

richer hypothesis, perhaps one in which we could genuinely recognise the matter in which we are formed as being truly human.

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HOPE: PROMISE, POSSIBILITY, AND FULFILLMENT edited by Richard Lennan and Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Paulist Press*, Mahwah NJ, 2013, pp. xvi + 261, £19.99, pbk

This book, an exploration of the theological virtue of hope for the 21st century, has considerable coherence and unity of vision. It is striking and unusual for a book comprised of 17 short essays by as many different authors to exhibit such internal resonance and cross-referencing between them – kudos to the editors for accomplishing this, which is a strength. The drawback of this unity, though, is that the weaknesses in the collection also tend to be evident throughout.

The essays are grouped into four sections or ‘movements’ (p.239). The first is called ‘grounding hope’ which offers a scriptural and theological foundation for Christian hope. Much is made of the Pauline triad of faith, hope, and charity, and how the three theological virtues, as they came to be called, are interlinked and even inseparable (cf p.37). So Doyle, in an otherwise cogent and helpful article, says that ‘because these three virtues are so integrated, they cannot be separated’ (p.20). However, although the theological virtues are infused altogether with the gift of sanctifying grace, this is not to say that they ‘cannot be separated’. On the contrary, as the Council of Trent taught definitively, ‘by every mortal sin, grace is lost, but not faith’; nor is hope necessarily lost. This is not just Catholic doctrine, of course. Hence John Henry Newman said in one of his (Anglican) parochial sermons: ‘Balaam had faith and hope, but not love. “May I die the death of the righteous!” is an act of hope. “The word that the Lord putteth into my mouth, that will I speak,” is an act of faith; but his conduct showed that neither his faith nor his hope was loving’. So, the teaching of the Church is that charity may be lost, even though hope and faith are not; these three are thus separable.

That this does not appear to be kept in view is a weakness in this volume. Lennan, for example, wonders if ‘the grim truth of clerical sexual abuse might lead us to abandon any attempt to connect the church and hope’ (p.45), and then in the next paragraph he argues that because there is ‘trust in God as the object of our faith, which is foundation of our hope, can enable us to retain hope’ (p.45f). But this is because the grievous sins of the institutional Church have principally harmed charity, and only impaired hope and faith; the loss of charity has important ramifications for her mission and what we should do in response. So, it seems to me the question that should be posed is not whether a sinful Church is an obstacle to hope (p.42) but whether she is an obstacle to charity.

If so, then Lennan can go on to argue as he does for us to ‘acknowledge our failings’ in a ‘grace-formed surrender to God in hope’ (p.51) for charity is restored by repentance. That one can do so is because one still has hope in God’s mercy and forgiveness, ‘even within our flawed church’ (p.42), as Lennan says, and this is precisely because faith and hope may yet remain even if charity is lost through unrepented mortal sin. My conclusion here matches Lennan’s, but the approach takes into account the dynamic of the three theological virtues and how mortal sin affects them. Within the Body of the Christ, such sins are clerical but they do affect us all as a Church, thus each of us individually needs to turn to God in repentance over this serious issue so that charity may be restored to the entire Body. As St Catherine of Siena has said, each of us is in need of conversion, of taking on what Lennan calls ‘an aspirational attitude to the church [that] prompts

us to be more faithful disciples of Christ, to living more authentically the faith we profess' (p.49).

This attitude of turning towards Christ is at the centre of Groome's essay, which is in the second section of the book, entitled 'Nurturing Hope'. I found Groome's reflection on effective catechesis for our times to be the most helpful in this section. As he says, this is catechesis that 'puts Christ Jesus at the center and reflects his own pedagogy' (p.96). Also touching and interesting was Ospino's essay on Latin American migrants which resonated with my own experiences with Filipino migrant workers. Their quest for justice and a better life speaks of how 'hope in eternal life through Jesus Christ is first experienced in the present in our immediate historical existence' (p.101). The present as the locus of hope is explored in greater detail in section 4, entitled 'Living Hope'. Drawing on St John's gospel, liberation theology and *Gaudium et spes*, the essays in this final section make an appeal for us to transform this world through renewed ways of living, and so to live out our hope.

While our own stories may thus be drawn up into the Christian experience of hope, I felt that the chapter that most required stories of the practical experience of hope offered very little. Pineda-Madrid's essay on 'Hope and Salvation in the Shadow of Tragedy' is the first of a section called 'Sustaining Hope'. At a time when so much tragedy fills our newsfeeds, I had hoped for some stories of the triumph of hope over despair and disaster; stories to sustain our hope in difficult times. I was disappointed to find none. Nevertheless, the author delivers a rousing call to 'thwart evil so as to realize the greater good' (p.122) which would have made more impact if examples, say from the life of Mandela or the saints, were included.

Such examples are happily forthcoming in the rest of this section, particularly in Vicini's fine reflection on hope motivating the moral life. Baldovin's contribution on the liturgy is excellent but one is left wanting more. Both he and Lennan point to the need for architecture that 'can engender [eschatological] hope by opening our hearts and minds to the God who exceeds our grasp' (p.44) but, again, I think examples would have helped. As Benedict XVI suggested, 'the Gothic cathedral intended to express in its architectural lines the soul's longing for God'.

Speaking of the Pope Emeritus brings me to a final point. I was surprised at how little reference was made to Benedict XVI's *Spe Salvi*, which was the last major exposition at such an authoritative level on the virtue of hope. Occasionally a cursory mention was made of this papal text, but surely it deserves a more thorough engagement in a book devoted to hope? One consequence of hoping is that when one's expectations are not met one experiences disappointment. So, although there is merit in this book, I could not help being left with this feeling. As a 'theology of hope for the twenty-first century', then, if I may cite Cardman whose essay closes the collection: 'the fullness of day is yet to come' (p. 236).

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HIMMELWÄRTS UND WELTGEWANDT – HEAVENWARD AND WORLDLY: CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN (POST) SECULAR SOCIETY edited by Thomas Dienberg, Thomas Eggenesperger and Ulrich Engel, *Aschendorff Verlag*, Münster, 2014, pp. 388, €42.00, hbk

This volume collects papers given at a symposium which concluded a two year research project on the subject of 'passing on faith in social and religious processes of transformation'. Each paper is in German and in English, hence the bilingual title. As with many symposia, the papers come at this topic from a number of