

## CORRIGENDUM

## Marcus Plested, *Wisdom in Christian Tradition: The Patristic Roots of Modern Russian Sophiology*. (Oxford: OUP, 2022), pp. xiv + 274. £75.00/\$100.00 – CORRIGENDUM

Demetrios Bathrellos

Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, UK ([frdemba@gmail.com](mailto:frdemba@gmail.com))

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930623000558>, Published online by Cambridge University Press: 03 August 2023

In the original publication of this review, the author of the book being reviewed, Marcus Plested, was spelled incorrectly, as Markus Plested in the title and opening paragraph.

The original review has been updated to show the correct name.

### Reference

**Bathrellos, D.** (2023). Marcus Plested, *Wisdom in Christian Tradition: The Patristic Roots of Modern Russian Sophiology* (Oxford: OUP, 2022), pp. xiv 274. £75.00/\$100.00. *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 1–2. doi:10.1017/S0036930623000558

doi:10.1017/S0036930623000625

## Ulrich L. Lehner, *The Inner Life of Catholic Reform: From the Council of Trent to the Enlightenment*

(Oxford: OUP, 2022), pp. xi + 294. £22.99/\$34.95.

Christian D. Washburn

University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN, USA ([wash0777@stthomas.edu](mailto:wash0777@stthomas.edu))

*The Inner Life of Catholic Reform: From the Council of Trent to the Enlightenment* is a welcome and enlightening book. Lehner successfully demonstrates that early modern Catholic Reform should be understood in terms of the inner renewal of the church and the theological and spiritual motivations of Catholic reformers. Lehner notes that ‘many recent studies of Catholic Reform have emphasized how new institutions, new forms of discipline, and some major figures brought about ecclesial improvement, but generally left out the spiritual motives for their actions’ (p. 1). According to Lehner one of the principal problems of the notion of Catholic Reform is that the term ‘reform’

is rarely defined. In chapter 1, Lehner examines these spiritual motives for Catholic Reform, which in his mind 'hinged on the conviction that a member of the church could receive supernatural graces and thus be transformed into a person who pleased God' (p. 10). Lehner explicitly excludes from his discussion 'forms of suppression, intimidation, and disciplining of Catholics' and 'affinities between church and politics, which led to the condoning of colonialism, slavery, nationalism, and confessionalism' (p. 3).

In chapters 2 through 4, Lehner examines how Catholic clergy helped to bring about spiritual reform. Chapter 2 examines the 'major rethinking of the role of the priesthood' (p. 10) and its relationship to the faithful that took place in the early modern era. Lehner looks at several different theologies of the priesthood developed by French Oratorians, Sulpicians, and the Society of Jesus. These new insights into the priesthood followed upon expectations of both the reformers and the faithful that the clergy be models of virtue, living lives of poverty and chastity. Chapter 3 stresses the importance of homilies in the clergy's efforts to reform the church; ideally, the function of the homily was to glorify God and to save souls. With this increased emphasis on homilies, Catholic theologians began to publish collections of homilies to aid Catholic clergy; 'between 1530 and 1555 about 132,000 complete sets of Catholic postils had been put into circulation in Germany alone' (p. 33). These texts acted as templates to help homilists structure competent and inspiring homilies for the faithful. Chapter 4 explains the various ways in which the clergy taught the faith in a parish, ranging from the utilisation of the homily as a 'prophetic proclamation', to the encouragement of the nobility to become exemplars of faithful living for their subjects, as well as the use of catechisms to bring about inner change.

With chapter 5, Lehner shifts his discussion of inner renewal from the clergy to the laity. The most important place where such spiritual formation occurred was the family. Post-Tridentine theology 'recognized the nuclear family as a pillar of church renewal' (p. 52). Married couples were encouraged to progress spiritually together. The Holy Family, for example, was presented to them as the exemplar for the family, giving hope that sanctification is possible in the married state. In chapter 6, Lehner discusses the various lay movements that blossomed in the early modern period. These confraternities, sodalities and third orders expected their members to live uprightly and provided them with both Christian counsel and particular devotions to lead them to a deeper spiritual life. In chapter 7, Lehner discusses the most important sacraments for bringing about inner renewal: the Eucharist and confession. In the early modern period spiritual leaders encouraged the frequent reception of the Eucharist, which in turn made necessary the frequent reception of penance. Lehner then examines how the faithful also benefited from new prayer forms and methods developed at this time.

