

it is deeply sourced, uses material exposing the Western reader to the breadth of Eastern patristic sources, and draws on the finest of liturgical scholarship, this text, between prayer texts and footnotes, is a starting point for further study. In short, it is a helpmate for students who wish to delve more deeply into the subject matter and for the instructor who wishes to teach them.

At the center of Eastern Christianity is the liturgy, and this shines through especially in the chapter on worship and spirituality. The core of all liturgical rites is the theology of *mysterion* (mystery), which lies at the heart of Eastern theology, especially as it is expressed in the celebration of the Eucharist. This theology is profoundly expressed in the final chapter, which also examines numerous liturgical elements of Eastern prayer practices. It ends with a strong reality check for those of the Eastern traditions who seek to live in and with the Western world. How do these traditions continue living while meeting the challenges of migration and changing demographics, while encountering cultural shifts, dialogue, and contemporary challenges? The final gift of the text is that it has set its feet firmly in the real world, just as the communities that continue to pray the rites celebrated in its pages have done.

This book makes an excellent text for graduate classes in liturgy, the liturgical rites as listed in the table of contents, and liturgical history. It also lends itself to graduate classes in ecumenical dialogue and spirituality of liturgy.

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Commodified Communion: Eucharist, Consumer Culture, and the Practice of Everyday Life. By Antonio Eduardo Alonso. New York: Fordham University Press, 2021. 188 pages. \$28.00 (paper).

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“Resist!” Alonso “propose[s] a mode of theological reflection on consumer culture and the Eucharist that sees the interrelationship in light of the unique challenges that US consumerism poses to Christian thought and practice” (3) and “attempts to open a space for myriad faithful responses to the graciousness of a God who works through us, including through our acts of everyday resistance to contemporary consumerism” (8). Said otherwise, he invites readers to consider consumeristic practices “from below” as spaces of revelation and grace. Among the four chapters, he intersperses what he calls “fragments” (7) of his *lo cotidiano*—this ethnographic and experiential move not only adds a layer of methodological richness but also betrays a humble

connection with his object (objects?) of study, which I wholeheartedly commend as Latinx theologian.

In chapter 1 Alonso affirms there is scholarly “consensus” in Christian theology, ethics, and liturgical studies about the dangers of consumerism and the need to resist this theological “threat” to believers’ correct relationship to God (18). In that same scholarship, the Eucharist emerges as the ultimate resistor to any human-divine disconnect via the proper liturgy, sacramentality, and ethics they promote. However, Alonso warns that “remaining only on the level of resistance obscures our ability to see the fullness of consumer culture, church, and Eucharist” (44).

Affirming theological consensus among scores of scholars, especially across decades, denominations (or lack thereof), and disciplines tends to elide difference. But Alonso’s argument is persuasive at its core: as Niebuhr taught so well, there are precarious yet productive tensions between theology and capitalistic culture at both the popular and collective levels. And it is at the latter that Alonso wants to intervene because people and their religious identity are most visible through the lens of consumption.

Chapter 2 presents “an angle of vision on consumer culture that leaves space from traces of the activity of God in the commodified objects and practices of everyday life” (54). Using Michel de Certeau’s work, Alonso claims that everyday practices are not passively resistant to “strategies” but also are affirmatively agentic “tactics” of those “absent”—indeed, he proposes using “absence” as a hermeneutical lens. The materiality of absence is further developed by using Walter Benjamin and material culture’s “collective hopes and desires” (73).

In this chapter, Alonso stakes a major claim: revelation and consumer culture are not antithetical. I find his claim compelling that everyday practices are absent yet subversive, especially as it nuances *lo cotidiano* as a theological source. Although deftly done, however, Alonso’s discussion of de Certeau sometimes seems to argue the evidence. Indeed, popular piety and devotion and their material culture almost always have been “strategically” made invisible, yet ultimately have proven “tactically” subversive to Christianity.

In chapter 3 Alonso boldly argues that using the Eucharist to resist consumer culture elides revelation and grace! For Alonso, the issue resides in the “dissolving of the social bonds of the church” (97) produced both by a lack of sustained empirical validation of liturgical effects and a “circular” (to use his word) self-valuation of the Eucharist *qua* sacrament. He writes: “To claim the Eucharist as a site of countercultural transformation bears marks on the market’s deepest logic” (101).

I find Alonso’s multidisciplinary and deeply researched argument about liturgy theologically creative and relevant. I also appreciate his implied

“call” for qualitative analyses, an approach that has recently surged via the intersection of theology and ethnography. However, I also view his claims as in danger of falling into circular logic: Can claims about the Eucharist be anything but inductive and constructive? Perhaps not, as he suggests in his discussion of *ex opere operato*, eucharistic mystery, and its ultimate concern for hope.

And it is precisely upon hope that Alonso lands in his concluding, more reflective chapter 4. Thinking decolonially, he imagines a liturgy between strict commodification and barren formalism; “I have often longed for a liturgy that is *just right*” (119). This “eucharistic hope” is “found neither in a gnostic flight ... nor in an imagined purity ... but instead in an intensification of the materiality of the world” (123), grounded in life-affirming material “hopes and dreams” within the pews that also promote justice beyond them.

This book impacts liturgical and sacramental theologies in general and Latinx popular religion/ritual studies, in particular. It also can be useful for conversations between theology and cultural studies, especially within the materiality of religion studies using theology, religious material culture and popular Catholicism, Latinx studies, and consumption/economics. I highly recommend this book for academic work and beyond.

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Anti-Christian Violence in India. By Chad M. Bauman. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020. xi + 302 pages. \$34.95.

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With *Anti-Christian Violence in India*, Chad M. Bauman, professor of religion at Butler University, effectively completes a trilogy examining modern Christianity in India. His first book, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion, 1868–1947* (2008), explored Protestant missionary activity and Dalit converts in Chhattisgarh, British India. His second text, *Pentecostals, Proselytization, and Anti-Christian Violence in Contemporary India* (2015), focused on violence against Pentecostal Christians, the fastest growing form of contemporary Indian Christianity. In this third offering, the author simultaneously widens and focuses his lens to discern the reasons for and meaning of Indian anti-Christian violence through examination of a particular and emblematic case in the twenty-first century—that which occurred in Kandhamal, Odisha, between 2007 and 2008.