

BOOK REVIEWS

Alston, W.P., *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 320 pp.

No doubt about it, Prof. William P. Alston of Syracuse University of New York is one of the world's leading Philosophers of Religion. The book under review which he has graciously sent us (and for which we are grateful) is the culmination of years and years of research and reflection on the topic of basic epistemological beliefs and their justification to be basic and credible as applied to religious experience. From an analytic (Hick, Swinburne, Plantinga) and pragmatic (James) philosophical tradition, this opus can claim to be a contemporary classic on the validity of mystical experiences as ground for the formulation of basic beliefs. To accomplish this, Alston combines Epistemology and Philosophy of Religion in this not quite easy to read work — especially for somebody trained in the Continental European tradition such as this reviewer.

Alston is primarily concerned with an “experiential awareness of God” (p.1) thus, the title of the opus. Can God be perceived? This is the crux of the inquiry of these penetrating pages. Alston immediately differentiates the Perception of God from ordinary sense perception. In spite of not being interested in sense perception per se, the a. dedicates one whole chapter to the topic (Ch.3: *The Reliability of Sense Perception: A Case Study*, pp.102-145). This chapter is only to build more ground as the exposition and analysis develop with the pages of the book.

The a. also qualifies the Perception of God as something to do with formulating the valid grounds of religious belief. Thus, at the outset the a. is interested in formulating what we can deem as “religious criteriology”— since his notion of Epistemology or Philosophy of Knowledge is, *ab initio*, linked to the task of justifying beliefs in particular M-beliefs (‘M’ for manifestation). Said manifestation is the basis for what the author calls “putative direct awareness” (which does not follow the dynamism of ordinary sense perception) and how this applied to God “can provide justification for certain kinds of beliefs about God.” (p.9) Proceeding within the Christian tradition with which the a. is most familiar, Alston does not propose to present religious or mystical experience as one of those proofs for the reality of God. Hence, this work is not a Natural Theology (p.3) or even a Theodicy as understood in conventional philosophical parlance.

To achieve his goal, the a. cites key mystical figures prominent among them is St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila), all in English translation. Analytic philosophy thrives and is limited by idiomatic considerations. Alston takes the texts of the mystics above all as testimony and these testimonies form the basis in the demonstration of the “epistemological value of mystical experience.” (p.12) The reader may misconstrue this as an interest in the cognitive value of mysticism, but at the outset and in practically all the pages of this volume, the a. has already made clear his notion of epistemology: the study of beliefs, of justified beliefs in as much as these form the basis of true knowledge. Mystical experience could be used interchangeably with religious experience. Alston, upon using this expression, warns us that “his category is much narrower; it embraces only those experiences in which it seems that God ‘appears’ or ‘presents Himself’ to one as so-and-so.” (p.349) Thus, the mystical testimonies truly have theophanic value—something that the a. has not emphasized enough in this work. Alston has been passionately interested in the authenticity of said experiences forgetting that theophanies have a gratuitous character. On the other hand, it can be legitimately argued that gratuity seems to be out of tune in an epistemological study of mystical perception.

But without a doubt, this viewpoint is quite limited. It somehow reduces mysticism to its “wow experience” value as a theophany without really entering into the details of the experience. Mysticism is also asceticism, process, trials, tribulations, union, love....Not even Alston’s notion of Christian Mystical Perceptual Doxastic Practice (CMP) has entered into these depths (pp.184ss.). In other words, he has only scratched the surface of something worth the while to really explore.

The epistemological game is at play upon treating these theophanic testimonies as primarily doxastic in nature. Alston differentiates the four kinds of concepts: phenomena, comparative, doxastic and epistemic on pp.44-45. To be doxastic is opinionative, belief-based. It is not yet epistemic or epistemological or fully certain. In the case of mysticism, Alston has not stressed that these beliefs are inevitably confessional and linked to confessions even institutionalized ones such as churches, orders, movements, schools, etc. But at least he gives allowance, following obviously the lead of William James, to the varieties of religious experience (Ch.7: *The Problem of Religious Diversity*, pp.255-285) without entering into the phenomenological and sociological level of language, culture, history, etc. His work is a work of philosophy and he limits himself to a rational, even “unconfessional” at times even though a strong Christian accentuation is felt, analysis of the subject matter. Natural Theology as “the enterprise of providing support for religious beliefs by starting from premises that neither are nor presuppose any religious beliefs” (p.289) somehow tiptoes into the complex if not complicated scene. But as already mentioned, this is not developed by the a. nor is it his ambition to construct something similar based on mystical testimonies.