In the final two chapters, Lehner looks at how these spiritual practices were aided by sensory objects, such as church bells and hymns, paintings, and architecture, designed to bring the faithful more actively into Catholic ritual and to lead them to more frequent and deeper contemplation of God. They even highlighted the importance of one's moral decisions throughout life and the necessity of practicing the virtues.

This short review cannot do justice to Lehner's work. This book is well sourced and is to be especially commended for two reasons. First, the author's argument is a correction to the impoverished understanding of Catholic Reform that presents it as a series of attempts to control the faithful through the establishment of various institutional structures. What Lehner shows is that, at its heart, Catholic Reform is based on the life of grace and the free commitment by Catholic Christians to live a life of holiness. Second, the author also shows a theological and spiritual sensitivity to elements of

the Catholic Reform that is refreshing. Lehner's work is a welcome addition to the field and should be required reading in courses on early modern Catholicism.

doi:10.1017/S0036930623000492

## Jeffrey Skaff, *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: A New Conversation*

(New York: Routledge, 2022), pp. xiv + 217. \$170.00.

David Thien Le

Emory University, Atlanta, GA, USA ([ddle@emory.edu](mailto:ddle@emory.edu))

Since Hans Urs von Balthasar's engagement with Karl Barth, there has been no shortage of engagements between Barth and Aquinas. Adding to this body of work, Jeffrey Skaff provides a new reading of Aquinas and Barth highlighting how divine 'mercy precedes justice' (p. 27) for both thinkers, and how this sharpens our understanding of their soteriologies, theological anthropologies and doctrines of God.

In his first chapter, Skaff sets the stage for this conversation by foregrounding the moral vocabulary of justice and mercy that is shared between Barth and Aquinas. By avoiding a metaphysical approach, this focus on justice and mercy is advantageous because it focuses our attention to God's actions and work in the world and shows the priority of divine mercy and non-competition between God's mercy and justice. Skaff lays out this prior point about God's justice and mercy by first expounding Aquinas' position in the *Summa Theologiae*. For Aquinas, justice pertains to right relations between persons and is determined 'by the particulars of those relationships' (p. 18). Skaff argues that for Thomas God cannot have a debt of justice towards creatures, except as it 'is due to it [the creature] by its nature and condition' (p. 25). This debt is an ordering 'according to divine wisdom' and an act whereby God is just towards God's own divine being. At the same time, divine freedom is affirmed for Thomas, and this guarantees that every act of God towards creation is an act of mercy (i.e. it is gratuitous and not compelled), something that is also clearly present in Barth's own theological formulations. Skaff also names an overlap between Aquinas' account and Barth's own use of divine justice, which is always embedded in certain roles and relationships between God and creation ('Creator, Saviour, Preserver, Keeper, Guarantor, Protector, Helper, and Benefactor'; p. 29). Despite certain differences, Barth's implicit account of justice is very much like Aquinas' in that both are specified within particular relations between God and creature. Justice for both Barth and Aquinas is determined by God's specific role and the status of each human person (elect, sinner, Jew, Gentile etc.) in relation to God.

The latter chapters use this hermeneutic of divine justice and mercy to engage various theological issues from the vantage point of each thinker. For brevity, I will only highlight or comment on some important aspects of each chapter. Chapter 2 engages the 'humanity of God' and divine providence and shows that Aquinas' theology of law embedded within his broader theological framework allows him to affirm the basic contours of Barth's doctrine of election as found in *Church Dogmatics* II/2. Chapter 3 continues this thread of divine providence into nature-grace debates and