

Chapter 5 concerns Paul; chapter 6, the four gospels; chapter 7, the Acts of the Apostles; and chapter 8, later writings of the New Testament, including the disputed Pauline letter. Moloney's comments follow the views of contemporary scholars. His documentation for these chapters identifies contemporary commentaries, noting those most compatible with his positions.

Moloney's remarks on the book of Revelation in chapter 9 differ from the standard conviction that this text assures Christians suffering from Roman oppression of the Lamb's future triumph. Founded on an Italian study by Eugenio Corsini, which Moloney translated, this interpretation claims Revelation concerns "the presence of the crucified and resurrected victorious Lamb *now*" (183; emphasis in the original).

The epilogue concerns the importance of the Word and Catholic understandings of Tradition that gave birth to the New Testament. Moloney distinguishes this Tradition from other traditions and claims that critical biblical scholarship offers a deeper appreciation of inspiration in the formative process of writing, reading, and discerning the presence of God within the community.

The text is flawlessly written with precise documentation supplied in the form of footnotes rather than endnotes. This book would be an excellent text for seminary, graduate, and college courses as well as faith-formation programs. It is essential for deacon candidates who in a very short amount of time must grow beyond the misnomers of their popular piety. Academic libraries that support biblical studies courses must include this title in their collections. Public libraries should consider this book a valuable acquisition.

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*Introduction to the Mystery of the Church.* By Benoît-Dominique de la Soujeole, OP. Translated by Michael J. Miller. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014. xxviii + 640 pages. \$75.00.

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At 640 pages, this book is a magnum opus. A translation of a French text published in 2006, it is an exhaustive study of various aspects of ecclesiology. The work has its origins in the author's teaching of Dominican students in Toulouse and at the University of Fribourg. The author situates his work explicitly as a project in *ressourcement*, so the chapters approach their respective themes by way of analysis of texts from Scripture, the Fathers and later sources, and official teaching at Vatican II and beyond. Especially in its first half, however, the dominant source for the work is the theology of Thomas Aquinas.

The book sets itself deliberately to construct a “theology” of the church, so it has a strong grounding in God’s Trinitarian revelation. While the title highlights the church’s mystery, that principal theme is developed via engagement with the church as “body of Christ,” “temple of the Spirit,” and “people of God.”

While the scholarship in the book is impressive in its detail, it is also selective and dated in many of its references—for a book written in 2006, there is little interchange with sources from the preceding two decades, even when addressing “contemporary” issues. Generally, the text engages with a narrow band of theological writing. Beyond official documents, the author relies principally on Dominican sources, but this means largely Thomas Aquinas. Yves Congar is cited relatively often and generally with appreciation, but Congar is also subject at times to some less than favorable critiques; Edward Schillebeeckx and Jean-Marie Tillard feature rarely, and are treated with more caution than enthusiasm; Gustavo Gutiérrez appears not at all.

In many ways, the use of Vatican II notwithstanding, this book, including in the “speculative” section in its second half, reads like an old-fashioned textbook. While that assessment might make it appealing to some readers, my judgment would be that this book has less to offer than many ecclesiologies currently available. The author’s commitment to a theology of the church is admirable, but the book delivers an abstract portrayal of the church, one that could imply a division between “theology” and “life.” Absent from its 640 pages is any engagement with the church’s place in history or with the social/economic/political factors that influence every context in which “the church” must come about, and in which God’s Spirit is operative. Other contemporary works in ecclesiology may themselves be far from flawless, but they have the virtue, lacking in *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church*, of underscoring ecclesiology’s connection to lived ecclesial faith. Joseph Komonchak proposes that a criterion to use when evaluating descriptions of “the church” is to ask who’s included in the particular description. The portrait of the church given in *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church* is certainly detailed and noteworthy in its intricacy, but its relationship to the lives of members of the church is not easily ascertainable.

The absence of “mission” as a category for ecclesiology highlights the abstract approach that pervades the book. Similarly, the discussion of texts from *Gaudium et Spes* covers less than a page, while *Ad Gentes* and *Nostra Aetate* receive no attention, despite the fact that the book has an extensive section on “no salvation outside the church.” *Lumen Gentium*’s article 12, a text significant for its description of the prophetic charism of all the baptized, is mentioned, but its ecclesiological significance is not discussed in depth. In addition, *Lumen Gentium*’s reference in article 8 to the church as *semper purificanda* does not appear in the book’s very short commentary on “reform.”

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