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# Authority in the Roman Catholic Church: Theory and Practice, edited by Bernard Hoose

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stating that Mary has hardly played a role in Protestant theology and should no longer be neglected. Extensive use of their book will significantly remedy that situation. The eleven contributions cohere well and are organized under three headings, though there is overlap and intersection: encountering Mary (the biblical presentation); living Mary (lessons for contemporary life); and bearing Mary (lessons about God).

Across the divided headings a number of themes predominate and promote dialogue with J.'s book and Catholic theology. One is the emphasis on Mary under the shadow of the cross. Elizabeth Johnson shows this emphasis in the disorientation and reorientation of Mary along with Jesus' family in Mark's Gospel. Beverly Roberts Gaventa paints the theme as a leitmotif running through the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. Lois Malcolm points to Luther's Mary as exemplar of how suffering and affliction show God's power to create out of nothing. Another fruitful theme, from authors like Cheryl Kirk Duggan and Nora Lozano-Diaz, is Mary as exemplar of a strong, active woman, especially for the liberation of women and the poor, but ultimately of all. Finally, several articles, like Bonnie Miller-McLemore's, draw creatively from the concrete experiences of motherhood to understand Mary both under the cross and active for liberation.

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ANTHONY J. TAMBASCO

AUTHORITY IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: THEORY AND PRACTICE. Edited by Bernard Hoose. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002. Pp. xii + 253. \$79.95.

In the Church, who commands and how? Who obeys and why? And more profoundly still, what is the very nature of authority among the people of God, brought together by the Spirit to worship the Father revealed by Christ Jesus? These vital ecclesiological questions underlie many of the crises in the Church today, and it was to explore them that an exemplary group of English-speaking theologians, mostly British, with world-wide experience and ecumenical interests, engaged in a rich conversation for several years around the turn of the millennium. The fruit of their research and debate, edited and framed by Hoose, is an exceptionally strong and coherent collection of articles treating various aspects of the essence and exercise of authority in and beyond the Roman Catholic Church.

H. sets the tone by distinguishing between two types of authority: an official power to govern and a charismatic ability to teach. That these two types of authority have often been held jointly by individuals—clergy for the most part—has led to their confusion throughout much of the history of the Church. To amend this, H. suggests as a standard of reference the manner in which Christ gave authority to his disciples: among them authority was to be manifested as serving and nurturing love, not as domination and

destructive power (Mk 10:42–45). G. Mannion extends this distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* authority, in an analysis that marries ideas of Max Weber to those of liberation theologians and calls for a deep and abiding participation of the governed in the functions of the governing—a generally accepted theory that is scarcely evident in practice (32).

Christ is the head of the Church, and the patterns he set remain normative. The principal access for Christians to the will of Christ is Sacred Scripture, yet H. Lawrence reminds us that the Gospels as we have them are themselves the fruit and not the source of the first several decades of the tradition. Thus we must look in our most important sources for a sense of the development of the notions and practices of authority, a continuing evolution that Lawrence paints in broad and yet quite valid historical strokes. He concludes that, in the life of the Church, the function of the magisterium was perhaps best shared by three ecclesial instances: the papacy, the college of bishops, and the theological faculties of the Catholic universities.

N. Lash's excellent essay follows with a lively and timely defense of reason and free academic inquiry as essential supports for the authority of the Church in the modern world. In cultural contexts wherein faith is often held to be inimical to the ruling scientific mindset, Lash holds that monotheistic faith supports an intellectual approach to reality by positing that the world is given to human beings and not made by them; thus the world is "legible." Leaning on Newman, he connects this insight to the subject of ecclesial authority to show that teaching is not an exercise of authority but rather that "governance is an aspect of teaching at the service of our common apprenticeship in holiness and understanding" (68).

In a second contribution, Lawrence makes a strong case for the active participation of the laity in the election of their bishops and thus in the formation and evolution of the episcopal college. F. Sullivan undergirds this position by parsing three key terms concerning the pneumatic guarantee of ecclesial infallibility from *Lumen gentium* 12: the sense of the faith, the sense of the faithful, and the consensus of the faithful. When the Council declared that the "body of the faithful as a whole cannot err in matters of belief," it asserted six crucial points concerning the sense (and the authority) of the faithful: (1) it is supernatural in origin; (2) it characterizes the people of God as a whole; (3) and it allows them to accept the Word of God in its integrity, (4) to cling to the faith without fail, (5) to penetrate it more deeply with accurate insights, and (6) to apply it more thoroughly to life (85).

R. Gaillardetz's overview of postconciliar developments concerning the reception of doctrine follows. He argues convincingly that each act of teaching takes place within a set of reciprocal and communal relationships. Other articles raise pertinent questions and add incisive analyses from political, ecumenical, religious, feminist, and liberationist stances. These chapters, which range in complexity from the academic to the popular, give the volume the necessary depth and breadth to make it of interest not only to theologians but also to graduate students of ecclesiology. Should it

appear in an affordable paperback edition, it would also be suitable for advanced undergraduate courses.

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CONFESSING AND COMMENDING THE FAITH: HISTORIC WITNESS AND APOLOGETIC METHOD. By Alan P. F. Sell. Cardiff: University of Wales, 2002. Pp. xi. + 550. \$90.

Alan Sell, former Professor of Christian Doctrine and Philosophy of Religion at the United Theological College, Aberystwyth, Wales, here completes his trilogy on Christian apologetics, following *Philosophical Idealism and Christian Belief* (1995) and *John Locke and the Eighteenth-Century Divines* (1997). The result is an encyclopedic survey of core issues relating to apologetics, S.'s assessments, and his own positive proposals about what it means to confess and commend the Christian faith and how to enact it.

S.'s starting point is "the confession of what God in Christ has done" (6). This is the bedrock of all Christian confession and to avoid the pitfalls of idealism, as propounded by Locke and his followers, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ must be central as Christianity's distinctive claim. This confession enables the apologetic task to be carried out both in the academic arenas where truth-claims can be advocated and evaluated, as well as in the faith advocacy of Christians who commend the faith by their lives.

The three parts of S.'s work take up the task of assessing apologetics by dealing with the crucial questions attendant to this enterprise. Part 1 considers what it means to confess the faith and what is to be confessed. This consideration entails discussion of the nature of the gospel and the contexts in which the gospel is expressed. An important issue too is whether there is an explicit identity to Christian confession through the ages and around the world. S. says there is. Relatedly, he considers the question of whether there can be an epistemological common ground between believers and unbelievers. His view is that the concept of the *imago Dei* provides this commonality, without which the whole apologetic task would be ruled out. Distinctive in this part is S.'s appeal to a "reasoned eclecticism," by which he means that commending the faith is much more than an intellectual exercise: "Christianity is a way, it involves a person's thought, practice, values, experiences—and all of these in relation to others" (88). A full-orbed understanding of the gospel demands no less, and it is this gospel that sets the direction for apologetics of all sorts.

Part 2 considers the presuppositions of the confession; here S. discusses the meaning, use, and reference of religious language. He contends that language is a legitimate vehicle for Christian usage in reference to God, that God acts in history, and that there is a valid place for speaking of the supernatural. God is transcendent and immanent: S. elaborates these affirmations in the light of historic challenges against Christian apologetics.