

For example, rather than take 1 Timothy and 1 Peter with their strong injunctions against women as indicative of feminine subordination in early Christian communities, the authors insist that such instructions point to women's enfranchisement during a time of widespread religious persecution due, in part, to the perceived radical egalitarian practices of early Christians. The command for women's submission adhered to the dominant Greco-Roman standards of the family and society. Women were called "to sacrifice themselves on the altar of male domination in order to blend in more unobtrusively to the surrounding culture" (103).

Through a comparative study of primary sources on holy women (e.g., Saint Monica, Hildegard of Bingen, Rade Gund, Godelieve of Gistel, Umiliana dei Cerchi, Dorothy of Montau, and Catherine of Genoa), the book questions the motivations behind the commemoration of domestic abuse victims, whose hagiographies conveniently align with oppressive social, economic, and political patriarchal norms. Ambitious in its scope, the book also considers the effects of Christianity on the cultural practices of Native populations like the Montagnais during the colonization of New France, as well as the theological groundings espoused in defense of the transatlantic slave trade. The book, therefore, can be placed in dialogue with existing scholarly work on critical race studies, the global spread of Christianity, and on the erotics of masochism and submission.

Some particularly poignant moments include excerpts from the diary of Abigail Abbot Bailey and the testimonies of contemporary women of faith who painfully demonstrate the internalization of the messages contained in medieval hagiographic accounts. Despite its focus on victimization, the book also provides a message of hope. Buried in the archives—the authors stress—lies a history of resistance to violence, such as the records of Merovingian women, medieval women exegetes, the Cathar woman Guilhelme Maury, and Matteuccia Francisco of Todi. Their voices reveal the strength of communities that challenge oppressive structures. *Saintly Women* provides a historically based theological support for such communities endeavoring to empower those who suffer abuse as they make the decisions to become survivors.

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*The Reform of Zeal: François de Sales and Militant French Catholicism.*

Thomas A. Donlan.

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In his short book, Thomas A. Donlan offers a new interpretation of François de Sales's spirituality, arguing that the Savoyard saint developed a piety that was the opposite of a

theology of violence that had been prevalent in early modern French Catholicism. The life of the titular bishop of Geneva overlapped with the duration of the French Wars of Religion: de Sales was born in 1567 and died in 1622, while one chronology of the wars dates them from 1562 to 1629. The saint's alleged progress from an ardent supporter of the militancy of the war period to the theology of *douceur* (gentleness, sweetness) could therefore shed light on significant processes and changes in French spirituality. Juxtaposing expressions of militancy with de Sales's numerous invocations of a kinder, softer piety, Donlan suggests that previous interpretations of de Sales's theology, which presented him as a devout humanist, a Tridentine reformer, and as a Counter-Reformation missionary, have failed to comprehend his innovative and even pioneering role in the transition from one form of Catholicism to another. With de Sales, nonviolent religious culture replaced a violent one, and aggression and hatred gave way to charity and compassion.

Donlan offers close readings of some of de Sales's spiritual letters and sermons, emphasizing de Sales's importance as a spiritual director of men and women, both lay and religious. He also analyzes de Sales's best-selling treatise of 1609, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, a book that offered a systematic introduction to piety for laypeople. Less attention is devoted to de Sales's other devotional treatise, *On the Love of God* (1616). Donlan reads this complex and mystical treatise as an implicit attack on the violent zeal of the Ligue and a call for a spiritual reform, which it certainly was. But it was much more. Among other things, it was a guide to moderation in pursuing contemplation, a major concern of the early decades of the seventeenth century.

In all of these works, Donlan identifies the same themes that, together, form not merely a style but a spiritual vision of morality and anti-violence. Whereas other contemporary theologians viewed God as a judge who ought to be feared, and invited believers to practice violence against heretics and violent acts of religious mortifications and penance against their very bodies and selves, de Sales, according to Donlan, promoted a "competing approach" (3), namely a piety of peace, tranquility, and charity. De Sales's God is love, affection, and tenderness; he is a mother and a consoler rather than an angry, punishing father.

Donlan's spiritual biography of de Sales is an important contribution to the English literature on French spirituality. I am not sure, though, whether the more general argument—namely, that with de Sales a page was turned in French piety and interpersonal and relational devotion replaced a spirituality of violence—does justice to the richness of French early modern Catholicism. Nor does it take into account developments within Catholicism in other parts of Europe. As Donlan himself acknowledges, there is little in de Sales's spirituality that had not been presented already in the Dutch School of the *devotio moderna*, in Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* of the 1420s, and in, above all, Ignatius of Loyola's and other early Jesuits' writings. De Sales was a student of the Jesuits, and the Society of Jesus itself absorbed new trends in Italian, Rhenish, and, of course, Spanish devotional languages and practices. In other words, de Sales participated in an outburst of Catholic spiritual creativity whose origins were pan-Catholic

and multifaceted. *Consolation* was a key term not merely in de Sales's mission and spirituality but in a Jesuit religiosity that was anything but anti-militant. Peacemaking, mercy, and pastoral care, as well as the cultivation of interpersonal relations with lay-people characterized the age and not only de Sales's religiosity. Pace Donlan, violent preaching against heretics, the promotion of practices of charity, and a call for moderation did not exclude each other in early modern Catholicism. Militancy and ascetic practices were not the opposite of relational bonds (8) and consolation of troubled souls (63).

What Ignatius of Loyola advocated, and de Sales then adapted, was moderation, not the promotion of "gentle, pastoral, and charitable zeal as superior to one of spiritual, psychological, and physical combat" (3). Excess, not any of the practices or words themselves, was what needed to be moderated. Juxtaposing these tendencies and experiences, as Donlan does, presents de Sales's spirituality as more one dimensional than it actually was, and credits the saint with a radical break from tradition that he would have undoubtedly rejected.

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*The Standard Bearer of the Roman Church: Lawrence of Brindisi and Capuchin Missions in the Holy Roman Empire (1599–1613)*. Andrew J. G. Drenas. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2018. xviii + 246 pp. \$75.

The Capuchin friar Lawrence of Brindisi (1559–1619), Catholic saint (1881) and doctor of the church (1959), is an extremely fascinating personality, though little is known about him in the English-speaking world. A correct historical understanding of this religious figure has been particularly hampered by the centuries of hagiography written about him. The aim of Andrew Drenas's book is to examine the role played by Lawrence of Brindisi and the Capuchins in the mission of re-Catholicizing the lands of the Holy Roman Empire. In this regard, the author situates Lawrence within the experience of early modern Catholicism.

Lawrence was born Giulio Cesare Russo in Brindisi. After moving to Venice, he joined the order of the Friars Minor Capuchin in Verona in 1575 at the age of fifteen, taking the name Lawrence of Brindisi. He studied logic, philosophy, theology, and holy scripture, and it appears he also learned Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek while drawing special attention to himself as a preacher. Ordained as a priest in 1582, Lawrence performed various governance functions in the convents and provinces of the Capuchin order: for example, he was provincial of Venice (1594–97) and Switzerland (1598) and definitor general (1599). In 1599 he was appointed commissar of the mission—a post he held at various times—finally becoming vicar general of the order (1602–05).