

The value of the book is N's erudition and its conciseness plus the vast knowledge he has about the texts that were germane to each of the doctrinal elaborations the church used in arriving at the doctrines it taught. What is also remarkable about the book is that it is scholarly while at the same time not off-putting to and for non-scholars. B. doesn't go further than the Mariology of the present-day church but points to several of the directions it might still take.

If it wouldn't seem inappropriate I would respectfully dub this theologian "cool" because he makes so much complex material understandable. For those curious about the title, it comes from a medieval Christmas Carol, "of such virtue as is the Rose that bare Jesu."

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The Marian Mystery: Outline of a Mariology. By Denis Farkasfalvy. Staten Island, NY: St. Paul's, 2014. Pp. x + 314. \$24.95.

Intended as "an adequate textbook for college-level courses and formation programs for priestly and religious life" (ix), this volume will certainly serve those readers as well as others, and fully deserves a place on reading lists for courses on Mary. Its subtitle, "Mariology," evokes what is an unfashionably maximalist emphasis on Marian dogma and Marian "privileges" rather than the minimalist "Mary of history" approach conventional in many US Catholic universities. The book provides a chronological, rather than thematic, treatment of the development of the Marian dogmas. The author eschews (and frequently criticizes as intellectually insufficient) a unilateral application of historical-critical method to the biblical texts that mention the mother of Jesus, and has as its center of interest the patristic era. From the point of view of elucidating the development of doctrine, the choice to devote half of this study of Marian theology to those key scriptural passages and the period up to late antiquity makes sense. That focus, however, also makes a claim for considering Mariology—with a dogmatic emphasis—as an important, indeed essential, topic of Catholic systematic theology.

Not the least of the contributions of this book are its insights into the genesis, contributions, and limitations of a range of theological schools, considerations that are of value beyond the particular context of Mariology. This is, however, an "outline," and the "Marian mystery" as F. delineates it far exceeds dogmatic considerations. A comprehensive college-level study of the topic would also need to consider post-conciliar contextual theologies focused on gender or culture, to study more deeply the potential imports of biblical studies as well as their limitations, and to offer broader ecumenical and liturgical considerations—all of which topics and perspectives F. does not enter into here. His dense literary style requires some concentration on the part of the reader. Nonetheless, the effort is repaid tenfold by the book's historical purview and notable theological depth.

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