Given our training in Thomism and our studies of the Spanish Reformationist and Renaissance Mystics, we disagree with Prof. Alston in many crucial points. But this review is not the place to enumerate them one by one since Alston and I belong to different orbits or traditions in the appreciation of the mystics. However, we would like to point out certain notions which we find lacking in his exposition and could have enriched the same. The first is the notion of ineffability. Mystical testimonies suffer from the problem of the insufficiency of language and thus, is confronted with the reality of silence. Authors like M. de Certeau could have enriched Alston's exposition. One author wrote: "However, as one penetrates into the mystery, he notices that the horizon is distant, and that he is falling constantly into the abyss of silence. For believers it is a silence of admiration; it is contemplative, mystical and not agnostic (like analytic philosophy) nor a feeling of loss (as in the case of the theologians of the Death of God)" (S.Fuster Perulló, *Misterio trinitario. Dios desde el silencio y la cercanía*. Salamanca: S.Esteban-Edibesa, 1997, p.13-translation mine). Behind the words of doxastic testimony lies what Jesuit William Johnston calls "Silent Music". Also Alston's exposition could have greatly benefited from the work of Jean Baruzi (*St. Jean de la Croix et le probleme de l'experience mystique*. Paris: Alcan, 1931).

Given an epistemological model strongly hinged on the theory of coherence, we felt that we were going around in circles in our perusal of this work and that we could go beyond the construction of the narratives and propositions in our epistemological analysis. Nevertheless, it could not be denied that the book under review is serious and committed in its reflections, analysis and arguments. Within the bounds of Alston's philosophical style and tradition, the book is definitely splendid and makes contemporary discussions on religious experience advance to considerably great distances and new heights.

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Various Authors, *Dios Amor en la tradición cristiana y en los interrogantes del hombre contemporáneo*. F. Guerrero and P. Largo trans. (Madrid: Editorial Ciudad Nueva, 1993), 289 pp.

Tante grazie to Prof. Dr. D. Jesús Castellano Cervera O.C.D., President of the Teresianum Faculty of Theology (Rome), noted consultant to various congregations of the Holy See, author of important works on liturgy, sacramental theology, liturgical theology and St. Teresa of Avila and one of the contributors to this volume under review for sending it to us for review. Prof. Castellano, an esteemed friend of this reviewer, lives up to the adage: *Amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas!* This book is the Spanish translation of a collective monograph written and published in Italian under the auspices of the Focolare Movement. During our stint in the Secretariado Trinitario of Salamanca from 1995-1996 we were able to peruse the Italian original and we

can truly say that this volume is an excellent translation. The contributors are prominent theologians-collaborators of the *Focolarini*. Thus, at the outset in order to understand this volume on *Dio Amore, Dios Amor* (God Love) one has to take into account the theology and thought of the foundress, Chiara Lubich on whom the University of Santo Tomas conferred the Honorary Doctorate in Theology in 1997 (Cfr. M. Cerini, *Dios Amor en la experiencia y en el pensamiento de Chiara Lubich*. Madrid: Editorial Ciudad Nueva, 1992). Truly the “kairós” has come for discovering the richness of her theology and what it could offer us nowadays.

