through art and technology, echoes what was critical in earlier chapters: knowing the right questions is essential to knowing how to communicate faith effectively. It must be noted that the chapter dealing with online learning is already dated, although certain aspects remain valid and relevant.

This collection does not treat 21st-century influences of the new cosmology or of feminist theologies, the significance of recent archeological findings or discoveries of historical documents, or the role of the Southern Hemisphere in the development and identity of the Church. It is, however, solidly rooted in the vision of Vatican II and pushes readers, e.g., the communicator of faith, seriously to consider both goals and methodologies in one's efforts toward effective faith formation. In his penultimate chapter, S. presents the relationship between faith and education through the metaphor of dance. With this compelling image of a partnering activity that is patterned and predictable while at the same time spontaneous and creative, he and his collaborators offer a well-honed, theologically sound framework for understanding the ministries of witness, evangelization, and catechesis in the Church today. *Communicating Faith* will serve well as a text for students in pastoral ministry programs, catechist formation programs, and seminaries, and as a worthy resource for anyone serious about communicating faith.

Holy Names University, Oakland, Calif. MIRIAM MALONE, S.N.J.M.

THE NATURAL DESIRE TO SEE GOD ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS AND HIS INTERPRETERS. By Lawrence Feingold. Faith and Reason: Studies in Catholic Theology and Philosophy. 2nd ed. Naples, Fla.: Ave Maria, 2010. Pp. xxxvii + 490. $34.95.

This probative book, originally an excellent doctoral thesis, is comprehensive, detailed, and measured. Feingold expatiates a centuries-old issue: Does Aquinas's argument about the "natural desire" to see God contradict what he repeatedly says about the gratuitous and strictly supernatural character of that end? Although there are textual ambiguities in Aquinas's argument, the baroque Thomist commentators effectively dispel them, so F. argues, by explaining the "natural desire" to see God's essence as a supernatural desire divinely elicited from the *potentia obedientialis* of human nature. Stepping out of this long line of systematizing Thomists, 20th-century scholars (Henri de Lubac, Etienne Gilson, Jorge Laporta, and Anton Pegis) historically deconstructed rather than logically smoothed out Aquinas's variant statements about the *telos* of human nature *within* the actual economy of grace. Their historical optic: Aquinas allows the possibility of man's creation *in puris naturalibus* (e.g., *Quodlibet* 1, q. 4, a. 3, co.); yet, it is not a doctrinal focal point. Aquinas develops his rationally

grounded metaphysics as a servant of his revealed theology. Hence, he conceives human nature in a way that neither Aristotle himself could nor the 13th-century Aristotelians in the Faculty of Arts would: "natura praeambula est ad gratiam" (*In Boeth. de trin.* q. 2, a. 3).

Sed contra: F. adeptly defends the commentators using their own method of doctrinally homogenizing the texts so that they fit together without contradiction (see, e.g., 156–58). His defense presents an encyclopedia of texts and reviews a host of theologians, but Cajetan is the chief protagonist and de Lubac the chief antagonist. Given the historically decontextualized terms in which he presents the issue and the method by which he resolves the doctrinal ambiguities in Aquinas, F. has undoubtedly resuscitated the Thomist commentators.

Still, hermeneutical questions remain, small and large, that perhaps cannot be dispositively answered. The *Index Thomisticus* lists 21 cases in 17 different (textual) places of *potentia obedientiae*; two cases in two places of *potentia obedientialis*. Both terms signify the potency that can be actualized in any being, beyond the generic coordination of passive and active natural powers, by a generically higher agent or, especially, by the Christian believer's omnipotent God. In nine of the 19 places, the text refers to "miracles," which are, most evidently, divine actuations of a being's *potentia obedientialis*. While some miracles use the natural powers of the creature upon which God acts, others do not. *Miracles* include healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, changing water into wine, generating Eve from Adam's rib, the Virgin Mary's conception of Christ, and the glory of the impassible resurrected body, but *not* the infusion of the supernatural virtues into the postlapsarian soul, though the latter too is plausibly regarded as a divine actuation of human nature's *potentia obedientialis*. In contrast, the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* prescinds from any notion of a preexisting potency, *naturalis* or *obedientialis*.

Against this background, it is notable, *pace* F. (149 n. 130), that Aquinas never explicitly identifies the attainment of man's gratuitous supernatural end as an actuation of human nature's *potentia obedientialis*. Why not? Was it too obvious to be mentioned, a *lapsus mentis*, or did Aquinas have some reservation about using that term? We do not and cannot know; we can only surmise. Aquinas tried to understand how man is enabled, by nature as well as grace—both given concomitantly in the first moment of creation—to be *capax Dei*. Man is created as an embodied spiritual substance that can be satisfied only by attaining *the* universal or infinite truth and goodness. This tenet impels the argument in *Summa contra gentiles* 3, chaps. 16–63. How should we read these chapters if we allow that the living thought of a mind as historically resonant, responsive, and metaphysically original as Aquinas's engenders many complementary but not always perfectly aligned insights? Should we conform them by suppressing

la différence and explicating inferences (146)? In so doing, the baroque commentators pertain to the history of Thomism more than they do to Aquinas. For all their finesse, the commentators' concept of *potentia obedientialis* does not encapsulate everything that Aquinas says about the intrinsic spiritual dynamic of human nature. So F. adds a newer fillip: a *specific* obediential potency "rooted in our spiritual nature" (159). The terminological refinement, however, only highlights the problem anew. It is the unique spirituality of human nature as a nature, and not exclusively God's omnipotence over any created nature, that grounds the "specificity" of this obediential potency. F. hedges, "we are dealing with a great mystery" (154): yes, but also with the hermeneutical limitations of commentarial Thomism.

Georgetown University, Washington DENIS J. M. BRADLEY

NATURA PURA: ON THE RECOVERY OF NATURE IN THE DOCTRINE OF Grace. By Steven A. Long. New York: Fordham University, 2010. Pp. viii + 282. $65.

This polemical but usefully provocative book consists of an introduction; four sometimes-repetitive chapters that put especially Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthazar under Long's microscope; a fifth chapter, "Conclusion" that could be better labeled "Summary"; and a devout appendix distancing the insightful Regensburg address of Pope Benedict XVI from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's dubious "inflections" about "neoscholastic rationalism." These chapters—except for the third, which takes "Analytic Thomism" to task for neglecting the proper metaphysical foundations of philosophy—are variations on a theme: the urgent need to recover, *contre la nouvelle théologie* (13), the correct conception of the nature-grace relationship, namely, the one developed by the line of 15th-to-17th-century Thomist commentators. L. champions their dilation on man's possible but merely hypothetical creation in the *status purae naturae.* Chapter 1, backed by the massive study of Lawrence Feingold, peruses the few texts where Aquinas considers the possibility of man's creation "*in puris naturalibus.*" L. grants that Thomistic man was created, from the first moment, in grace with a supernatural destiny. Nonetheless, L. doggedly reiterates that the alternative hypothesis, the possibility of man's being created without any supernatural grace or destiny, is the doctrinal fulcrum essential for understanding Aquinas (8). More to the point, that hypothesis is necessary for resolving the "enormous complication and confusion following the Second Vatican Council" (211), as, in chapter 4, where L. argues that secular politics can be rightly ordered only in reference to the theoretical content of "theonomic" natural law and not Maritain's "minimal practical consensus expressed in terms of unordered rights" (144).