

## *Historical Dictionary of Catholicism*

William J. Collinge. *Historical Dictionary of Catholicism*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2012. 593 pp. \$95.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780810857551. E-book. ISBN: 9780810879799.

The second edition of the *Historical Dictionary of Catholicism* is one of the latest entries in Scarecrow Press' Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements series. The volume is aimed at undergraduates, non-Catholics, Catholic religious educators in parishes and dioceses, and Catholics who wish to learn more about the tradition. Containing over 500 alphabetically arranged entries, this edition has been updated to include the death of John Paul II and the election of his successor, Benedict XVI. The longest entries run to perhaps three pages; the majority of the entries are perhaps one or two longer paragraph(s). Each entry contains cross-references to other entries in bold type. A clear and concise listing of acronyms and abbreviations, as well as a chronology, are included in the front matter. An updated introduction precedes the dictionary entries. The five appendices include a listing of the popes and the Ecumenical Councils; the documents of Vatican Council II with a brief summary of their content; the complete list of papal encyclicals (also with a brief summary); and some common Catholic prayers (Our Father, Memorare, Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, etc.). The bibliography (seventy-six pages) is arranged by general subject areas ("Doctrine and Theology" — "Specific Themes in Doctrinal/Systematic Theology" — "The Trinity"). An e-book edition is also available.

The author, William J. Collinge, is Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, MD, and holds the Knott Professorship in Theology. He is the director of publications for the College Theology Society, and is currently working on the third edition of the *Historical Dictionary*.

Given the scope of the material and the many controversial topics included, the author has done a fine job of showing the development of doctrine, devotions, and attitudes within the church. Right from the introduction, the author informs the reader of his approach: "... it concentrates on the history that leads to the Catholic Church in the United States at the beginning of the 21st century," and focuses on the time from ca. 50 to the beginning of the Second Vatican Council (2). For someone new or unfamiliar with Catholicism, the entries give enough information to find one's way. It would be a good replacement for the now-dated *Catholicism* by Richard McBrien, and contains a wider variety of topics than the out-of-print *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, edited by Rene Latourelle.

There are a few theological bones to be picked with this volume, though, perhaps inevitably given the vast range of time and ideas covered. In general, controversial topics are treated in a balanced manner; however, it seems that at the end of potentially controversial topics, the author throws in a line or two that has the potential to cloud the issue rather than clarify. For example, the article on "Euthanasia" gives a concise description of the current Catholic position on the issue, clarifying the distinction between killing and allowing to die, the nature of "ordinary" and "extraordinary" means of life support, and the continuing need for discussion due to rapid developments in medical technology. But then, at the end of the article, almost as a throw-away line, Collinge

brings up issues of distributive justice in regard to end-of-life care, seeming to echo the secular cultural arguments of cost-containment and rationing.

There are a few quirks in the entries. For example, the entry for “Florence (Ferrara-Florence-Rome), Council of (1438-45?)” covers a half-page with quite a good summary of the issues involved in the Council, cross-references, and “See Also” referrals. In contrast, the entry for “Reconciliation” is a very brief five lines (one of the shortest in the volume), with no space allotted to the theological dimensions of the topic. The referral to “Penance (Reconciliation), Sacrament of” presents a much longer, informative discussion of reconciliation as a sacrament and theological concept. Putting some of this material under “Reconciliation” would have given the reader a sense of the theological concept of reconciliation and set a solid background for the theology of the sacrament of penance.

As part of the introduction, the discussion of the growth of a world church gives away two key points at issue for the author: church reform and women in ministry. In a brief paragraph that identifies “evangelical Catholics” with conservatives, he states “[t]heir concern is not *with reform of the church* but with Catholic witness in a secularized world” (22, emphasis added), as if the two were mutually exclusive. He also states, “Women’s relative lack of influence on Catholic theology and institutions is closely connected with their exclusion from the sacrament of order” (22). After citing the statistic that about 80 percent of lay ministers are women, he goes on to state that “they remain subordinate to the authority of clerics” (23). In a hierarchical organization, everyone is subordinate to someone else.

After looking at a number of entries in the volume, one begins to suspect that the author is from the “Spirit of Vatican II” camp of theology. For example, under “Liturgical Movement”: “There *remains*, however, the *task of embodying in the actual liturgy*, as prayed in local churches, the aims that are reflected in the liturgical texts ...” (264, emphasis added). Again, under “Eucharist”: “It [renewed Eucharistic theology] locates the presence of Jesus *first and foremost in the church gathered to celebrate*; the presence in the Eucharistic elements is derivative from this” (154, emphasis added). It is possibly more accurate to state that the Eucharistic assembly, and Christ’s presence in it, derives from Christ’s own presence in the Eucharistic elements, rather than the other way around. As to the Second Vatican Council itself, it receives a surprisingly short treatment; two longer paragraphs under “Vatican Councils.” Collinge characterizes *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* as “the most important documents” of the Council; certainly one could argue that *Dei Verbum* and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* may have had more impact on the “person in the pews” than *Lumen Gentium*’s simply “subordinating the hierarchical structure of the church” to the concept of the church as the people of God (451).

This book would be a good resource for the stated audiences, with the possible exception of religious educators in parishes. It is easy to find subjects and entries, and there is enough information to give a sample of what the discussion about that topic is. Most intended readers would not pick up on the theological distinctions listed in this review, and would probably be none the worse for reading them in passing.

*Kathy Harty*  
*Leo Dehon Library*  
*Sacred Heart School of Theology*

