

Catholic History for Today's Church: How Our Past Illuminates Our Present. John W. O'Malley, SJ. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015. Pp. viii + 235. \$24.95

If the historian's work is to make sense of the past, the effort is often shaped according to matters of the moment. This is history with a purpose, at work in the service of the present and this is largely what O'Malley is about in this highly readable collection of lectures, book chapters, and previously published essays. A constant theme throughout is "what happened in the past gives helpful perspectives on the present" (95). But this is not simply a collection of O'M.'s short historical writing: this is a handbook of historical pathways to contemporary Roman Catholic ecclesiology. And it's done with a personal touch. The opening chapter is as much autobiography as it is an introduction to the 17 pieces that comprise the book. A concluding piece titled "My Life of Learning" rounds out the volume as a personal reflection on the intellectual influences in the historian's life. Indeed, what underscores this collection is the author's vocation—if not his ministry—as a church historian teaching, writing, and publishing for the past 50 years.

O'M. divides the collection into three sections: the first focuses on the papacy and the centralizing, bureaucratic trajectory it has taken more or less since the Gregorian Reform of the eleventh century, a long and complex process of empowerment O'M. calls "papalization." As a result, this section of the book hovers over the business of popes, the Roman Curia, papal elections, and an illuminating study in contrasts that are the pontificates of Benedict XVI and Francis. Part II of the work and by far the longest is comprised of spin-off articles from O'M.'s recent and excellent work in the two great councils of reform, Trent and Vatican II. Not surprisingly, there is a great deal of learning in this section, not only of conciliar documents and how one reads them, but also of the complex historical settings and personalities that stand behind those texts. Nor is the work purely textual: one article is about Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" on the eastern wall of the Sistine Chapel and its insights into aesthetic and theological arguments from the cultures that shaped the Council of Trent. This relationship between the world and an ecumenical council is taken up with three articles devoted entirely to Vatican II and a final chapter ending this section comparing the two reform councils. A key contribution here is how the church in the mid-twentieth century began to understand its own story: not as an unchangingly triumphalist march down the centuries but as itself a subject of history acting and being acted upon by shaping cultural forces. Because O'M. deals so much with ecumenical councils, popes, monarchs, and high-ranking ecclesiastics, less attention gets paid to personalities closer to the ground, though clearly he wants to include the broader experience of church in these pages. This is perhaps what part III is meant to accomplish with "The Church at Large," a section title bigger than its contents. These at-large issues include a brief history of clerical celibacy, a reconsideration of how theologically orthodox medieval universities actually were, political leaders past and present under various kinds of episcopal bans, and a mainly pastoral introduction to the relationship between diocesan and religious priests.

The tone throughout these articles (many of them lectures with a casual style) is affable and welcoming. It is no surprise that fully eight of the 17 pieces here are from *America* magazine. The pitch consistently is to an interested, non-professorial readership. There are no footnotes or bibliography to freight the collection, encouraging a quicker pace through source analyses, historical anecdotes, and clever turns. At the same time, absent references and citations, readers must regularly take O'M. at his word. This is offset somewhat by an index that serves as a unifying instrument for the book. Throughout, O'M. is ever the teacher, always clarifying, sometimes chiding, often entertaining. That posture is conscious and deftly held as the reader finds in O'M.'s patient, enthusiastic work the accomplishments of a master teacher. It's a syllabus worth the reader's engagement, for the rewards include a well-informed understanding of the church as hardly monolithic and the dynamic result of personalities, events, and cultural forces that have always and are still contributing to its making.

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The Work of Theology. By Stanley Hauerwas. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. Pp. xii + 294. \$28.

Hauerwas's latest essay collection reflects on how he has undertaken the theological task, both in form and content. More like an "unplugged" reworking of his themes, H. dubs the book "Stanley Hauerwas—An Attempt to Understand Him." This "entertaining" (4) book repeats familiar themes many times—for example, the reader will certainly know that H. "does not have a 'theory,'" and that "the first task of the church is to make the world the world"—but it does so for the purpose of understanding how these oft-quoted one-liners work. "Hauerwas Unplugged" strips his work down and reveals the fundamental structures of how he thinks, the logic that underpins the familiar "hooks" of his greatest hits.

These signatures do not constitute a method, but rather a way of performing the task of theology in particular contexts. That performance above all "depends on the descriptions" of Christians, which are "meant to entail substantive commitments" (138) to the truth of God's revelation in the events of Israel, Jesus, and the church. H. thinks those descriptions of the world and our lives in it are distorted because their substantive commitments lie elsewhere; his essays wake us up by disrupting the easy use of certain language patterns. Theology must be "edgy" so that it does not "reproduce the grammar" that "legitimizes the assumptions that the way things are is the way they should or must be" (126). Often, alternative questions must be formulated. For example, H.'s reflection on his criticism of human rights concludes, "The question is not: Can a