

*The Spirituality of Saint Paul.* By Frank J. Matera. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2017. 152 pages. \$17.95.  
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In *The Spirituality of Saint Paul*, Frank J. Matera is able to draw from the complex, varied, historically conditioned letters of Paul to articulate a simple, clear, insightful center for Paul's spirituality. According to Matera, spirituality for Paul was expressed through living a life that conformed to Christ, a life so shaped by the central paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection that every aspect of that life was animated with, by, and through union with Christ. Matera argues that Paul encouraged the people in the churches he founded to imitate him because this imitation would lead to living a fully formed Christian life (vii). Matera explores the spirituality of this fully formed Christian life through six themes: (1) living by God's grace, (2) dying and rising with Christ, (3) living in the Spirit, (4) being sanctified and transformed in Christ, (5) finding power in weakness, and (6) living by faith, hope, and love (viii).

Matera's exegetical and theological expertise is evident throughout this book. Matera has years of experience writing and teaching the letters of Paul, and this book was developed from a retreat Matera gave for Catholic military chaplains. With this book, Matera intends to shape material from this retreat and from his teaching to appeal to a wider audience. He also intends to move from a focus on the theology of Paul to an articulation of Paul's lived experience of that theology. He is partially successful in achieving both of these goals.

The strength of this book lies in Matera's focus and his discussion of Paul urging his followers to imitate him. Matera points out that Paul does not urge the people in his churches to imitate Jesus but to imitate Paul because discipleship, following Jesus, looks different twenty to thirty years after the death of Jesus than it did when Jesus was alive. Matera recognizes that for Paul the kenotic act of Jesus in surrendering to death for our sins is the central theme and most significant aspect for understanding and following Jesus. Furthermore, Paul came to understand this mystery through a revelation of the risen Christ and through God's grace allowed this mystery to so shape his life that Paul's life lived in union with Christ is now a teaching tool for other Christians to follow.

Matera's reflection on the role of imitation for Paul is a powerful and compelling insight for understanding Paul's spirituality. Unfortunately Matera does not develop this insight sufficiently. After identifying an important theme for the spirituality of Paul in each chapter, Matera moves from letter to letter extracting and then commenting on verses in the letters that reflect

the identified theme. Matera's expertise is seen in his explanation of the verses, but the reader is left with an articulation that is much closer to theology than it is to spirituality. Matera does not entertain existential questions that arise as someone tries to live out this spirituality. Recognizing that Paul articulates a spirituality that is impacted by a twenty- to thirty-year gap between the lives of the followers of the earthly Jesus and those Paul is writing to, Matera does nothing to wrestle with the two-thousand-year gap between his readers and the people living in the churches Paul founded. Furthermore, by extracting the quotations from letters the historical exigencies that flesh out Paul's spiritual insights in each letter are lost, and so these insights become less rooted in life experience and therefore more difficult to apply to current life circumstances.

The book only partially succeeds. Matera's goal of writing for a wider audience is hindered by inadequate attention to the questions and problems that might emerge as members of that wider audience try to imitate Paul. This leads to a book that is closer to theology than it is to spirituality. Despite this limitation the book does provide the reader with a simple, clear, insightful center for Paul's spirituality and a succinct summary of themes in Paul that contribute to a fully formed Christian life.

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*Beyond Our Lights and Shadows: Charism and Institution in the Church.* By Judith A. Merkle. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016. xiv + 237 pages. \$106.04.  
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The Spirit is free but everywhere is in ecclesiastical chains. This may be something of an overstatement, but it gets to the heart of the issue Judith Merkle sets out to address in her study of revitalization and adaptation in Roman Catholicism. Since at least the time of Max Weber, charism and institution have had something of a dialectical relation, the latter seen as the inevitable decline and capture of the former in what Robert Michels famously dubbed the "iron law of oligarchy." Notoriously obscure and ambiguous, on the one hand, and yet, greatly overdefined by Weber's typology, on the other, charism and its role within the church remain an underdeveloped aspect of the field of ecclesiology. This is complicated more for Catholics because of the association of charism with the institutions of religious orders. Merkle's work thus is a welcome contribution for its willingness to take on an often neglected and complex topic. Its central question focuses