The volume contains six articles: 1) “Jahveh, God of Mercy and Clemency. God Love in the Old Testament” by A. Dreston; 2) “God love in the New Testament” by G. Rossé; 3) “God Love in the Fathers and Great Theologians” by S. Cola; 4) “Knowledge and Experience of God Love in the Christian Mystics” by J. Castellano; 5) “Is God Love? Some Reflections on Contemporary Culture” by G. Mura; and 6) “God Love and Contemporary Society: A Sociological Perspective” by V. Araújo. One can see that the main topic is studied from varied perspectives: Old Testament Theology, New Testament Theology, Patristics and History of Theology, Mystical Theology and Spiritual Theology, Philosophy (of Culture) and Sociology (of Religion). One can legitimately intuit that since this book is written within a Christian tradition that the notion of God Love as known by man “flows” from Scripture and the flow moves on first through the Fathers, theologians and the mystics towards its application in culture and its place in society. Thus, Theology from its sources flows as something theoretical then it is lived and experienced (especially by the mystics) and then it presents itself as a challenge in culture (through philosophy and literature) and as a sociological reality. This proves that the notion of God Love is not the domain alone of theology. Likewise, God Love enriches theology and other disciplines challenging them to transcend their theoretical nature in order to make themselves more experiential. Theory must be lived — especially in theology and philosophy! Otherwise they would be empty, senseless and useless! In this sense, the mystics have a lot to say and this reviewer opines that Castellano’s excellent article is truly timely. The same must be said of Araújo’s piece, which tackles the ambivalent phenomenon of secularization. Thematically, the volume lacks the perspectives of Ecumenical Theology, Phenomenology and History of Religion (for non-Christian traditions in dialogue with Christianity), Moral Theology, Liturgical Theology, etc. The perspectives adopted are Christian Catholic since God Love is the Trinity whom Jesus Christ revealed. The Trinity is the God of Christians.

The essays are highly expository in character. They are quite easy to read in spite of their authorized erudition and profound theological reflections making the perusal of this volume truly enjoyable and educational.

Upon closing this volume, this reviewer feels that it poses a challenge for all of us: to make God Love as the basis, the *quid*, the content, the goal of

all theologizing and philosophizing. The essays should be taken as points of departure for a future project: a Trinitarian philosophy and theology! The Trinity must be the beginning and the end of all our works. What is theology if not God-Talk, the talk of God? The God who talked to us in Jesus Christ is the Trinity and it is this God whom we should talk about as Christian theologians. What is philosophy if not the love (or friendship) of wisdom? Is not the love of the Three Persons in One God the perfect love of wisdom for God is Wisdom and in the Trinity He loves Himself in Three Divine Persons? Is not the Trinity the model of the love that we humans should profess? Is not the Trinity the "social principle of Christianity" (Cfr. X. Pikaza, *Trinidad y Comunidad Cristiana. El principio social del cristianismo*. Salamanca: Secretariado Trinitario, 1990)? Is not the Trinity the greatest novelty of Christianity with respect to other religious traditions? These questions, hopefully, will wake up our philosophers and theologians from their lethargy! Here in the Philippines, it is sad and unfortunate that God Love has not been studied by our philosophers and theologians! The question is, in the light of all what has been stated, is the Philippines blest with philosophers and theologians? It would be deplorable to respond to this urgent and yet biting interrogation in the negative. We want to believe that the Philippines can count on men and women from its own ranks for philosophizing and theologizing, but if these men and women call themselves as Christians they should make God Love, the God of Christians the everything (though not thematically speaking) of their endeavors. The key is a Trinitarian thrust in Filipino philosophizing and theologizing. Hopefully it would hatch soon.

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Lobato Casado, O.P., A., *Dignidad y aventura humana*. (Madrid-Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban-Edibesa, 1997), 273pp.

The work under review is not a generalized philosophy of man or anthropology. It only seeks to study the reality of man by emphasizing one clef or dimension: Human Dignity. *Human Dignity*, as a thematic in itself, opens up ways or channels of comprehending the total man. This is what the author of this book wants to initiate: an itinerarium of man towards himself, towards discovering himself along the paths of dignity. This is the adventure that this work seeks to outline.

The author Prof. Abelardo Lobato, O.P. has already written numerous works on the philosophy of man aside from his known contributions to metaphysics, history of philosophy (especially medieval philosophy) and St Thomas Aquinas. Lobato, formerly Rector of the *Angelicum* of Rome, Dean of its Faculty of Philosophy and presently Rector of the Faculty of Theology of Lugano (Switzerland), is a world renowned authority on these themes. He is not just a mere specialist, but an authority and undoubtedly one of the most impor-

tant philosophers of the Dominican Order of today. A *Magister* in Theology, Fray Abelardo is one of the world's leading scholars on St. Thomas Aquinas. He is the founding president of the Sociedad Internacional Sto. Tomás de Aquino (SITA). Indirectly, I consider myself as one of his students not only because I have been reading him for the past five years or so and having nurtured myself with his works, but because some of my better philosophy mentors in Salamanca and Manila were his students. Lobato belongs to that noble Spanish thomistic tradition having studied directly under Ramírez and Cuervo.

