

of mind, and Thomas Aquinas's appropriation of Aristotle. Rahner's method focused, in part, on the anthropocentric foundation of the truths of the Christian faith. Rahner understood the realities of the faith as the keys that unlock the multiple mysteries of what it means to be a human being: theology is anthropology, and anthropology is theology. Rahner's critical reverence for the Christian tradition, coupled with his keen sense of the needs of the contemporary world, produced a holistic approach to Christianity that makes its truths more intelligible and credible. B.'s book makes this holistic approach plain.

A 1960s article in *The National Catholic Reporter* dismissed Rahner's theology as woefully abstract, spiritually and pastorally sterile, and irrelevant for Christian living. B., agreeing with Rahner, seeks to correct this view. He asserts that the more scientific theology is, the more spiritually and pastorally relevant it will be; he also points out that many of Rahner's works are sermons, homilies, contemplations, prayers, and timely spiritual and pastoral pieces, written for specific audiences in particular moments. Chapter 5 contains reflections on how profoundly Rahner influenced B.'s own priestly spiritual and pastoral life—B.'s meditations on Mother Teresa and John Updike should not be missed.

Although somewhat less than trenchant, the epilogue, "Defending Rahner against His Critics," adequately shows that Rahner not only easily refuted his detractors but also assimilated and creatively deepened their valid insights. The epilogue also underscores Rahner's enduring influence in the theological world. As I have often said, "Karl Rahner always buries his undertakers."

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*Ethics and Spirituality*. Edited by Charles E. Curran and Lisa A. Fullam. Readings in Moral Theology 17. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2014. Pp. xii + 275. \$29.95.

We live in an age when increasing numbers of people, especially in the younger generations, refer to themselves as "spiritual but not religious." Beyond that phrase often lies a desire to distance oneself from an institution that is experienced as restricting and out-of-touch; it also bespeaks a yearning for spiritual nourishment, often without much accountability for ethical behavior. In many of its selections, this collection of writings makes the case that a robust spirituality has implications for relationships with others and the world.

In this installment of the well-known Readings in Moral Theology series, the editors have divided this collection of 15 essays into three parts of equal size. Part I, featuring selections from Mark O'Keefe, Norbert Rigali, Richard Gula, William Spohn, and Curran himself, focuses on foundational issues such as the nature of ethics and spirituality as distinct academic disciplines, their historical divergence, and the ways they might be fruitfully reconnected today. As a teacher, I wish they had included a sample from one of the old manuals of moral theology, since examining that style of

reasoning typically elucidates an ethics isolated from spiritual practice. However, for those interested in researching and writing about the modern reintegration of ethics and spirituality, this first section in particular offers a helpful group of essays.

Parts II and III are comprised of an eclectic mix of essays illustrating the possibilities that arise when spirituality and ethics are rejoined. Here the editors have drawn from the works of such well-known figures as Enda McDonagh, Walter Burghardt, James Keenan, Kenneth Himes, and Ada María Isasi-Díaz, among others. These authors offer unquestionably rich reflections on prayer, justice, virtue ethics, conscience, and the common good from a framework in which spiritual and moral practices are conjoined. Though most of these essays were written over 15 years ago, they do not feel dated. Overall the book gathers together an outstanding collection of essays that together witness to the dynamism of an integrated spiritual and moral life.

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*Decoding Vatican II: Interpretation and Ongoing Reception.* By Catherine E. Clifford. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2014. Pp. xii + 131. \$12.95.

When discussing the teaching and implementation of Vatican II—which was, incidentally, the 21st, not the 22nd, ecumenical council (3)—C. engages with the impact of such notable landmarks as the 1985 synod of bishops, Pope Benedict’s Christmas address of 2005, and the election of Pope Francis. C. balances the conciliar authors, readers, and the texts themselves, as well as the changing contexts in church and world for interpreting and receiving these texts. Apropos of the council’s “public,” she valuably explores “the role played by the advance in levels of literacy” (56). The modern revolution in literacy has dramatically shaped the way conciliar teaching has been received, as well as the way the *sensus fidelium* has been expressed.

When C. assesses new habits of dialogue, she rightly points out how dialogue with “others” has proved more successful than dialogue within the Catholic Church (104–10). Creating space for genuine dialogue within the Catholic household has lagged behind the progress made in dialogue with other Christians, with Jews, and with those of other faiths (or of no faith at all).

Despite a promising analysis, several errors stand out: Gabriel Flynn (not Daly) coedited *Ressourcement* (114); the surname of Joseph Fitzmyer suffers (119); Sebastian is the first name of Father Tromp (121); and Cardinal Cassidy’s second name is “Idris,” not “Idriss” (131).

All in all, C.’s monograph is a most welcome addition to the still lively work of interpreting and receiving the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

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