

*Thomas Aquinas: A Portrait.* By Denys Turner. New Haven: Yale University, 2013. Pp. xi + 300. \$28.

As an invitation to the study of Thomas Aquinas, Turner's book is of the first rank. In its sinuous eight-chapter sprint through everything from trinitarian relations to medieval Parisian politics, the book provokes, tantalizes, debunks, and—particularly for the general audience for whom T. writes—dizzies. Yet, even if nonspecialists do not always follow the brisk pace or free reformulations of Aquinas's claims, they will certainly grasp that in him they are dealing not only with a prodigious intellect animated by love for God, but also with a man whose sainthood is beheld in its very invisibility, the degree to which Aquinas makes himself a sheer vessel of Wisdom. This evidence of holiness reaches its apogee in the *Summa theologiae*'s "elected incompleteness" (45), parsed not as reversion to the monastic silence of Aquinas's youth, but as unifying consummation of his Dominican charism, theological identity, and Christlikeness: his final—and highest—sermon, *respondeo*, and act of *caritas*.

As a portrait of Aquinas, however, the book's success is less unequivocal, both in composition and in fidelity. Thus, Aquinas's invisibility, lack of "personal style," and eschewal of unnecessary provocation is celebrated in rhetoric that is sometimes Chestertonian (36, 65, 95). Moreover, broad references to "today's theologians" (153) and depictions of opponents do not always reinforce T.'s praise of Aquinas's own precision, patience, and charity (163). As for substance, convincing chapters on Aquinas's "materialism" and conception of soul-as-form vindicate Aquinas and his particularly Christian priorities in his moment and ours, and culminate in an elegantly realized connection to his sacramentalism (97–98), which the final chapter skillfully unfolds. Yet, excellences aside, these and especially intervening chapters occasionally blur distinctions (will's formal object vs. material object), forward unreconciled claims (183, 186), or present as uncontroversial quick readings on exceedingly complex and long-contested topics (desire for God; natural law).

And when T. declares Aquinas's decision to join the Dominicans—perhaps the single most determinative choice of his life—to be "uncharacteristically throwing caution to the winds" (13), one wonders whether, more than T.'s trope of invisibility, it may be Aquinas's single-heartedness, his *non nisi te*, that defines him above all. Still, not since Herbert McCabe has Aquinas seemed so enticing.

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*The Text and Contexts of Ignatius Loyola's "Autobiography."* By John M. McManamon, S.J. New York: Fordham University, 2013. Pp. xv + 230. \$80; \$25.

McManamon presents an engaging study of the *Acta* (commonly known as the "Autobiography") of St. Ignatius Loyola, carefully exploring the text, its origins, history, as well as its theological and spiritual significance. The book offers new