By using a particular clef in his anthropological discourse (dignity), Lobato has opened a floodgate of themes. Truly this work, penned within the horizon of St. Thomas Aquinas, is an itinerarium along the various dimensions of the human reality: the bodily nature of man, spirituality, personality, personal development, social development and relationships, the notion of transcendence, origin, vocation, openness and destiny. Lobato parts from the presupposition of forgetfulness, the contemporary forgetfulness of God which coincides with the Heideggerian forgetfulness of being (p.14). This has led him to write this essay to overcome this forgetfulness which has led to the forgetfulness of man of himself, of his dignity.

Hinged on Aquinas, Lobato dialogues with diverse authors such as Sofocles, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Boethius, Avicenna, Pascal, Della Mirandola, Leo the Great, Nicholas of Cusa, Kant, Schopenhauer, Heidegger, Maritain, Sartre, Bloch, Marechal, Levinas, Bueno, Forment, John Paul II as Pope and as Karol Wojtyla etc. The dialogue could have been richer if it included representatives from the East and if it specially highlighted certain contemporary schools of anthropology such as Existentialism, Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Structuralism, etc. Likewise the recent magisterium of the Church starting with Vatican II offers potent material for a dialogue such as this one. Nevertheless, this work is a showcase of Open Thomism as far as Philosophical Anthropology is concerned.

This easy to read opus is dialogical in style and sometimes hinges on the poetic which is quite characteristic of the author as an elegant stylist and seasoned pedagogue. Perhaps this book has been written hurriedly as it does not, in many cases, elaborate and because of the somehow simple erudition it showcases. In this sense, this book is not one of Lobato's better works, however in a different level it may be one of his most important works. It is the product of years and years of anthropological reflection as a thomist, as a philosopher and as a theologian. This book on the adventure of human dignity is without a doubt a synthesis of thought written vis a vis the new challenges of the coming century. It is also an insistent, albeit repetitive, call to rediscover man as somebody (and not something) endowed with dignity. It is appropriate to quote (without translation to conserve its poetic strain and impact) the concluding words of this book which summarizes the anthropology of its author: "No es lícito pasar indiferente ante los problemas en los que

se juega el destino del hombre, presente y futuro. El dilema es radical. Coincide con el dilema del evangelio, con el de Hamlet. 'Ser o no ser' digno, esta es la cuestión. La aventura de la dignidad es la aventura radical del hombre. Todo caminante que, en reposo al final de la jornada, ha sido capaz de aprender esta lección y de asimilar su contenido, cuando de nuevo vuelva a su condición de homo viator, de itinerante, bien seguro que divisará en lo alto una estrella que oriente sus pasos y haga posible el anhelo de ser y ser más, ser en plenitud, con la conquista de la dignidad."(p.267) Beautifully written, Maestro!

Our congratulations to our friend Prof. Lobato for a fine book, worth consulting especially in courses in Rational Psychology, and our thanks for his continuing service to the development of a truly Christian and yet open anthropological reflection in the wake of the advent of the twenty first century!

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Rodríguez I., OSA & Alvarez, J., OSA., *Al servicio del evangelio. Provincia agustiniana del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de Filipinas.* (Valladolid: Editorial Estudio Agustiniano, 1996), 454 pp.

This volume, penned by the great historian Isacio Rodríguez OSA in collaboration with Jesús Alvarez OSA, is a compendium of the history of the travails of the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of the Philippines. The Agustinian Order, starting with that band led by Fray Andrés de Urdaneta, is the pioneer of the evangelization of these islands. This work does not seek to replace I. Rodríguez's *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniana del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de Filipinas* (Manila, 1965-Valladolid 1994; 22 vols.), but rather is a "manual" for neophytes in the subject matter. In fact, it is more than just a manual or a book of easy reference. Its fluid, well balanced and authoritative exposition make it an obligatory reading material for lovers of Philippine History and of the Agustinian Order.

The author makes use of the schema of J.L.Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*. (Madison, 1959). The book's twenty six chapters speak of the saga of the group of Urdaneta and his successors. To read the story of the Agustinian Order in the Philippines is equivalent to a reading of the History of the Philippine Conquest and Evangelization. The Agustinians were missionaries and church builders. Because they were church builders they were town builders since the church aside from being just a mere landmark or temple was the starting point and center of the town. Ignorance of the Agustinian Order in the Philippines is ignorance of a big chunk of Philippine History.

