto ipotattico* and *giustizia sociale* offer starting points for a robust consideration of the complex character of the political common good and the variety of relationships which it embraces. Behr’s book offers promising avenues for contemporary reflections upon and applications of the central concepts in CST and opens the way to a more detailed study of Taparelli’s thought and its significance. N.V

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Vessel of Honor: The Virgin Birth and the Ecclesiology of Vatican II.

By Brian A. Graebe (*Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2021*), 351 pp.

THOUGH MARY’S UNDIMINISHED VIRGINITY in giving birth (*virginitas in partu*) was long understood to be an event as miraculous and a teaching as authoritative as her virginity in conceiving (*virginitas ante partum*), *virginitas in partu* underwent a kind of existential reinterpretation in the middle of the twentieth century. Authors such as Albert Mitterer and Karl Rahner suggested that, physically speaking, Jesus’s birth might have happened like any other, rupturing the hymen, distending the birth canal, and causing Mary pain, albeit not in the spiritually disintegrating way common to post-lapsarian humanity. These arguments effectively “unsettled” the traditional understanding of *virginitas in partu*, leading theologians of the highest stature to distinguish between the doctrine itself and the anatomical aspects attached to it over time. Fr. Brian Graebe has written a fine book arguing that the bodily dimensions of the virgin birth, including the physical “seal” of virginity, belong to the substance of the doctrine. This more inclusive understanding not only does better justice to the data of tradition, he argues, but illuminates the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. The book impresses by its theologically reflective method, its clarity of exposition,

and its depth of research—especially into the archival and antepreparatory sources of Vatican II.

Vessel of Honor responds in effect to Rahner's argument that physical intactness is peripheral to the dogmatic core of Mary's virginity *in partu*. To show otherwise, Rahner contended, one would need to show that such a doctrine can be found directly in the apostolic teaching, or that it, "being implicitly contained therein, has grown out of the apostolic doctrine, by a legitimate historical, logical, and theological process, as its authentic development" (68–69). If the bodily aspects of this doctrine really belonged to the deposit of faith, in other words, one would need to show how they are implied in the *traditio divino-apostolica*, as well as how they cohere organically with the rest of the deposit. The two major parts of *Vessel of Honor* respond in turn to each aspect of Rahner's challenge.

The first three chapters argue that Mary's bodily integrity in parturition belongs at least implicitly to the *traditio divino-apostolica*. Turning first to the postapostolic tradition, Fr. Graebe shows that—apart from the early exceptions of Origen and Tertullian—patristic sources either affirm or strongly imply a miraculous delivery. This constant witness culminates in the Lateran Council (649 AD), which, while not itself an ecumenical council, was received into the magisterium of Pope Martin and affirmed by the Third Council of Constantinople (680 AD). Its teaching that Mary "gave birth without corruption" (*in corruptibiliter . . . genuisse*) would be defended by Paschasius, Ratramnus, Thomas Aquinas, and others. This consensus remained undisturbed until the eve of Vatican II.

Even at Vatican II, Fr. Graebe argues in the next chapter, the Council Fathers intended to reaffirm the more inclusive idea of *virginitas in partu* against those who would marginalize its bodily dimensions. Here he really breaks new ground, delving deep into the antepreparatory, preparatory, and conciliar drafting history. He shows convincingly that many of the chief drafters of the final formula—"Our Lord, who did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it . . ." (*Lumen Gentium* §57)—saw it as excluding Rahner's and Mitterer's minimalizing interpretations. Drawing on material from the Vatican Apostolic Archives, Fr. Graebe shows that some of the very theologians who voted to omit the pointed phrase "in the birth itself" (*in ipsomet partu*) did so for tonal rather than substantive reasons.

The third chapter argues that Mary's physical integrity in birth is to be believed with divine and Catholic faith, despite the ongoing confusion introduced by Rahner and others. Admittedly, Vatican II did not *define* but merely reaffirmed the traditional understanding of *virginitas in partu*. But there are other reasons for including it in the *traditio divino-apostolica*.

