

As this review has noted a few times, *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church* is vast in its scope. While the author's attention to detail can certainly be affirmed, what is less evident is how this book might serve the self-understanding of all those who form the church and are integral to the realization of its mission in the present day.

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*A Council for the Global Church: Receiving Vatican II in History.* By Massimo Faggioli. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. 349 pages. \$44.00.

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Fortress Press has done a great service in gathering together in one place some of the many essays produced over the past decade by the Italian church historian Massimo Faggioli. Recently named professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova University, Faggioli has emerged as one of the most insightful and prolific commentators working on Vatican II today. Bringing his own analysis and the best of European scholarship to the attention of American Catholics, Faggioli asks what the council means for a church that is truly global.

With one or two exceptions, the chapters of this book were all published between 2009 and 2014—a period that coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, the historic resignation of Benedict XVI, and the election of the first Latin American pope. While several of the essays point with hope toward Francis, the real context is the “anti-historical surge” and “neo-essentialism” that Faggioli associates with the previous pontificate (4).

In response to this context, Faggioli argues for a thoroughly historical approach to the council. However, apart from a pair of excellent chapters on Vatican II's Decree on Bishops (*Christus Dominus*), this volume does not offer focused historical reconstructions. Rather, the volume mounts a kind of methodological imperative: the council must be contextualized. The clash of “narratives” must be replaced with the investigations of history.

The themes that appear throughout these essays include the interplay of *ressourcement* and *rapprochement*, the need for an intertextual and intratextual interpretation of the council documents in light of history, and, above all, the nature of Vatican II as “event.”

Faggioli argues that the event of Vatican II did not conclude with the closing ceremonies in St. Peter's Square on December 8, 1965. It is simply an “illusion” to think that one could assess the council “without considering

the enormous consequences of that event" (157). Thus Faggioli helpfully draws our attention to the significance of the postconciliar period. To those who would dismiss this period as a departure or deviation from the council itself—and thus “out of bounds” for understanding Vatican II—Faggioli points to that other great reforming council of the modern period, Trent. So much of what today can be legitimately considered “Tridentine,” Faggioli argues, cannot be found in the published decrees of the Council of Trent. The Tridentine church—with all its institutional and juridical structures, its centralized and universalist ecclesiology, its liturgy, rites, and catechism—all of these elements owe more to the reception of the council than to the corpus of its documents. If our assessment of Trent is not limited to commenting on its texts, why should we feel so constrained when it comes to Vatican II? Drawing a line from the sixteenth century to the present, Faggioli concludes, “refuting the theological value of the reception of Vatican II” is to freeze Vatican II “in a sort of theological monolith—assigning it a fate that had not even been the one of the Council of Trent” (256).

If the “spirit” of a council is shorthand for the way in which it is received and implemented (260), then an appeal to the “spirit of Vatican II” is not a flight into abstraction or subjectivity. Rather, to speak of the spirit of Vatican II is to locate the conciliar event squarely within the concrete realities of history. In fact, if we are worried about abstract and ideological interpretations, then it may very well be that citing an ahistorical “letter” of the council poses the greater risk.

Without a doubt the reception of Vatican II is historically significant. But Faggioli makes a further claim, and so issues a further challenge: the history of reception has *theological* importance. This is a challenge for the theologian to imagine the event of the council itself within a broader understanding of revelation, magisterium, and the *sensus fidelium*. It is a challenge to attend not only to what Vatican II said, but also to what it *did*, and to what God may yet be doing through it.

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*A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium.* Edited by Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015. xvi + 220 pages. \$24.95 (paper).  
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The nine essays on ecclesiology found in this volume in honor of Fr. Thomas F. O'Meara, OP, were first presented during a symposium in