This manual does not only limit itself to the Philippines. It also includes the activities of the Province in India, Spain, South America, Tanzania, etc. It does not only narrate, but also enumerates the great foundations and founders of the Order. It also goes through the touchy issue of the separation

and birth of new provinces. It also makes mention of important cultural contributions and contributors.

Supplemented with excellent photos and a rather too generic chronological table, after reading this book, the Filipinogue is bound to admire this great Province of the Order of St. Augustine. Unfortunately it is too laconic to deconstruct and demythologize the old myths and old wives' tales about the Spanish friars, but it is a solidly written testimonial work that could in a way reinvalidate the good name of these missionaries who played pivotal roles in our history eventhough one of them (Fray Mariano Gil O.S.A.) had to squeal the outbreak of the Katipunan revolution in 1896.

The Dominican Province of the Most Holy Rosary published something similar in 1987 (Cfr. E. Neira, *Heraldos del Evangelio en los Reinos del Oriente*. Rome, 1987). Neira's book as well as this work under review are necessary reading materials in order for us to appreciate the work of these two missionary Provinces, of these men who left their home and clan to unknown and distant lands to preach the Good News. An English translation should be in order, because the present day generation of Filipinos cannot read Spanish.

This reviewer was formed by these two great missionary provinces: the Augustinian Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus (Colegio S. Agustín, Makati; 1977-1988) and the Dominican Province of the Most Holy Rosary (University of Sto. Tomás, Manila; 1988-1992). During our postgraduate studies in Spain (1992-1996) we visited their convents in Valladolid, Madrid and Avila. It was a fascinating experience trying to synthesize CSA and S. Agustín de Intramuros with the Real Colegio-Seminario de Agustinos de Valladolid; UST and Sto. Domingo with the Convento de Sto. Tomás de Avila. In Valladolid and Avila, our mentors in Makati and Manila were formed and upon treading on their places of origin, there was somewhat an inexpressible "mystical" feeling challenging us to continue constructing and forging the elusive definitive synthesis in the spirit of the Bishop of Hippo and the Angelic Doctor, son of St. Dominic who adopted the Rule of St. Augustine for his Order of Mendicant Preachers. Hopefully a comparative study of the saga and "finale" which gave way to the indigenous provinces here in the Philippines of these two orders would be written by competent historians. Reviews like this one are not enough to thank the Augustinians for our formation and that of our nation. This reviewer could only encourage intelligent readers, who thirst like St. Augustine for "Virtus et Scientia" to get hold of a highly recommended publication such as this one under review. Likewise a word of gratitude is in order here to the friars of Valladolid and to their Editorial for sending us this book for review. May this book together with their praiseworthy apostolate be widespread and be appreciated by a generation plagued by ignorance and indifference. No Filipiniana collection is complete without it!

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Gamarra Mayor, Saturnino, *Teología espiritual*. 2nd ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos-Sapientia Fidei, 1997), 312 pp.

The work under review is intended to be a manual of Spiritual Theology for use in Spanish (and Spanish speaking) Faculties of Theology. As such, aside from being written in Spanish, it must be propedeutical or introductory in nature, i.e., present the major themes and topics of Spiritual theology in a language and style easily accessible to students and non-experts alike. Corollary to these objectives, the aim of making the readers aware of the great importance of Spirituality not only in the field of academic theology, but likewise in the practical, day to day level. The latter, in the long run, is wherein the crux of Spiritual Theology lies. It is that level which really does matter.

To accomplish these objectives, the author makes a good headstart with a broad bibliographical list and its first chapter entitled "Identificación de la teología espiritual" (Identification of Spiritual Theology). This chapter features the history of spirituality as an academic subject, fundamental reference works for a study of spirituality, the relationship of Spiritual theology to other fields such as Dogmatic Theology, Moral theology, etc., the various names given to the treatise (the author prefers "Teología espiritual" or Spiritual Theology which is the title of the book), various definitions to the study (from renowned authors such as de Guibert, Royo Marín, Ruiz Salvador, Bernard, Rodríguez-Melgarejo, Secondin and Goffi. The chapter ends with an enumeration of how spirituality should be. The author proposes six qualities.

