

music that readers can appreciate, and the visual arts of painting and film media-making. He rightly and gently chides both the art world and religious institutions that have maintained a stubborn divide.

Finally, B. situates the conversation between the art world and religious institutions and their mutual concerns with concrete examples of a number of Christian congregations, particularly St. Gregory of Nyssa Church in San Francisco, as models of fruitful interchange that can take place and yield something new in the midst of an ancient rhythm.

For students who wrestle with postmodernism's cultural and ecclesiological discomfort, this volume is an accessible doorway into the iconic character of artistic fashioning and its use in church communities. The work encourages persons of faith to allow great art to give voice and shape to God's goodness, truth, and beauty to which the tradition holds fast and for which the community is a sacred vessel. Praise and thanksgiving, fashioned within an ancient *ordo*, is the central expression of this holy encounter. The liturgy has a rhythm and harmony to which B. does not refer. He might have chosen his primary metaphor, jazz, to show how it could illumine the liturgical dynamic.

This is the seventh book in a series dedicated to deepening the dialogue between "The Church and Postmodern Culture." Series editor James K. A. Smith set the tone in his foreword: artistic engagement, he contends, may be the antidote "for those of us who have seen postmodernism . . . help the church awake from its modern slumbers" (x). But the promise the liturgy holds for Christian identity and the world's healing and wholeness seems to ask more than Smith deems appropriate. In recommending B.'s work, Smith regrettably states, "So one could hope that a new appreciation for the arts of the church might be a kind of 'gateway drug' that draws congregations to liturgical renewal" (xi). One should hope that any renewal of the liturgy will be more of a shimmering icon into profound Mystery than a gateway into low stakes that merely encourage postmodern folks to try out "liturgy" as an answer to numbing emptiness. Both liturgy and good art offer much more than that.

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Thomas Merton: Selected Essays. Edited by Patrick F. O'Connell. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013. Pp. xviii + 493. \$50.

About two years ago, I tried again to read Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain*, only to put it down after about 30 pages remarking to myself that its shelf life had expired: it had become a period piece. Thus, it was with some hesitation, but also curiosity, that I accepted the invitation to review O'Connell's selection of 33 of M.'s essays. I am glad I did so.

In an appendix to this volume O'Connell lists, in chronological order, some 250 essays by M. written over his lifetime, indicating in bold print the 33 he is now

reproducing. That list itself is worth the price of this book. These 33 are samplings of the themes M. wrote about: monastic history and spirituality; liturgy; Eastern religions; selective subjects of literary interest (e.g., Pasternak, Camus, Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor); social justice issues, especially war and peace, and so on. Many of the originals were published in Catholic periodicals no longer extant or in collections where M. was just one of many contributors.

The editor's aim in publishing this collection is to show the vast breadth and scope of M.'s output as an essayist, and he admirably proves his point. To introduce each one of the essays, the editor has provided excellent headnotes, all of which I found informative and helpful.

The editor's second aim was to produce a book that could act as an introduction to M.'s writings in general for a new and younger generation. In his admirable introduction, the editor briefly comments on the staying power of M.'s works and cites M.'s own opinion that such appeal was grounded in the perception that he did not seek to say the last or definitive word about any subject. (In this statement M. was echoing the attitude of St. Benedict in chapter 58 of his Rule where the criterion a novice master should use to determine if a candidate has a vocation is "whether he truly seeks God" (*si revera Deum quaerit*). The criterion is not whether he has found God. (When I preached at M.'s funeral Mass in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1968, I used his theme of the persistent searcher, describing M. as one never totally satisfied with the current state of our knowledge but always seeking to expand his and our horizons.) The editor does not go into depth on the theme of the staying power of M.'s writings and thoughts from one generation to another and does not assert whether he used such a criterion in selecting these particular essays in the book.

On reading these essays, I noted two other points that are not dealt with but that often came to mind. First, how much influence did the Cistercian censors have on the final product? In all the publications of M.'s works before Vatican II this issue floats like a shadowy figure in the background. Some generalizations in correspondence with the abbot general of the Trappists are quoted here and there, especially in reference to which themes Merton was permitted to write on, but, at least for his most important works (like some found in this collection), it would have been helpful to know how the first draft submitted may have differed from the published text. Surely by now we should be able to have access to the archives of the Trappist Order to ascertain whether significant changes were made.

Second, did theologians of the *ressourcement* before, during, or after Vatican II have any perceptible influence on M.? Searching the index of this book one finds very few theologians mentioned, even in passing. Works by theologians such as de Lubac, Congar, Chenu, Daniélou, Chardin, and Balthasar are not cited, to say nothing of the German and Dutch theologians who were his contemporaries. M.'s personal studies in monastic patristic literature were important in his appreciation of the thrust of Vatican II on topics pertinent to monks and their *aggiornamento*, but there is no similar research in other fields. One could reply that his gifts were primarily in the area of spirituality and not speculative theology, but I find that distinction weak.

Someday M.'s complete works will appear in a series of numerous, almost endless, volumes on bookshelves (or on the Internet). Then we will be able to read all 250 of his essays! The editor of this volume has given us an excellent foretaste of what is yet to come.

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Buying the Field: Catholic Religious Life in Mission to the World. By Sandra M. Schneiders, I.H.M. Religious Life in a New Millennium 3. New York: Paulist, 2013. Pp. xxxiv + 763. \$39.95.

This is the final volume of Schneiders's trilogy developing ministerial religious life as "a Christian mystical-prophetic lifeform, given to the church by the Holy Spirit for the sake of the world, and constituted by perpetual profession of consecrated celibacy, evangelical poverty, and prophetic obedience lived in transcendent community and ministry" (615). Having addressed celibacy in volume 2, S. here considers religious life as missioned to the world and offers a reconceptualization of the vows of poverty and obedience reflective of the transformation that has occurred in apostolic congregations. S. articulates a coherent vision of religious life firmly rooted in the gospel, illustrative of the seriousness with which religious approached the three-pronged task of Vatican II (*ressourcement*, development, *aggiornamento*) and attentive to the challenges religious confront today.

S. constructs a theology to support the "world engagement" of apostolic religious who, even before the council, began to identify ministry as "absolutely central to their vocation and identity" (271). Since religious historically defined themselves as "fleeing the world," the council's positive turn toward the world "inaugurated a transformation in self-understanding, life and mission" in religious life (603). S. critiques and reappropriates religious life as a "renunciation of the world." Focusing on the Gospel of John, S. establishes the scriptural use of "world" to refer foremost to the good creation loved by God (47). Negatively, "world" is also used as a metaphor that "refers to an imaginative construction of reality according to the coordinates of evil" (47). It is this "world" which religious "die to" (47–48). Instead, religious "undertake to live the Resurrection in a radical way within history . . . by creating and living within an 'alternate world' which derives its coordinates exclusively from the Gospel" (68). This "alternate world" provides the rich conceptual foundation from which S. unfolds "evangelical poverty" and "prophetic obedience" as structuring an alternative economic and political world in community and ministry.

S. presents evangelical poverty as structuring a "gift economy" rooted in the biblical vision of interdependence and reliance on God. Engaging in work that is also ministry and service to those most in need is central to the apostolic mission