Drawing heavily on Belgian Jesuit exegete Ignace de la Potterie, Fr. Graebe suggests that Scripture contains traces of the belief that Mary was spared the “bloods of childbirth” (127; see John 1:35). The doctrine meets all the criteria, moreover, for infallibility according to the universal ordinary magisterium. Enjoying at least some biblical foundation, and being seldom doubted by the faithful, Mary’s miraculous and painless parturition belongs to the revealed deposit.

The last three chapters show the significance of *virginitas in partu* for Catholic ecclesiology, thus meeting the second aspect of Rahner’s challenge: coherence within the analogy of faith. Each chapter has a different focal Marian image or series of images. And each argues that the Mary’s bodily and spiritual virginity makes her a fitting image of the Church’s faith, especially as developed by Vatican II. Foregrounding Mary as the Ark of the Covenant, chapter 4 suggests that Mary’s twofold virginity typifies two aspects of faith that *Dei Verbum* brings into better balance: *fides quae* and *fides qua*. The Church preserves an objective “body” of teaching while developing it contemplatively. Privileging the scene of Mary with disciples at Pentecost, chapter 5 argues that Mary’s *virginitas cordis et carnis* serves as an icon of the Catholic understanding of Tradition. The Fathers have often seen in Mary’s virginity a bodily image of the Church’s doctrinal purity. Appreciating the bodily dimensions of Mary’s virginity helps us both to appreciate the visible and institutional transmission of doctrine through apostolic succession and to revalorize teaching among the bishops three *munera*. Focusing on the “woman” of Revelations 12, chapter 6 notes how Mary’s virginity, properly understood, mirrors the infallibility and indefectibility of the Church. The coinherence of Mary’s bodily and spiritual virginity is analogous to the *conspiratio* of bishops and faithful in a single *sensus fidei*. The traditional connection between Mary’s preservation from parturitional corruption and her preservation from the decay of death recalls the indefectibility of this faith and points to its eschatological reward. If Mary is the archetype of the Church, in sum, then it is the “embodied” understanding of *virginitas in partu* that seems to correspond best to the ecclesiological emphases of Vatican II.

Vessel of Honor does many things well that are too seldom done in contemporary theology. Not content simply to exposit a certain thinker on a given topic, the book engages in genuine dogmatic theology. It makes a strong argument that a miraculous and painless parturition belongs to the doctrinal core of Mary’s *virginitas in partu*, and that the whole doctrine, inclusive of its anatomical aspects, ranks among those of the first paragraph of *Ad tuendam fidem* (126–27). In the second half of the book, Fr. Graebe shows

an impressive scholarly control of a number of questions at the intersection of ecclesiology and revelation: the *sensus fidei*, the act of faith, apostolic succession. His treatment of exegetical literature on Mary is careful to avoid claims exceeding the strength of the evidence. All this is finely done.

The book does, however, leave me with a few questions in the fraught field of doctrinal hermeneutics. Its careful analysis of the drafting history of *Lumen Gentium* §57 shows that Gérard Philips, Sebastian Tromp, Carolo Balić and others on the drafting commission intended by their formula to exclude any existential reduction of *virginitas in partu*. The accompanying footnote even cites Ambrose's *De institutione virginis* 52, the clearest patristic witness to Mary's bodily integrity in giving birth. But other members of the commission, such as Rahner's Jesuit confrère Otto Semmelroth, saw the same formula as inclusive of Rahner's position. As Fr. Graebe's historical research shows, moreover, the final formula took into account the animadversions of the German bishops, who considered any express affirmation of the anatomical aspects of Mary's *virginitas in partu* to be theologically premature, ecumenically insensitive, and demeaning to women. With drafters and bishops divided among themselves, can one really consider the traditional doctrine to have been reaffirmed in "meaning and intention, if not in the actual wording" (100)? With so many intentions bearing upon the same words, does one not simply have to judge by the "way the words run"? The success of the book's argument depends on the answers to such thorny questions.