At the outset, we get the impression that Prof. Gamarra wants to lay the foundations of a very serious discourse — which is of vital importance. After reading Chapter One, this reviewer was in an expectant state. It was as if a definitive treatise of Spiritual Theology or something close to it was about to hatch. Chapter One could be interpreted as the planning stage. But as we went beyond Chapter One, we somewhat disappointingly saw that the treatise did not go beyond the so called planning stage. Chapter Two entitled "¿Hay cabida para la espiritualidad hoy?" or the actual significance of spirituality with its examination of the criticisms hurled against spirituality, its excursus into anthropology, transcendence, interiority, postmodernity and a re-elaboration of the characteristics of spirituality is an extension and re-elaboration of the previous chapter. What's more after rambling a lot on the matter, the a. fails to propose a concise definition of Spirituality. We have also failed to see how the characteristics or qualities proposed find "fruition" in the succeeding chapters.

The result is an atypical manual of Spiritual Theology not only in the sense mentioned, but also in the thematic and systematic senses of the word. On one hand, this could be due to the fact that Gamarra's opus is not like the other manuals which we previously perused and thus have grown accustomed to through the years.

But on the other hand, the author's treatment of the Life in Christ (Ch.III), Christian and Ecclesiological Life (Ch.IV), Christian Prayer (Ch.V), The Call to live a Christian Life (Ch. VII), Sin and the Spiritual Life (Ch. VIII), Process in the Christian Life (Chapter IX) and Asceticism (Chapter X), has given this reviewer the impression of a treatise more along the lines of Dogmatic and Moral Theology and even Comparative Phenomenology of Religions. But we have to admit that we have been impressed with the strong theological theoretical framework present in these chapters especially in Chapters IX and X. In our opinion, said framework could have been richer if the author took into consideration the contributions of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Actually Chapters III to X are shades or facets of Asceticism which receives a strong treatment in Chapter X. The book, as a whole, is truly a treatise on Asceticism. Thus, we find lacking in it a word about Union, Mystical Union, the goal of all Christian Asceticism and its crowning glory of which many saints have spoken especially St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross whose presence in this manual, though minimal, cannot be denied.

In spite of the author's propensity to enumerate, we cannot deny the presence of a strong, well founded and fluid theological base in all of the chapters. Perhaps this is the true merit of this work. Instead of being an introduction to the study of the Spiritual Life we could call this book as an "Introduction to the introduction" or a meta-introduction to the study of the Spiritual Life.

Perhaps altogether it is just a matter of difference in perspective that has led this reviewer to criticize this work. Prof. Gamarra, Dean of the Faculty of Theology of Vitoria (Spain) and known specialist on Sacramental Spirituality, is definitely an authority on Spiritual Theology. His work, with all of its long and rambling excursus, is definitely a valid contribution to the Study of Spirituality. However, we cannot recommend it to beginners like students. Perhaps it would be of greater help to professors in order for them to be theologically equipped to initiate their students in Spiritual Theology.

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Regan D., CSSp, *Experience the Mystery. Pastoral Possibilities for Christian Mystagogy.* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 152 pp.

The volume under review is the doctoral dissertation of the author presented at the Faculty of Theology of the Gregorian University of Rome in 1992 under the direction of the prominent specialist on Spiritual Theology, Prof. Bruno Secondini O. Carm. At the outset, this work, as we can glean from the title has a pastoral thrust. It is not highly erudite. The author's bibliography is quite, quite limited - especially in terms of liturgical theology. Holy Spirit Fr. David Regan (b.1926) makes it clear that he does not have the ambition to pen a

highly erudite and specialized monograph. In spite of these apologetics, we believe that this study would have been richer if the a. had taken more pains to incorporate the insights of various liturgical theologies such as Casel, Beauduin, Guardini, Marsili, Federici, etc. The value of any study diminishes if it forgoes available opportunities and sources for conceptual enrichment.

But this book is indeed insightful and can truly stand on its own as a legitimate intellectual contribution. It contains theological gems, worth re-reading and reflecting upon constantly, scattered throughout its pages making the exposition somehow too repetitious and sometimes disconcerting with inexplicable leaps from one theme to another aside from indiscriminate sprinklings quotations from other theologians such as Rahner, Schillebeeckx and the Brazilian Leonardo Boff into the text.

