

to describe them, or—her preference—spirituality and fallibility. What is at issue is understanding human behavior (xxvi) and affecting it. Probing her subjects' responses thus leads B. into larger theological and philosophical frames that engage other voices (a favorite is Paul Ricoeur). While B. is not writing ecotheology in a formal sense, she engages what, citing Langdon Gilkey, she identifies as the two great questions of the theological task. One is material. How will theologians and citizens address human behavior and the grave ecosocial issues of the day—inequality, ecological degradation, violence, war and peace, oppression and justice? The other is hermeneutical. How are faith's "traditional words, concepts and symbols ... to be interpreted intelligibly in our cultural present" (B. citing Gilkey) so as to address grave issues? B.'s work, carried out in careful social scientific mode (see the Appendix on Research Design and Methods) and influenced by Roman Catholic liberation theology, takes up both questions of the theological task. It's a mix that deepens both "why" and "how to," both confessing the faith and communicating it in deed.

In summary, before this volume we had anecdotes about what mobilizes people of faith to act amidst the planetary crisis as well as anecdotes about what gets in the way, again and again. But we did not have a full qualitative social scientific account, much less answers to draw upon and test. *Inspired Sustainability* will hopefully not be the last such undertaking. But we could not have expected a more effective, accessible, and helpful launch.

Larry Rasmussen
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Conscience and Catholicism: Rights, Responsibilities, and Institutional Responses. Eds. David E. DeCosse and Kristin E. Heyer. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015. Pp. xxiii + 216. \$38.

This collection of essays, based on a seminar held at Santa Clara University in 2014, explores competing conceptions of conscience in the context of contemporary debates over the relationship between the primacy of conscience and institutional identity. The backdrop for the volume is the very public dispute between the United States Catholic Bishops and the Obama administration over mandated contraceptive coverage under the Affordable Care Act, but discussions of the nature and scope of conscience range over seven countries and address a much broader set of challenges, e.g., religious freedom for adherents of minority religions, marriage equality, and the ethics of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Taken together, the essays critique the construal of conscience promoted by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI and invoked in the debate over contraceptive coverage. In this model, Catholic conscience operates correctly only when one's judgments are in conformity with Catholic doctrine; the relationship between the individual and the institution is binary, taking the form of obedience/loyalty versus dissent; and the role of practical reason in discerning moral norms in concrete circumstances is limited, at best. Through reflection on classical texts as well as case

studies, the authors argue for an alternative, Vatican II-inspired theology of conscience—one that takes full account of history, culture, and context in the formation and exercise of conscience.

Opening essays by James Keenan, SJ, and the late Archbishop John Quinn effectively trace the roots of the personalist theology of conscience that would emerge from Vatican II to post-war European theology and, earlier, to the influential work of John Henry Newman on conscience and papal infallibility. Keenan's and Quinn's essays are especially helpful in capturing the seriousness with which the tradition has sought to understand the faculty of conscience as a dimension of moral agency. Essays by Linda Hogan, Emilce Cuda, Eric Marcele Genilo, Eugene Rodrigues, and William O'Neil use various lenses to illustrate the importance of understanding not only how conscience is shaped within particular social, cultural, and political contexts, but also how claims of conscience are necessarily expressed within, and therefore mediated and sometimes constrained by context, whether contemporary pluralist democracies or politically and economically fragile states. Running throughout is the assumption that acknowledging the role of practical reason in moving from universal norms to particular moral judgments need not collapse into moral relativism, nor are conscience claims in pluralistic societies limited to the now-familiar forms of conversation-stopping. In a vibrant public square, Hogan argues, conscience claims (understood as contingent and provisional) function as discursive bridges, upholding the integrity of the polity and advancing debate over norms and practices. When moral decisions or positions fuel heated debates over Catholic identity and mission, as we see in Carol Bailey's study of a controversial pregnancy termination in a Catholic hospital, and in the decision to dissolve Catholic Healthcare West over the provision of elective sterilization, the tensions between fidelity to church teaching in the formation of conscience and judgments about the demands of neighbor love under concrete circumstances become visible in a way that resists simple characterizations of loyalty versus disloyalty.

The volume's emphasis on the social and contextual character of conscience is complicated by attention, on the one hand, to preconscious emotional forces at work in moral reasoning, and on the other hand, to the distorting effects of structural forces such as racism and sexism. Stephen Pope's essay draws from the work of psychologist Jonathan Haidt to suggest that moral judgments reflect emotions or intuitions strongly shaped by group identities. Thus, the formation of conscience is less a cognitive process than a communal training of moral sensibilities. This argues for vibrant ecclesial communities, but how exactly they might emerge from the contemporary Catholic landscape is unclear. Moreover, Bryan Massingale and Lisa Fullam highlight the role of social sin in creating certain forms of moral blindness or self-rationalization. Here again, the authors note the importance for Catholic conscience of being shaped within communities of empathy and solidarity, but the degree to which those communities escape their own structures of sin is not obvious.

A collection of this kind cannot be expected to engage all the counterarguments that might arise. However, some readers will be frustrated with the largely one-dimensional presentation of the model of Catholic conscience favored by the US Catholic

bishops. In the appendix, David DeCosse attributes the bishops' emphasis on obedience, law, and hierarchical authority to fear about losing ground in the war against secularism, creeping moral relativism, and the erosion of confidence in the concept of intrinsic evil. The volume does an excellent job of showing how the Catholic tradition yields a more nimble, epistemologically humble, and historically conscious understanding of conscience. Still, the arguments for alternative models would be strengthened by addressing those concerns on their own terms.

Maura A. Ryan
University of Notre Dame

What Do You Seek? The Questions of Jesus as Challenge and Promise. By Michael J. Buckley, S.J. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016. Pp. xii + 146. \$17.98.

The well-known philosopher-theologian Michael J. Buckley is also an ardent student and teacher of the spiritual life. His learned but also ultimately pastoral studies of atheism are complemented by, or perhaps better said contextualized by, serious study of spiritual masters such as Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Ignatius Loyola. A distinctive style has emerged from these two sides of his intellectual life, in which “architectonic” is almost as prized a word as “love.”

For years my friend gave retreats, especially to religious men and women, that were structured by questions that Jesus posed in the Gospel of John. The philosopher in him emphasized the revelatory, original place of questions in our experience. The pastor knew that they were unique openings to personal encounter with Jesus. And now we have a late, relatively slender distillation of all those years of “caring for souls”—a smiling, joyous man introducing you to his master.

Although the book does begin with the first words of Jesus in John's Gospel, “What do you seek?” and characterizes them as interpersonal challenge and promise, the thirteen questions that follow are not presented chronologically or synthetically, “not [as] a single developing narrative, but more [as] a field of force.” Each question echoes the others (as well as the twenty-one others still that John presents but to which the author will not attend). Their unity is concrete, practical, and personal—in Christ. To christological titles such as eschatological prophet, suffering servant, Spirit-giving Lord, or liberator, B. adds that of the Beloved whose questions open us to the Spirit present in our lives in ways so manifold that only “Mystery” can allude to them adequately.

Beyond the rich reflections in his book, B. offers flashes of insight that will stop many readers in their tracks: God's desire for us as awakening our desire for God; the gaze of Christ as “the first event of discipleship;” “gift” as the universal and foundational Christian transcendental; the primary ministerial love of Christ as the foundation of all Christian ministry; the forgiveness of sins through the gift of God's presence; compassion as the intelligibility of God; and being “weak enough” for service (based on a famous essay of 1975).