

phenomena. Caputo offers a radical rethinking of tradition, biblical interpretation, pneumatology, and ecclesiology, prompted by the recent firing of a lesbian Catholic school teacher in Philadelphia, and proposes an analogous radicalization of the Catholic principle, which would intervene upon the hierarchicalism and authoritarianism he sees in the contemporary church. Altizer, ever *sui generis*, sets forth a radical agenda in which the death of God is conceived of as “epic” in continuity with the apocalyptic and antinomian yet cruciform enactments of Dante, Blake, and Joyce. Kearney presents a more synthetic, constructive mapping of his trademark themes—atheism, theopoetics, and so forth—proposing a return to the notions of God, Trinity, and Christian imagining that takes its departure from art and poetry rather than theology and doctrine.

Edited volumes are notoriously strange creatures, very often lacking the balance and vision of better monographs. Yet *The Challenge of God* is a collection of essays for which such lacunae count in its favor. It gathers instances of engagement, offers occasions for intellectual provocation, and lets its constitutive tensions and contradictions lie. Its center of gravity is certainly what one is tempted to call “Chicagoland phenomenology” insofar as it resonates with the phenomenology-forward philosophy that (thankfully) flourishes at Loyola Chicago and the University of Chicago. One might note the absence of certain developments (deconstruction, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, *inter alia*) and voices (Falque most notably), but a book need not be all things to all people. *The Challenge of God* should be of interest to continental philosophers, systematic and moral theologians, and would be an ideal text for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students familiar with phenomenology and the Continental philosophy of religion.

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A Prophetic Public Church: Witness to Hope Amid the Global Crises of the 21st Century. By Mary Doak. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2020. xxi + 234 pages. \$29.95 (paper).

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In 1965, the Second Vatican Council in its conciliar documents, *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, reminded the Catholic Church of its mission in the world as a sign and instrument of prophetic service. From the beginning of his papacy, Pope Francis has strongly recommended that Catholics be the public church out there in the field advocating justice for all God’s people, especially for the poor and those on the margins. In her

work, Mary Doak puts before us very clearly and descriptively where we are in our mission as a public and prophetic church. Doak states that while globalization is uniting us, it is also dividing us as we face problems of unprecedented scope: vast inequality, climate change, population migration, human trafficking, and desperate refugees. Although the church has always responded to inequality, the plight of refugees and migrants, and, to some extent, climate change, it has never had to face these issues on such a massive scale as today. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the above issues even more so.

This ambitious work is illustrated in the depth of its scholarship. It is well documented in supporting references. Doak uses not only theological sources, but also sources from the natural and social sciences, to give a more detailed image of the tragedy confronting God's creation. But Doak is realistic in all her chapter presentations that the church alone cannot solve these problems. Government and state policies as well as international agreements are necessary to make for a more just society. However, the church must do its part to work with others to increase solidarity in the world.

This book is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1, which is grounded in the teachings of Vatican II and later ecclesiologies, puts its emphasis on two concepts which are fundamental for the church's mission in the contemporary world: unity-in-diversity and persons-in-community. Because the church must be a sign and instrument of unity, chapters 2 and 3 address two of the church's historical failures in maintaining unity-in-diversity. More specifically, chapter 2 is concerned with the anti-Semitism that was present in New Testament times and continues to distort our ecclesial self-understanding. There must be room for Judaism as well as other religions if we are to serve God's plan of unity-in-diversity. Chapter 3 deals with the second historical failure: women are seen and treated as less than full members of the church. Anti-Semitism and misogyny prevent the church from being that prophetic witness to the world, especially when it is trying to find solutions to the major global challenges that are confronting our contemporary world. The last three chapters, 4 through 6, discuss the major issues confronting the world today: economic poverty, climate change, and human migration.

Doak concludes her work by stating that a public and prophetic church must be one that takes the issues of women very seriously and works with people of all faiths or no faith to make a difference in the world. In short, the church must do church differently in order to be a sign and instrument of genuine community in the twenty-first century. Doing or acting church according to gospel values is living a radically different, even heroically countercultural, life. The issues are urgent, and the response from the church must

be prophetic, which means standing up to the powers that destroy God's creation.

This book would serve as an excellent source for an undergraduate or graduate course in theology of justice, Catholic social teaching, or the Church's mission. In fact, when I concluded reading this book, it gave me an inspiration to develop a course based on this title: A Prophetic Public Church. I recommend that this book be placed in college libraries.

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The Politics of Mercy: Catholic Life in an Era of Inequality, Racism, and Violence. By Matthew T. Eggemeier and Peter Joseph Fritz. New York: Herder & Herder, 2020. xii + 169 pages. \$49.95 (paper).
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In a 1966 essay on the teachings of Vatican II, Thomas Merton writes, "The Christian cannot be fully what he is meant to be in the modern world if he is not in some way interested in *building a better society*, free of war, of racial and social injustice, of poverty, and of discrimination" (*Love and Living*, 156). Almost sixty years later, one wonders if Christians in the United States have yet gotten the message. Breathing new life into Catholic social teaching and drawing lucidly from Pope Francis, Matthew Eggemeier and Peter Fritz set out, in five tightly argued chapters, to offer a "fresh apologetics" for "a holistic vision of Catholic life centered on mercy" (2). Structured in three parts corresponding to "Inequality, Racism, and Violence," part 1 addresses the crisis of "Wealth and Poverty"; part 2 treats "Migration" and "Mass Incarceration"; and part 3 addresses "War" and "Ecology." Originating from the authors' team-taught course at the College of the Holy Cross, the book is thoughtfully conceived for use in the undergraduate classroom, in parish study groups, or for deepening the theological context for any number of social-pastoral ministries. (I recently used the chapter on mass incarceration as linked to structural racism with volunteers in Catholic prison ministry.) The book's form reinforces its content. As Pope Francis insists, these multiple crises are of one fabric and cannot be treated piecemeal. The discussion of ecological devastation alongside war under the rubric of violence was especially powerful for this reader.

What makes *The Politics of Mercy* stand out is the authors' rhetorical clarity and range in showing how inequality, racism, and violence are so deeply interconnected. Although their judicious presentation of Catholic social thought alongside contemporary sociological and political analysis is impressive, it is the sensitive use of narrative and the occasional turn of poetic