

interpret the signs of their life together. Thereby they constitute the higher-order corporate reality of a community with a shared past and a common future that deals with the world around it as a single unified agency. All that being said, this book is well worth reading if only for Robinson's reader-friendly explanation of technical terms in theology and science and for the artful way in which he uses Peirce's semiotics to present the sacraments as different ways to participate in the divine life even now.

JOSEPH A. BRACKEN, SJ
Xavier University

Vernacular Catholicism, Vernacular Saints: Selva J. Raj on "Being Catholic the Tamil Way." Edited by Reid B. Locklin. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017. xiv + 290 pages. \$90.00.

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Selva J. Raj (1952–2008) was a Catholic scholar of religion and the anthropology of religion from Tamil Nadu, India. Ordained a diocesan priest, he came to the University of Chicago Divinity School for his doctoral studies, on popular Catholicism in India. He was thereafter for many years a professor at Albion College, and respected as one of the leading experts on popular Christianity in South Asia (and by extension, in the global context). After Raj's untimely and much mourned death in 2008, Reid Locklin, professor at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, generously took up the work of editing a representative volume of ten essays by Raj (including the one providing the volume's subtitle). The essays are followed by responses from leading figures in the field and a brief afterword by Raj's dissertation director, Wendy Doniger. An opening overview of Christianity in Tamil Nadu by Michael Amaladoss, SJ, gives the essays a comprehensive frame. This valuable collection complements Raj's own earlier work, including his *Popular Christianity in India: Riting between the Lines* (Albany: SUNY, 2002), coedited with Corinne Dempsey, also contributor to this volume, and Dempsey's more recent coedited volume, *Sacred Matters: Materiality in South Indian Religions* (Albany: SUNY, 2015).

Beyond the fact that this volume fittingly honors Raj, we can be grateful for two reasons. First, it showcases a fascinating body of fieldwork and descriptive writing on Catholicism lived and practiced as a minority religion in majority Hindu South India. The essays are rich in concrete detail, as their titles show. For example, "Shared, Vows, Shared Space, and Shared Deities: Vow Rituals among Tamil Catholics in South India," "Public Display, Communal Devotion: Procession at a South Indian Catholic Festival," and "Serious Levity at the Shrine of St. Anne in South India" (which appeared in yet another volume

coedited by Raj and Dempsey, *Sacred Play: Ritual Play and Humor in South Indian Religions* [Albany: SUNY, 2010]). Comparable in some ways to Robert Orsi's work on popular Catholicism in the United States, Raj's work has changed how we think about Catholicism in India and globally, now from the bottom up as well as from the top down. It will be eye-opening for students, simply in its fresh perspective on Christianity in India.

Second, Catholics and Hindus live side by side as neighbors across South India, and over the centuries all manner of sharing has flourished, by way of practices that gravitate from one faith to the other, and through actual shared participation, in local pieties, festivals, and so on. All of this happens naturally, and without suspicion or resentment. In essays such as "Two Models of Indigenization in South Asian Catholicism" and "Dialogue 'on the Ground,'" Raj is asking us to rethink where we look for evidence of dialogue. By his reading, too much of the dialogue has been planned, scheduled, and controlled from above, directed by well-meaning church leaders and theologians distant from dialogue as a daily lived experience, and often too eager for rapprochement with upper-caste Hindus and their high culture, neglecting the vernacular faith and practices of village Catholics. Raj's attention to dialogue on the ground is an insistent invitation to the Catholic hierarchy and theologians to listen to and learn from lay Catholics, already well advanced in Hindu-Christian dialogue and friendship.

Regarding both practice and theory, this volume will enrich many a class on Asian Christianity and interreligious dialogue today. Unfortunately, though, these essays do not make the return, necessary in a Catholic context, to theologizing in and for the Church. Deep respect for the lived and ordinary practices of Catholics need not preclude asking larger questions about the meaning of popular practices, and about how they link to ancient traditions of Catholic thinking and doing that have often arisen from local churches and in accord with lived experience on the popular level. One wishes that Raj had appraised with more nuance institutional and missionary modes of inculturation, which in lieu of close study are rather labeled (by one of Raj's favorite words) "contrived," as if Indian priests, nuns, and theologians can only mimic or confuse what ordinary Indian Catholics do naturally and well. Clericalism is a woeful problem, to be sure, but not the only or last word on what the official Church is up to in India or globally. Similarly, Roberto de Nobili, the seventeenth-century Jesuit pioneer in adapting Western Catholicism to the language and symbols of South India, merits a closer reading, and a more careful assessment. He was of course a man of his times, not ours; his methods those of a pioneering foreigner, not a native; his particular accommodation to caste Hinduism cannot be applied in the same way now. But neither should de Nobili be held responsible for

defects in lived Catholicism in today's India, such as the tensions regarding caste and identity that still plague the Tamil Church in both city and village. He was after all a marginal figure for much of the past 400 years: he was never canonized, and was buried in an unmarked grave; his Tamil writings were not printed until the 1960s, and no institutions in Tamil Nadu bear his name. Even his method has been honored mostly by lip service. His books did not create caste-consciousness among modern Tamil Catholics.

It is all the sadder then that Raj died prematurely, since he was one of the few Tamil Catholics training in theology, and in Western modes of the study of religion, who was at home in village India. Had he had the time and the will, he would have been the perfect person to move beyond the necessary critique to a constructive Catholic theology grounded in tradition and in harmony with the lived Catholicism he so vividly shows us.

FRANCIS X. CLOONEY, SJ
Harvard University

The Sacraments: Historical Foundations and Liturgical Theology. By Kevin W. Irwin. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2016. vi + 388 pages. \$39.95.
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Kevin Irwin has been teaching and writing about sacraments and liturgy for decades, and has now produced a work specifically for classroom use. He has three audiences in mind: college juniors and seniors who are taking a course on sacraments or liturgy, Catholic adults who want to learn more about the church's worship, and graduate students preparing for service in the church as priests, deacons, or lay ministers.

Part 1 summarizes the history of sacraments and sacramental theology from their scriptural foundations to the Second Vatican Council. Of great value are summaries of and direct quotations from historical sources such as Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, the Council of Trent, and the Second Vatican Council.

Part 2 introduces liturgical sacramental theology as something different from the systematic sacramental theology that dominated Catholic thinking from the time of the medieval Scholastics until just before Vatican II. Instead of employing philosophical reasoning to explain the sacraments and how they work, this approach uses liturgical sources themselves to understand more deeply the God who is worshiped, the worshipping community, and what happens during sacramental liturgical worship.

Part 3 builds a liturgical sacramental theology primarily on the liturgy of the Eucharist and the liturgies of the Easter Vigil. Special attention is given to the