

Religious groups in general are persecuted because of governments' "one nation, one religion/culture" ideology, fear of Islamic terrorism, perceived threats to the Hindu caste system, and their identification as breeding grounds of democratic (e.g. Christians in China) or separatist movements (e.g. Buddhists in Tibet and Muslim Uighurs in China). The forms of persecution range from prejudice to systematic discrimination/exclusion in the work place and public life, unjust use of blasphemy laws, cross demolition campaigns, to violent suppression or being declared non-citizens. The discrimination oftentimes constitutes policies against minority groups of which religious adherents are a part (e.g. Karen and Tamil Christians). Persecution occurs too within a religious group; Sunni fundamentalists in Indonesia and Pakistan consider Shias and the Ahmadis, who oppose the use of terrorism and violence to promote jihad, as infidels and non-Muslims, respectively.

Although this small book could have gone deeper in its analysis by delving into notions of nationhood and cultural rights, it is in itself already a treasure trove of information for those interested in the issue of restriction on religious freedom and the current state of the church in Asia.

Agnes M. Brazal

De la Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Einheit in Synodalität: Die offiziellen Dokumente der Orthodoxen Synode auf Kreta 18. bis 26 Juni 2016. Trans. Barbara Hallensleben. Epiphania Egregia 12. Münster: Aschendorff, 2016. Pp. iv + 112. €12.

This book is a German translation of all the pre-conciliar and conciliar documents of the "Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church" which took place in Crete on June 18–26, 2016. The Opening Address of Patriarch Bartholomew cites three main themes in announcing the agenda of the council: the significance of the principle of synodality; internal matters concerning the order of the Orthodox Churches; and pastoral matters pertaining to the relations between the Orthodox Churches, other Christians, and the rest of the world. This outline provides an apt taxonomy for the contents of the synodal documents. The predominant theme of the overall contents of the synodal documents is fittingly reiterated in the title of this book, "unity in synodality." In his opening address, Bartholomew contends that the process of synodality is intrinsic to the mystery of the church, while the "Message of the Synod (*Botschaft*)" reaffirms that the key priority of the synod was to proclaim the unity of the Orthodox Church. In dialectical tension with this positive emphasis is the recurring evocation of the historical and continuing difficulties of the Orthodox Churches in giving concrete expression of their unity. The "internal matters" treated by the synodal documents are preoccupied primarily with these difficulties, especially with the challenges which the Orthodox structure of "autocephaly" pose to the enactment of its catholicity and unity. Among other "internal matters," marriage and fasting receive special attention. Marriage is affirmed as the sacramental union of man and

woman, and all members of the Orthodox Church are exhorted to enact the ascetical ethos of life in Christ. As far as matters pertaining to the church's relations with the world are concerned, some of the noteworthy emphases include an insistence on ecumenical dialogue (in response to some internal resistance and opposition in certain Orthodox quarters), repeated protests against religious violence and the persecution of Christians in the Middle East (where a considerable number of Christians are Orthodox), and an exhortation to an urgent response to the ecological crisis (wherein a distinctly Orthodox inflection is the emphasis on asceticism as healing the disorders of consumerism).

Khaled Anatolios
University of Notre Dame

Cardinal Walter Kasper: Spiritual Writings. By Cardinal Walter Kasper. Sel. and trans. with Introduction by Patricia C. Bellm and Robert A. Krieg. Modern Spiritual Masters Series. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016. Pp. xv + 173. \$22.

The editors of this fine collection, conceived as a gift on the occasion of Cardinal Kasper's 60th anniversary of ordination, hope that readers will encounter "an insightful theologian, an exceptional ecclesiastical leader, and, most importantly, a true *Mensch*" (34). Nicely chosen excerpts show the coherence of K.'s life and theology, highlighting how the joy of the Gospel, and hope for the world and the Catholic Church, have characterized K.'s long and fruitful ministry as professor, bishop and president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. A helpful introduction presents the main periods of his life and explains the choice of texts. Seven chapters focus on fundamental themes of Christian faith, and each begins with a text from Vatican II—especially appropriate given K.'s constant insistence upon the truth and direction of the Council.

Some gems I found include imagining the light of Christ's truth guiding the church as a lantern that illumines the way forward only step by step, not as a floodlight on an airport runway (77). This is an image that appears frequently in K.'s recent writings about ecumenism.

He reminds us that because we believe "that the Spirit of God is at work everywhere, we do not need to be constantly terrified that we'll be lost and relinquish our identities when we build bridges of dialogue and enter into conversations with [people of] other religions and other world views" (100).

Another: "Tradition is not a package and a burden that we have to drag along. It is much more a fresh spring that is never exhausted" (114).

Finally, and especially appropriate in these days: "In order to remain non-violent, whoever strives for reconciliation and liberation among people must be a *spiritual person* who is open to the Spirit of God and draws strength from stillness, meditation and contemplation, the strength of prayer and worship" (100).