

E.'s work is de- and re-centering with respect to essential faith claims and the cultural contingency of all faith expressions, but especially with respect to the masses of faithful whose experiences of the radical hope in a God of compassion remain tangential to many ecclesial and liturgical authorities—the exclusive claim to which is also contextualized in the volume. Not only is the volume needed with respect to resetting the compass of Catholic theology—or clarifying the process of the traditioning of this story. It is also needed because Christians of every generation are always desperate for restating the central message of compassion to which Christianity witnesses and on which it wagers its entire existence.

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A Ministry of Discernment: The Bishop and the Sense of the Faithful. By Amanda C. Osheim. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2016. Pp. xxii + 221. \$24.95.

In the opening pages of this thoughtful volume, Osheim acknowledges that getting at the *concept* of the *sensus fidelium* is not nearly as difficult as getting at the *content*. And yet, O. argues, without some way of knowing the substance of the sense of the faithful, we risk reducing it to “a platitude about God’s presence in the church” rather than “a way of more deeply cooperating with the Holy Spirit for the church’s life and mission” (xi).

In order to move the discussion forward, O. turns from objective criteria to subjective processes of spiritual growth. The book “explores spirituality as a means of forming persons of discernment who may better know the *sensus fidelium*” (xv). In this account, the spirituality is Ignatian. The person of discernment is the bishop.

After an ecclesiological orientation that presents the bishop within the context of an “apostolic communion” originating in the reception of God’s self-revelation (Ch. 1), O. surveys the vision of episcopal ministry found in four conciliar and post-conciliar documents: *Lumen Gentium*, *Christus Dominus*, *Apostolorum Successores* (Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, 2004), and the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* (Ch. 2). Displaying a generous hermeneutic of charity, O. culls from these texts “opportunities” and “potential structures” for assisting the bishop’s discernment of the *sensus fidelium*, but ultimately she concludes that such support is frustrated by three “absences” in the texts. First, episcopal learning is narrowed to pastoral application rather than pastoral reception. Second, little attention is given to how the faith of the local church is received by the universal church. And finally, these documents do not adequately envision how the bishop is formed in holiness through his reception of the *sensus fidelium* (82–83). In sum, these official texts fall short because they perpetuate a top-down institutional model of church that imagines reception as unidirectional—always describing the bishop as teacher, rarely as learner (92).

For O., the bishop *has* to be a learner if there is going to be any meaningful way of affirming the *sensus fidelium* as “an authoritative source of the church’s knowledge of

God” (163). In chapters 3 and 4, she turns to the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola and *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, respectively, to suggest a flexible model (not a rigid mold) for forming ministers into persons of discernment capable of learning from the local church. Defining discernment as a virtue, a habitual disposition and practice, O. lifts up the qualities of imagination, humility, indifference, and consolation as resources for a spirituality of episcopal ministry. In reflecting on *The Constitutions*, O. focuses exclusively on the Jesuit superior and those persons and structures designed to assist his discernment.

Despite the clear personal, practical, and pastoral concerns of these chapters, the discussion remains fairly abstract. The book is a balanced theological reflection on a few primary texts, not an analysis of how personal or ecclesial forms of discernment have actually played out in the life of the church. Nor is there much explicit engagement with the extensive literature on the *sensus fidelium*, the theology of the episcopate, or the *Spiritual Exercises*.

In all of this, O. never suggests that the Ignatian way is the only path, or that every bishop ought to be a Jesuit. In a final chapter, O. appeals to broader principles for discernment: acknowledge limitations, learn with and through others, seek personal transformation. She draws on these principles to propose renovating specifically diocesan processes and structures—such as pastoral and presbyteral councils, diocesan synods, pastoral visitations, and the role of various collaborators, ranging from the college of consultors to a spiritual director—in order to deepen the bishop’s capacity for discerning the *sensus fidelium*. The appeal to one particular tradition serves to fire the imagination and open up other possibilities for grounding the question of the *sensus fidelium* in transformative spiritual processes, not only for the bishop, but also for other ministers, and for all of the faithful.

For many bishops formed in the unidirectional ecclesiology of recent church teaching, it can be hard to admit that there is something to learn from the flock entrusted to their care. At root this is a spiritual issue calling for spiritual conversion. Perhaps the constant encouragement of Pope Francis to bring discernment into every corner of ecclesial practice will open up space for O.’s argument to be heard. Francis (a Jesuit who also happens to be a bishop) has had a few things to say about pastors smelling like their sheep, and he knows that this flock is not a passive herd, but a people of faith “who have a flair for finding new paths” (161).

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The Theological Roots of Christian Gratitude. By Kenneth Wilson. Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. viii + 239. \$100.

Kenneth Wilson’s goal in this ambitious, astute, and often inspiring work is first to explore how a Christian account of gratitude can enrich and transform our lives by