In the "Introduction" the a. makes some methodological considerations which the reader has to take into consideration in order to understand the chapters of this monograph. He clearly makes a clearcut enumeration of the three areas wherein mystagogy is studied, namely: liturgy, patristics, spiritual theology, catechetics and missiology (p.7). This clearly reveals the richness of the main topic at hand. Insightful too is his affirmation that "Mystagogy is capable of uniting theology, spirituality and the paractical arts of pastoral and mission action." (*Ibid.*)

"Experience the Mystery" is indeed the gist of the ten chapters of this book combining liturgical theology, dogmatic theology, exegesis, patristics, pastoral theology and missiology. The study starts from the history and present day recovery of mystagogy (Ch. 1-2); then it explores various correlative areas such as experience, Word of God, liturgy, community and mystery (Ch.3-7); and finally it winds up in the level of application, particularly initiation, inculturation, formation, service and spirit (Ch. 9-10). We Christians must truly Experience the Mystery, the Mystery of Our Salvation. From the point of view of Rahner, the a. distinguishes the notion of mystery in liturgical theology and in what we commonly call dogmatic theology. The a. rightly observes. "In his view of mystery, Rahner is heir to the theological rather than the liturgical tradition. The liturgy sees and celebrates the Mystery as primarily the Mystery of Christ in his death, resurrection, ascension (and Second Coming). For Rahner, 'The trinitarian mystery of God' is fundamental, while he admits that 'The mysteries of soteriology can undoubtedly be reduced to the mystery of the Incarnation.'" (pp. 99-100). But is not the liturgy the activity of the so called "Economic" Trinity? Is not the Rahnerian affirmation somewhat valid in liturgy, though essentially of methodologically it is dogmatic? Unfortunately, this study is totally expository and bereft of a critical sense.

Throughout the a.'s exposition, the liturgical and sacramental tradition or dimension of theologizing is the predominant. Patristics somehow becomes the supporting buttress for the mentioned predominant dimension. What

is truly disconcerting is that the pastoral and missiological level have been mentioned - and canonized in the title — are practically absent. The level of praxis which these two levels imply vis a vis liturgical and dogmatic theology is non-existent in this book.

Although it has been mentioned, we feel that the sacramentological level has not been sufficiently treated in this book. In other words, it lacks the buttress of Fundamental Sacramental Theology. In this, St. Thomas Aquinas could have enriched the book's discussion — or even the St. Thomas as studied by Schillebeeckx in his first theological phase. Recently, Sacramental Theology has been enriched with the contributions of authors such as Rahner, Vorgrimler, Chauvet, etc.

Our heartfelt congratulations to the a. for having combined depth and readability in an interesting book.

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Pikaza, X. O.de M., *Las religiones monoteístas: Judaísmo, cristianismo, islam.* (Madrid: Fundación Santa María - Cátedra de Teología Contemporánea del Colegio Mayor Chaminade, 1996), 144 pp.

The monograph under review is number five in the collection of "Diálogo Interreligioso" (Interreligious Dialogue) and is the corrected version of the text delivered by the a. during the course on Interreligious Dialogue sponsored by the Marists SY 1994-1995. In spite of its brevity, this opus of the Basque theologian Xabier Pikaza of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy is very dense, deep, suggestive and thought provoking. He seems to have taken off from an excellent monograph in French (J. Lambert, *Le Dieu distribué. Une anthropologie comparée des monothéismes*. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1995, 406 pp.) Pikaza's work has to be read slowly and more than once or twice or thrice in order to capture its subtle nuances, assimilate its impressively conceptual and yet pedagogic categories and schema in order to be able to form a critical judgement. If one is not careful or analytic enough he may be swept away because the a.'s style is truly convincing, breathtaking and sweeping. Any intelligent reader of Pikaza, aside from keeping track of his dynamism, resistance to simplistic labeling, evolution and uncountable works, must allow himself to be impressed by his aesthetical language and images, but must not be blinded by it or carried away by its poetic rhetoric. Pikaza is a writer, an excellent writer. Undoubtedly he is one of the few theologians gifted with a poetic, impressionist and sometimes romantic pen (or Personal Computer) who evokes, provokes and uses his aesthetical gamut to communicate something profound. Though Castilian is not his native tongue being a Basque, he is a master of the language especially in using the veil of simplicity, fluent rhythm, functional syntax and directness in order to communicate something profound.

