

“resisting, empowering, nurturing, and liberating” (217). Gender studies has revolutionized pastoral theology to the point that it “has sparked a shift in focus from the individual to the community, from personal distress to social injustice, from personal fulfillment to the common good, from an ontology of separative selfhood to an open web of relationality” (307).

The book is very repetitive and could have been synthesized into a more focused statement. Nonetheless I highly recommend it for the wealth of insights and resources on pastoral and practical theology and their relationship within a unified academic discipline.

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IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE SPIRIT. By Diarmuid O’Murchu. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012. Pp. x + 240. \$22.

O’Murchu, an Irish priest of the Sacred Heart Missionary Congregation, is enthusiastic about the numerous ways indigenous peoples believed in “the Great Spirit.” He is convinced that the Pneumatology of Western Christianity needs to be repotted, that is to say, removed from the metaphysical soil that located the Spirit in the trinitarian personhood plant and inserted into this much earlier evidence. His conviction is shored up by several other enthusiasms. One of these is the findings of modern science, especially those from paleoanthropology and quantum theory. The other is Pentecostalism, though not in its often literalist, fundamentalist mode of operating. His biggest distress is Western dualism that has been produced in a Christianity that cleaves matter from spirit.

From all his readings and thinking, a synthesis emerges that he hopes will “stretch the inner spirit—of human and earth—toward the Great Spirit” (195). It will take some time for orthodox Christian minds to stretch as far as he is recommending. One dimension of his Pneumatology is that he wants to get rid of the propensity that modern monotheistic believers have for confecting religious systems whose purported clarities obscure the freedom and playfulness of the Spirit. This must be done because the Spirit is where energy originates from in both matter and humans. This Spirit energy also interconnects everything, from subatomic particles to the vast galaxies. Therefore, we must discard our functional personhood and enter into the ongoing event of a relational personhood. He sees the latter as what the Spirit would “lure” us toward. He traces the wrong notion of personhood back to the anthropology of ancient Greece and to an “imperial theological arrogance” in modern theologians who have not seen the depth operating in the prehistoric religions whose anthropology and Pneumatology were innate and intuitive rather than articulated.

Asian indigenous spiritualities, for example, were not affected by “narrow,” “biologically reductionist,” “patriarchal,” Western notions of personhood. Consequently, they perceived the mystery of a cosmic life force that connects all life forms to one another. Spirit for them was transpersonal, not impersonal. Jesus is a key figure in O’M.’s synthesis. He was led by the Spirit but left the Spirit to his followers to take up from what he had started. But the Christology that developed in the West misconstrued him, making him into the *Pantocrator* of the universe rather than the way and truth of the life that the Spirit would empower. O’M. emphasizes the invocation of the Spirit at eucharistic worship that transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus, as a major move that could refocus Christians on the primacy of the Spirit. O’M.’s synthesis sees the agenda of the Spirit as trying to move the church past its own parochial agenda. Rather the Spirit blows where it will and does not tolerate efforts at domesticating it. O’M. recommends that we get beyond our present Pneumatology to one that does justice to the Holy Mystery. Science invites that breadth. Pentecostalism conveys that possibility.

O’M.’s credentials, according to his self-description, for making such unusual assertions about the Spirit are unusual. He is neither an academic nor a theologian; he is an intellectual and social scientist. And he concedes that “the distinction between the divine and human in Jesus is a theological question beyond my competence as a social scientist” (153). Nonetheless, he proposes that we “re-vision God at work in creation primarily in the power of Holy Spirit.” Why is this necessary? Because “much of the theological rhetoric of past and present Scholasticism, needs to give way to an experiential appropriation of a living and vibrant faith, inspired primarily by the pervasive Spirit of the Holy One in our midst” (154).

To whom shall we go to help us re-vision the mystery? For O’M., to native peoples, the indigenous, pretheological peoples of the world for whom the mystery seemed to be second nature. More specifically, to native American religions, Australian aborigines, African animism, and the indigenous religions of Asia. These sources enable O’M. to uncover an “archetype” and, as far as I can tell, an imaginary infinite that would seem to need more data to ground the creative assertions he is making about Spirit at work so long ago, and intercontinentally at that. He is certainly a free spirit about Spirit! One of the values of a theological tradition is that its furrow is linear. When it comes to a theology of Spirit, a furrow is not likely to be something the Spirit follows. Neither does O’M.! But entering the terrain of Spirit knowledge evokes the question of dark spirits; they do not get their due here. Neither does the internecine ferocity of tribal identities of these prehistoric religions over which the Great Spirit supposedly presided.

To use O’M.’s own criterion for discernment of material: “only when the seeing has been done in depth (and, of course, it is an ongoing process)

can we responsibly move to the next stage, *judging*” (214). This provocative, stimulating volume, hopefully will be followed by others, maybe less intuitive and more “academic.”

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DU CHRIST À LA TRINITÉ: PENSER LES MYSTÈRES DU CHRIST APRÈS THOMAS D'AQUIN ET BALTHASAR. By Étienne Vetö. Paris: Cerf, 2012. Pp. 478. €45.

When Christians say “Our Father,” are they addressing the first Person of the Trinity, thus expressing their participation in the intratrinitarian relations? Or are they addressing the one God, who is “Father” as creator of the world, whose works *ad extra* are without differentiation of persons?

Aquinas explicitly affirms the latter. So does Balthasar, despite his close adherence to the differentiation of the roles of the three Persons in the Scriptures. Vetö has attempted a renewed trinitarian theology inspired by these two, but overcoming their perceived limitations and keeping a “balance” between the unity and distinctions in God. To do this, he suggests a modification of the traditional doctrine of God’s operations *ad extra* and its corollary, the notion of “appropriation.” He carefully reviews the history of the doctrine of God’s operations, concluding that the intent of the magisterial statements does not preclude his reformulation. He proposes a distinction between God’s “operation,” which is common to all three Persons, and the three different personal “activities” within that operation.

V. devotes the final third of his book to making this argument. The prior two sections are devoted to the treatment of the Trinity in the events of the life of Christ in the theologies of Aquinas and Balthasar. In the chapters on Aquinas there is a good deal of repetitiveness. V. examines every mention of Father and Spirit in the treatment of the “mysteries” of Christ’s life in the *Tertia pars* of the *Summa*, only to conclude each time that for Thomas the action involved is common to all three Persons, and is merely “appropriated” to a single Person. Aquinas hence overemphasizes God’s unity.

The chapters on the trinitarian dimension in Balthasar’s Christology would be valuable to any student of Balthasar. Although V.’s sympathy with Balthasar is obvious and explicit, he does not accept Balthasar’s views uncritically. He points out significant inconsistencies, if not contradictions, in Balthasar’s thought. At one point he remarks, “Let us note—and regret?—the determinative influence of A[drienne]. von Speyr” (264 n. 1). He twice cites Rahner’s remark that “Balthasar is a tritheist” (25, 301). V. disagrees; but he finds that in contrast to Aquinas, Balthasar errs on the side of plurality.

The book has much to recommend it to a student of trinitarian theology. The lengthy sections of exposition and commentary on Aquinas