

Kathleen Sprows Cummings, Timothy Matovina, and Robert A. Orsi, eds., *Catholics in the Vatican II Era: Local Histories of a Global Event* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. v + 295, £75.00, ISBN: 978-1-10714-116-2.

While nearly six decades have passed since the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, the Council, its documents, and its implementation continue to impact the global Catholic Church in deep and lasting ways. Theologians and religious scholars have and will continue to explore the teachings of the Council. This work is vital, but so too are the efforts of historians who explore the effect of the Council on the lived religion of Catholic laity and clergy in the ensuing years since the close of Vatican II in 1965. This is evident in the volume that Kathleen Sprows Cummings, Timothy Matovina, and Robert A. Orsi have brought together to examine the changes to the Church emanating from Vatican II at the local level in a global context, as their title, *Catholics in the Vatican II Era: Local Histories of a Global Event*, implies.

*Catholics in the Vatican II Era* contains twelve chapters, with histories from eight different countries, providing insight into the impact of the Vatican Council at the diocesan level. The geographical breadth of these collected chapters underscores the importance of seeing Vatican II beyond national boundaries. Cummings, Matovina, and Orsi have incorporated in one volume different case studies, which, amid an increasing emphasis on the global impact of Church history, allows readers to grasp the truly ‘epochal event’ that was Vatican II (p. xii).

*Catholics in the Vatican II Era* offers research which moves the conversation of the Council forward, in two ways specifically. First, an important question asked by these authors is the significance of the primacy of conscience and what happens when the laity diverge from the accepted path articulated by clerical authority? Second, it is difficult to consider the Catholic Church since the twentieth century without confronting the sexual abuse crisis, and two chapters of *Catholics in the Vatican II Era* ask how to understand the Council’s impact in the wake of these crimes. Underlying these two points are encroaching secularism, declining vocations, and restructuring of clerical authority. The Council had a disruptive and revolutionary impact felt deeply at the local level by the laity, some of whom responded to changes in a mixture of defiance, unsettled acquiescence, and the search for new traditional liturgical communities.

In its various chapters, *Catholics in the Vatican II Era* focuses on an empowered laity and movements to reconceptualise the Church, as in Gilles Routhier’s study of post-conciliar Quebec Catholics and the consequences of the Quiet Revolution, or rapid secularization, and the separation of social services from Catholic control. A diffusion

of power made way for more pastoral ministry at the parish level and shared responsibility between priests and laity. Andrew S. Moore's study of black Catholics in Atlanta looks at race and belonging, the divide between white and black Catholics, and how the Eurocentric reforms of Vatican II in the archdiocese enabled African American Catholics to embrace an important role as laity. Similar developments are charted in Jennifer Scheper Hughes's study of Cuernavaca, Mexico, Leslie Woodcock Tentler's look at the Archdiocese of Detroit, and Kathleen Holscher's examination of Nuevomexicanos in rural areas of the Santa Fe Archdiocese. These chapters reveal conflict and resistance to change came from different quarters. Scheper Hughes highlights efforts to preserve indigenous religious culture and heritage in the face of external hierarchical pressure to implement conciliar changes and strip churches of beloved statues and iconography. Tentler studies Archbishop John Francis Dearden's leadership at a time of growing racial tensions, with lay involvement in renewal unevenly distributed between suburban, elite, white, male Catholics. Ruptures emerged between young and old priests over Vatican II, clerical authority, marriage, divorce, and birth control, as well as mission and social justice within and without the Church. Echoes of this appear in Jeffrey M. Burn's look at the Archdiocese of San Francisco and contraception, married priests, gay and lesbian Catholics, and a more complete understand of sexuality.

Themes of disruption and revolution continue in *Catholics in the Vatican II Era*, as well as power struggles and attempts to preserve traditional religious identities. Sol Serrano and Luz María Díaz de Valdés' study of the Archdiocese of Santiago focuses on an emboldened laity and inspired new social justice movements had political implications for the clergy, who supported challenges to an oppressive government in defense of the poor. Brandon Vaidyanathan finds church and politics intertwined in the Archdiocese of Bangalore with the conflict arising over the move to the vernacular in the liturgy, which sparked debate and in some cases violence over what was *the* vernacular. Religious identity was wedded to the traditional expression of the liturgy. Alana Harris's study of the Archdiocese of Westminster finds that English Catholics employing a 'Reformation rhetoric' understood themselves as a religious minority which viewed renewal as a threat to Catholic history and memory. Harris argues adeptly that many traditional Catholics connected the shift from Latin to English to increasing secularization and re-stripping of the altars.

Catholic defense of tradition and a sense of lay autonomy in this era continues in Marjet Derks' look at the diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch, in the Netherlands, and how the rapid change of Vatican II, despite media coverage and public image of a liberal Catholicism, was not embraced by all. Similarly, Massimo Faggioli finds a disconnect between laity in

the Diocese of Ferrara in northern Italy who embraced willingly the changes of Vatican II and the church leadership who opposed it.

While not a question explored by all, two contributors touch upon the sex abuse crisis. John C. Seitz explores Boston seminarians and priestly formation in the light of a new understanding of the need for emotional support and attempts to combat isolation; his study also shines a light on the factors that produced the sexual abuse that tore through the Boston Archdiocese for decades. Holscher looks at the American church's persistent practice of knowingly reassigning abuser priests to areas like rural New Mexico to bury its problems. Seitz and Holscher provide future scholars a way forward with questions about power structures, authoritarianism, and the consistent move to self-protection, which we cannot ignore.

*Catholics in the Vatican II Era* is an important and timely volume. Vatican II as 'texts,' as 'experience,' and as 'event' as Joseph Komonchak concludes, challenges readers to consider the enormity of the Council's legacy on a global and local level. Like many collections, its parts can be read separately and add to specific subspecialties, but as a whole, Cummings, Matovina, and Orsi have brought together a valuable resource for historians of global Catholicism.

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