Likewise raising interpretive questions is the book's conclusion that Mary's physical integrity in parturition belongs to the truths of the first paragraph of *Ad tuendam fidem*. Even if we grant that Vatican II reaffirmed this teaching as already proposed by the ordinary and universal magisterium, does this qualify it as doctrine *de fide credenda*? Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's own commentary on *Ad tuendam fidem* suggests that the teachings of the ordinary and universal magisterium may continue to belong to the second paragraph, even after they have been reaffirmed by an explicit magisterial act. He gives the example of the reservation of priestly ordination to men, which John Paul II declared to be already infallibly taught by the ordinary and universal magisterium. Could not *virginitas in partu*, affirmed but not defined by Vatican II, have analogous standing? It would be comforting to me, at least, not to have to consider theologians such as Jean Galot, Walter Kasper, and Gerhard Müller material heretics.

The fact that *Vessel of Honor* brings the reader back to such foundational questions about the nature and interpretation of dogma means that it is a very fine book. It is reverent of the mysteries that it treats. It unfolds in the

play of Scripture, Tradition, magisterium, and reason, adhering to a genuinely theological method. It has convinced me that bodily integrity belongs inseparably to the doctrine of *virginitas in partu*, whatever its doctrinal “note.” I know of no better contemporary study on the significance of Mary’s virginity. Fr. Graebe is to be congratulated. N.V.

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Configured to Christ: On Spiritual Direction and Clergy Formation

by James Keating (*Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2021*), xxix + 312 pp.

DEACON JAMES KEATING has served the Church by forming her clergy for thirty years. While he has been a seminary professor and a director of deacon formation at the diocesan level, his prolific scholarship as well as his time as director of theological formation for the Institute for Priestly Formation in Creighton, NE, made him a national figure. *Configured to Christ* is a collection of Keating’s most important essays.

While this book is a retrospective, it couldn’t be more timely. In 2016 (on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8), the Congregation for Catholic Education issued *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation—Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, a text which provides guidelines for the whole Church concerning priestly formation. In the fall of 2021, the United States Council of Catholic Bishops completed their revision of the sixth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)*, which translates the principles of the *Ratio* for the American context. With these two documents in place, it now falls upon seminaries to examine their programs in light of the vision provided by the magisterium. The next five to ten years promise to be a time of reform and renewal in seminary formation. Institutions will be looking for fresh and orienting ideas. Keating’s book can be recommended as among the best resources for the venture that awaits.

One reason Keating’s book is so valuable is its focus on the “perichoresis” of the various aspects of formation (107). This emphasis is consonant with the terminological change found in the new *PPF* from the language of formational “pillars” to the language of formational “dimensions” (see the USCCB’s 5th edition of the *PPF*, §28). The thinking behind this change seems to have been that it was too easy to imagine “pillars” as separate from

one another. The human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of formation are in fact interwoven, interdependent, and interpenetrating. While they can be distinguished, they cannot be divided. Growth in one fosters growth in the other. Keating has long understood this, as his various essays show.

The book is divided into three parts and eighteen chapters. Part 1 is entitled "The Interior Life of the Cleric." Here, readers are introduced to the integral relationship between the spiritual and intellectual formational dimensions. For example, Keating provides, in chapter 1, a sustained theoretical reflection on the relationship between academic theology and spirituality, and, in chapter 2, he examines John Henry Newman's writings as a concretized test case for the right relationship of prayer, study, and thought. Authors such as Hans Urs von Balthasar and Jean Leclercq have investigated this relationship in classic works, but Keating's presentation is notable for its accessibility, coherence, and concision. The remaining chapters of part 1 address the topics of silence and spiritual direction. Emerging from these analyses are the insights that interiority expands through discovery of Christ within. We participate in Christ as we behold, wonder, think, theologize, and pray. Keating's plea that we introduce ministerial candidates to the romance of silence is most welcome.

The second part of the book is entitled "The Formation of the Cleric." It brings together nine essays which explicitly explore the art of formation. The key to this section, and maybe to the whole book, is chapter 7, "Christ is the Sure Foundation: Priestly Human Formation Completed in and by Spiritual Formation." This chapter makes the case not only for the perichoresis of formational dimensions but also for a much stronger emphasis on spiritual formation than is often the case. Of special note is Keating's observation that spiritual formation can truly support human formation. This is an important insight. In his 1992 apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (on the formation of priests), John Paul II had articulated that human formation was "the basis of all priestly formation" (§43). Unfortunately, this line could be (and has been) interpreted problematically to mean human formation must be achieved before real progress in the other dimensions could take place. Or, it could falsely imply that, while human formation supports the other dimensions, they do not necessarily contribute to human formation. As noted, Keating counters those false steps by presenting the formational dimensions as interweaving so tightly in a perichoresis that genuine progress in one area ought to help the others advance as well. With his eye on the relationship between the spiritual and human dimensions specifically, Keating contends that progress in prayer, the theological virtues, and discernment, provides

