

Sallie McFague: Collected Readings. By Sallie McFague. Edited by David B. Lott. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013. vii + 273 pages. \$34.00 (paper).

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Sallie McFague once wrote an essay in which she identified her theological contribution to the planetary agenda as “a square in the quilt.” Her work as a constructivist theologian, as demonstrated in this book of her selected readings, provides a vision of the intricacies of pattern, fabric, and stitch that comprise the square she has created and added to the rich design of theology.

David B. Lott’s comprehensive introduction provides a context for the selected readings by giving a brief overview of the author’s life and works and then allowing McFague to speak for herself of the richness of her theological journey, one that she would call a hike. This trek explores McFague’s theological development, which begins with her critical examination of the power of theological language and the use of metaphors and models, ultimately arriving at the understanding that discipleship can be defined as the practice of restraint. Drawing on McFague’s eight books, Lott offers the reader a synthesis of the critical aspects of each selected reading. He notes that McFague approached the writing of each of her books as an opportunity to make up for the insufficiencies in the one that came before. There is evidence, however, that much more is reflected in the evolution of McFague’s work. In every case, she takes the questions that arise in her research and reflection to the next level. Each book demonstrates the growth and expanding vision of a true theologian, who seeks truth in her relationship with God and the world. Her style offers a humble acknowledgment that understanding deepens, that experiences call for new questions to be answered, and that the work of theology is indeed a vocation. Only infrequently is there an opportunity to witness the genuine depth of understanding as it emerges throughout a life; *Sallie McFague: Collected Readings* demonstrates the evolution of wisdom in a life of fidelity.

Lott begins this foray into the lifework of Sallie McFague with her religious autobiography. In it, she chronicles four important moments of personal conversion, moments that changed her thinking about God and transformed her heart. In these experiences it is evident that McFague is ever open to encountering God in all she perceives. She comes to realize in a profound way that God pervades the entire universe, and that God is God and nothing else is. The journey that follows brings her to the important realization that doing theology is a vocation that leads to becoming acquainted with God and recognizing God’s self-disclosure in every aspect of life.

The readings selected by Lott are divided into three parts; the first is focused on the language of theology. In three of her early books, McFague

considers the significance of metaphorical language for theology, seeing parables as metaphors and arriving at the realization that Jesus is the parable of God. She points to the danger of reification of Christian metaphors that results in idolatrous language and belief. Part 2 considers metaphorical, ecological, and kenotic approaches to theology and spirituality. It makes evident the impact of metaphor for doing theology. McFague suggests that using the metaphor of self-emptying aptly addresses spirituality for the whole planet. The Christian embraces a discipleship of restraint that honors the presence of God in all creation and thus supports the health of all its creatures. Finally, in the third part, McFague engages in a constructivist vision of God, humanity, and the world.

This book provides an overview of the work of an essential member of the theological community whose vision and insight offer wisdom in response to the questions that haunt our world. It presents a way to live that honors and respects all life. It is written for all Christian disciples who seek to live a faithful life that makes a difference. In particular, for theologians today it bears witness to the impact of one life and the difference each can make. McFague's quilt square enriches the whole.

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Vast Universe: Extraterrestrials and Christian Revelation. By Thomas F. O'Meara. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013. ix + 104 pages. \$12.95 (paper).

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Five hundred years after Galileo, our understanding of the cosmos continues to evolve in spectacle, from Einstein's theories of relativity to the recent discoveries in cosmic microwave background radiation (CMB), the light detectable to a mere 380,000 years after the Big Bang. Most of Christian theology, however, has been done as though there had been no Copernican Revolution, as though planet Earth and its inhabitants were still the center of the universe, with God primarily concerned with human well-being. Thomas O'Meara notes that theology has not kept pace with advancements in cosmology, and considers the divine from the standpoint of the wider cosmos—beyond Earth as the singular beneficiary of divine revelation. While timely and innovative, his procedure is not methodologically unusual; O'Meara follows traditional theological steps (employing Scripture, Origen, Aquinas, and both Protestant and Catholic thinkers through the twentieth century) when asking questions about the possibility