

Newman and Life in the Spirit. Theological Reflections on Spirituality for Today. Edited by John R. Connolly and Brian W. Hughes. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. Pp. xi + 236. \$35.

“Today the Catholic Church needs a personal approach to Christian spirituality wedded to social concern” (5). The rationale for this book is the enduring significance of Newman’s spirituality for Christian living today. Newman never wrote a treatise specifically on the topic of spirituality. So the authors have gathered his insights scattered throughout his works under various themes: (1) his “four conversions” as “a process both gradual and careful” (20); (2) the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as “the foundation of Newman’s spirituality” (43); (3) historical consciousness in the development of doctrine; (4) sympathy; (5) the power of imagination in real assent that leads to action; (6) incarnational spirituality marked by Christ’s presence; (7) Mary as “the model of faithful reception of the divine Word” (131, emphasis original); (8) the transition from “other-worldly” to “this-worldly” holiness (134); (9) the power of “personal influence” in the communion of saints, especially, for Newman, Philip Neri (171); (10) oratorian spirituality embodied in the early church’s *disciplina arcani*, the mystical adoration of the Trinity (194).

The book is the result of research by participants in an interest group on the spirituality of Newman at the Catholic Theological Society of America conventions (2011, 2012, 2013). Each chapter is well written and informative, valuable both for Newman novices and the well-versed. The analysis of Newman’s less well-known “Oratory Papers” (1846–1878) gives insight into Newman’s mysticism and practical wisdom. “For Newman, all genuine spirituality is marked by a strong personal engagement in one’s own process of becoming the person one already is in the eyes of God” (188). Mystical adoration of the Trinity corresponds to playing the role God assigns to each one in life: “He then is perfect who does the work of the day perfectly” (197, citing Oratory Paper 28).

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Flannery O’Connor: Writing a Theology of Disabled Humanity. By Timothy J. Basselin. Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2013. Pp. xi + 146. \$29.95.

Basselin introduces the potential intersections between theological and disability studies in O’Connor’s works. With a literary critic’s insight, B. surveys O’Connor’s grotesque characters—initially on the periphery and often despised—for the mystery and the mirror that many of them embody in their abnormality. In O’Connor’s fiction, the mirror image of the grotesque exposes the hypocrisy of the central characters, often reckoning divine judgment upon themselves, while a divine grace emanates from the grotesque characters in their midst.

To contextualize his thesis on O’Connor’s theology of a disabled humanity, B. explores O’Connor’s reflections on the introduction she wrote for the biography of a