critical support to progress in affective maturity. For certain, Keating recognizes that some developmental challenges and psychological wounds require more than just prayer to overcome. On the other hand, he does not minimize the liberation and healing that can come from greater intimacy with Christ: "Intimacy [with Christ] sustains and orders a man's personality and virtue directing him toward healing where necessary" (107).

Along similar lines, Keating contributes, in adjacent chapters, the concept of cultural wounds. These are challenges that come from one's cultural formation as a twenty-first-century American, a culture plagued by addictions, fantasy, and cynicism among other ills. Keating contends that the formator's work is "to draw the priest out of the American who is before him" (139). Spiritual formation liberates the candidate from cultural wounds by drawing the man closer to Christ in contemplation, a process which Keating calls a "suffering," for it plays out like detoxification, but its end is the regeneration of imagination and the re- and right-ordering of one's desires (102).

Part 2 also includes some bold thinking about the concrete renewal of seminary formation. Taking his cue from the USCCB statement that spiritual formation is the "core" of priestly formation (*PPF* 5th ed., §115), and Benedict XVI's contention that the priest must be, above all, a spiritual leader (Meeting with the Clergy, Warsaw Cathedral, May 25, 2006), Keating provides creative proposals for how seminaries might be oriented and structured to create spiritual leaders. Keating argues for introducing men to classic practices such as exterior silence, *lectio divina*, and contemplation while cultivating their sense of beauty. More radically, he advocates a recentering of formation away from such a heavy onus on academics and onto activities which integrate the human, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions of formation. He argues for a slower pace to seminary life with less academic work and more time for other pursuits, especially prayerful ones. In order to make this slower pace possible, he boldly entertains the ideas of extending the seminary formation year from nine to twelve months and eliminating the M.Div. degree in favor of an M.A., which would have fewer academic hour requirements. To justify such a radical reimagining, Keating rightly reminds his readers that the goal of seminary formation is not the graduation of a scholar, but the ordination of a spiritual leader.

Having shown the relationship of spiritual formation to intellectual and human formation in parts 1 and 2, Keating devotes part 3, entitled "The Pastoral Mission of the Cleric," to essays which connect spiritual and pastoral praxis. He again emphasizes that priests (and deacons) must be spiritual leaders. He discusses the homily as a prime occasion for exercising such leadership. In an original contribution, he advocates for a "contemplative

homiletics" (237) that is "ordered to encounter" (247). Keating observes that too many homilies focus on getting to the moral of the story and giving people something to do, but only for after they leave Mass. What is too often lost is a leading of people into a deeper encounter with the Lord in the moment. Effectively, the Eucharist (as presence, prayer, and thanksgiving) gets bypassed in favor of moralism. Keating's remedy is a preaching style that flows from the preacher's own prayer life. The preacher has encountered the Lord and he uses the homiletic moment to bring people into that encounter. His homily is almost like a praying out loud. Keating follows his essays on homiletics with ones that encourage ministers to better understand the lay vocation so as to better foster holiness within it, to embrace the ministerial role as teacher of prayer for the lay faithful, and to lead liturgy in ways that foster spiritual healing. In the background of this section remains the importance Keating attaches to the clergy's being true spiritual leaders.

Keating's book is excellent. It is wise, coming as it does from a man who has been involved in formation work for decades. It is also refreshingly original. While some of his bold proposals may never materialize on a grand scale, their mere suggestion helps readers appreciate the importance and urgency of spiritual formation to clergy formation. The book's title makes it likely to attract spiritual directors, but it would be highly useful for both internal and external seminary formators. The book would have tremendous value as well for lay faculty of seminaries who seek to better understand how their role in intellectual formation connects to the whole. Finally, It would also be a compelling read for seminarians and deacon candidates who would like to better understand what formation's goal is, all that goes into it, and how they can cooperate with the process. N.V.

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