

vision of a Reformational Catholicism that he does not really address. But even this brief consideration underlines his point that the old map of Christianity as Protestant–Catholic–Orthodox no longer works.

There is considerable wisdom in L.’s vision, as in arguing that Paul’s warnings about “discerning the body” (1 Cor 11: 29) are concerned not with the theology of the Supper but with factionalism in the church, or stressing the need to work out doctrinal differences without requiring the church of the future to hold to absolutely uniform beliefs. But in spite of his ecclesial vision, he has not moved very far beyond his own roots in the Reformed tradition. He argues that Catholics and Orthodox need to purge doctrinal traditions such as the papacy, Marian doctrines, icon veneration, and the cult of the saints in light of the Bible and describes the Eucharist as a “communal meal of joy and thanksgiving” (177), but it is not clear that he deals adequately with Christ’s eucharistic presence, so strong in the tradition. Nor does his saying that to become Catholic he would have to agree that he has never presided over a valid Eucharist really reflect Catholic theology today. This issue is more complicated.

But L.’s vision is challenging for all the churches. His “Reformational Catholicism” wants to bring an end to Protestantism as a family of churches defined over and against Rome and Orthodoxy, seeing this as a defection from the Gospel. Catholics and Orthodox Christians need to hear his plea for a more inclusive eucharistic discipline. All need renewal in light of the word of God.

Thomas P. Rausch, SJ
Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

Women Deacons? Essays with Answers. Edited by Phyllis Zagano. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2016. Pp. xvii + 252. \$24.95.

If married men can be ordained to the permanent diaconate without prospect of advancing to the priesthood, why not women? To answer that question, these twelve essays—five newly translated from Italian, three from French, and four in original English—seek to retrieve what was suppressed by the International Theological Commission (ITC) in 2002: “This collection is aimed at presenting the entire story, the majority of which the ITC may have accepted between 1992 and 1997 but which it eventually eviscerated in 2002” (xvi). Zagano has recently been named to the special commission called by Pope Francis to examine the question anew. These essays provide an invaluable background for understanding the issues biblically and historically. The major questions are: “Were they ordained to the major order of deacon? What were their tasks and functions? Can they belong to the renewed order of deacon today?” (xi). The studies are detailed and cannot be easily summarized, so I will highlight some of the more important features here.

Paul’s endorsement of Phoebe (Rom 16:1–2) seems to have created problems for 1 Timothy who mentions women in the middle of his treatment of deacons (3: 11: “. . . women likewise . . .”) but cloaked it with ambiguity because of social tensions over

the role of women. However, as we move into subsequent history, the feminine diaconate was valued, certainly until the fourth century and in some places even into the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, more in the East than in the West. Deaconesses were ordained with a rite similar to that used for male deacons, but they ministered primarily to women, especially at baptism. When adult baptism gradually declined, so did the practice of ordaining women deacons.

Cipriano Vagaggini in his study of the Byzantine tradition (chapters 5 and 6) summarizes: “. . . in that tradition the diaconal order included two grades, one male and one female, with a different range as far as their liturgical functions were concerned, but both of a strictly sacramental nature and as major orders” (98; see also 142). All the studies show that the tradition of women deacons has been alive in both East and West. In her article, Z. affirms that “. . . the tradition of women deacons has been lost, but not forgotten, in the Latin Church” (195; see Phyllis Zagano, “Women Deacons in the Maronite Church,” *Theological Studies* 77 [September, 2016] 593–602: “To argue that ordination is unnecessary for women performing diaconal ministry is to argue that ordination is unnecessary for men performing diaconal ministry” [602]). The conclusion to her article in this volume expresses the point of the whole volume: “For the tradition to be fully remembered, it must include women” (218).

While women were clearly ordained to the major order of deacons in past history and while their tasks and functions were limited by the socio-cultural conditions at various periods in history, the real question that confronts the church today, especially the Western Latin Church, is whether they can belong to the renewed order of deacon as it has existed since Vatican II. Or, perhaps more fundamentally, do they belong to the apostolic ministry of Jesus that included women from the very beginning as, for example, in John’s Gospel the Samaritan woman who proclaimed the good news of salvation to her own people, Martha at the tomb of Lazarus who proclaimed the good news that is the essence of the whole Gospel, and Mary Magdalene at the tomb of Jesus who proclaimed the good news to the other apostles: “I have seen the Lord!”? These texts are not treated in the current work but they are essential to understanding the Spirit of Jesus who is calling the church to overcome the past prejudice against women. The assumed lack of education, skills, and opportunity of the past can no longer be applied to women today. Women are at the forefront in leadership, pastoral involvement, and missionary work in all parts of the globe, such that the church cannot survive or flourish without them. As Peter Hünemann strongly affirms in his “Conclusions Regarding the Female Diaconate”: “The Church can no more forgo the official collaboration of women today than it could during its great missionary drive or during the missionary effort of the third century; their assistance was simply indispensable” (232).

I highly recommend this work. The Selected Annotated Bibliography is a useful tool to pursue further study on this issue.

Michael L. Cook, SJ
Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, Los Gatos, CA