

lives, today represent a major force in shaping cultural and religious life in the United States. The book provides a much-needed and comprehensive view of the beginnings, development, and present state of Latino AG. It makes a most valuable and lasting contribution to scholars and practitioners in the field.

Luis Calero, S.J.
Santa Clara University

A Bridge across the Ocean: The United States and the Holy See between the Two World Wars. By Luca Castagna. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2014. Pp. xviii + 193. \$49.85.

This volume is a significant and, to some extent, original contribution to the study of Vatican diplomacy and to the history of the political and diplomatic relations between the United States and the Holy See from World War I to the opening days of World War II.

Conceived as a doctoral dissertation, and already published in Italian, Castagna's book is enriched by Gerald P. Fogarty's foreword and Italian scholar Luigino Rossi's afterword. Exhaustive and well written, C.'s work is the fruit of extensive study of primary sources of diverse provenance—mostly used for the first time—found in the Vatican Secret Archives, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library, the US National Archives, the Archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia. C. supplements these sources with newspapers and journals from both the United States and Italy.

C. accurately and critically analyzes the dialogue—and its absence—between Washington, Rome, and the American Catholic hierarchy, contextualizing US–Vatican rapprochement on the eve of World War II “within the disturbing international scenario” (xv) of the first two decades of the 20th century. Far from presenting a sterile picture of American and Vatican foreign policy, C. provides a fascinating and vivid account of the main phases of alliance and conflict between the United States and the Holy See during a dramatic period of world history.

Considering both the international and the internal sphere, C. discusses the spread of anti-Catholicism in the United States in the early 1900s and its repercussions on the American administration's behavior during and after the Versailles Conference (1919). As C. correctly argues, in the years of the Great War “the clash between Benedict XV” and the Wilsonian White House “became more or less total since the [President] considered pontifical diplomacy an inappropriate interference by a spiritual leader” (11). As a consequence, Wilson “opposed both all participation on the part of the Holy See to [sic] the Versailles Peace Conference and Vatican efforts to arbitrate between belligerent countries” (11).

Wilson's anti-Catholic obstinacy and intense skepticism toward the potentialities of papal diplomacy erected a wall of incomprehension between the United States and the Vatican. At the same time, a resurgence of nationalism and a fresh wave of anti-Catholic nativism started to permeate American society, virtually nixing any prospect

of approaching the Holy See. “Immersed in the problem of conversion and therefore in the so-called postwar normalcy” (xiv), all three Republican administrations of the 1920s showed their almost absolute unwillingness to deal with anti-Catholic sentiments. On the other hand, Benedict XV’s successor, Pius XI—committed as he was to a concordat policy—did not seem to have “any particular intention” (xv) of mobilizing Vatican diplomacy and the American episcopate toward reestablishing dialogue with Washington. A progressive—and radical—change in US–Vatican relations had to await the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932 and his campaign for social reforms.

As C. explains, the substantial convergence of the inspiring aims of Roosevelt’s New Deal and the Catholic Church’s social doctrine prompted the rehabilitation of Catholicism in American society, and also resulted in an unprecedented participation of Catholics in the national sociopolitical arena. The activism of certain prominent new leaders of the American Church helped reestablish a direct line of communication between the national episcopate and the White House. The escalation of the Nazi-Fascist regimes—alarming to both Roosevelt and the Vatican—produced an alignment of views on the common need to preserve world peace and stability, and laid the foundation for a mutual collaboration and strategic partnership—an embryonic “alliance” well symbolized by the 1936 meeting between the just-re-elected Democratic President and the then-Cardinal Secretary of State and future Pope Pius XII, Eugenio Pacelli.

Three years after that historical meeting, Roosevelt decided to brave the possible hostility of American Protestant circles by assigning his own “Personal Representative” to the pope—an unofficial diplomatic post specifically created for the occasion. Myron Charles Taylor, an executive of the United States Steel Corporation and an Episcopalian, took on this role, with the personal rank, but not title of, ambassador.

The establishment of full diplomatic relations between the United States and the Holy See would have to wait until 1984. But Roosevelt’s wise move, as C. demonstrates, had already built the first “bridge across the ocean.”

Andrea Di Stefano
University of New Hampshire in Italy

Visions of Amen: The Early Life and Music of Olivier Messiaen. By Stephen Schloesser. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. xxi + 572. \$50.

This dazzling, monumental study of the French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) is more than equal to the task of charting the life, imagination, and work of a rare genius. The author, a cultural historian thoroughly conversant with theology, is an accomplished musician himself, and perhaps the only scholar who could possibly offer such a comprehensive and penetrating examination of Messiaen, who represented the acme of 20th-century French modernism and a Catholicism of mystical depth and radical theological vision. One of Messiaen’s most memorable works, “Quartet for the End of Time,” was composed while he was a prisoner of the Nazis; he