Once more Pikaza gives us a demonstration of his mastery of language and of Phenomenology of Religion. He parts from the Abrahamic roots of the three monotheist religions. In fact, one could substitute “monotheist” for “abrahamic” in this study. Then slowly, the a. threshes the differences first in viewing Abraham, their brand of monotheism vis a vis contrary trends such as polytheism, pantheism and deism. In its origins, these three religions were somewhat already conscious of polytheism as manifested in the religions of the gentiles or neighbors; but pantheism and deism are “modern” inventions. We find Pikaza guilty of making a “foreign” philosophical imposition. Then he makes a strict definition of the word “Theophany” insisting that it could only strictly apply to the three monotheist religions-given their prophetic nature. Pikaza is correct in affirming that among the three it is Islam that is truly prophetic par excellence. Mohammed was the prophet. One is reminded of the famous expression: “By the beard of the prophet!” Jesus Christ for the Christians was not just a prophet. The Jews had their priesthood which later on disappeared with the replacement of the rabbis or teachers. Truly the prophetic is an excellent key to understand and compare these three religions. Pikaza has been insisting on this point for years. As a Biblical Exegete, he has been known to (over)emphasize the prophetic nature of Christianity.

However, we find Prof. Pikaza’s denial of the existence of a priesthood in Christianity and his affirmation of Jesus Christ as “laico” or “layperson” unacceptable (the a. as well as fellow Mercedarian Mercedes Navarro have long used this stumbling block of a classification applied to Jesus Christ). Was not Christ “Priest according to the rite of Melquisedec”? Certainly He did not belong to the rite of Aaron — perhaps this is the rationale of calling Him “laico,” but He was truly a Priest, the High Priest! Was He not also considered a Pharisee and a Rabbi — who definitely is not a priest of the temple soon to be destroyed, but is more than just a mere “laico”? The notion of prophet, especially in the case of Christianity, is not sufficient to explain the notion of mediator — as the a. insists subtly and yet insistingly. The notion of mediator in Christianity only makes sense if it is identified with the Priestly Office as synonymous. The prophet is merely spokesman of another; he is a proclaimer. Pikaza’s categorical denial of the existence of the priesthood in Christianity has one disastrous consequence which we are sure that he is aware of: the non-existence of sacrifice. Is not the Eucharist a sacrifice? Was not Jesus Christ the living oblation at the Cross and at the same time High Priest? Putting our minds at the same wavelength as that of Prof. Pikaza we reflect whether these affirmations are already beyond Dogma and thus belong to the realm of Biblical Exegesis — as Pikaza would claim himself to be? Did not renowned Exegetes, among them Pikaza’s professor in the *Instituto Biblico* of Rome Fr. Albert Vanhoye, S.J. (Cfr. *Prêtres anciens, prêtre nouveau selon le nouveau testament*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980) write on the priesthood in the New Testament? It goes without saying that this reviewer finds Pikaza’s

appreciation of the prophetic office somewhat offhand and exaggerated - especially if said appreciation is to the detriment or total elimination of the priestly office in Christ and His Church. We could even ask the a. as to how he considers his charism, role or vocation as presbyter of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy in the light of his ideology on the priesthood. Apparently, the a. has been "carried away" with this new and sometimes disconcerting lay theological language. Pikaza in this opus commits the "sin" of excessive concession to the role of the prophet. Two years ago he criticized Dominican A. Bandera's book (*El Espíritu que ungió a Jesús*. Madrid: Edibesa, 1995, 374 pp.) for its excessive concession to the priestly role. We too criticized Bandera for the same reasons (*Estudios Trinitarios* 29/1995, 500-502), but Pikaza, just like Bandera, was in favor of reducing the salvific role of Christ to one coordinate. In Pikaza's case, the prophetic. ("Desde la seguridad doctrinal" in *Vida Nueva*, March 2, 1996, 42).

We also judge Pikaza's evaluation of certain Oriental traditions too generalized and too sweeping — he limits himself to Hinduism, Taoism and Buddhism without making clarifications, divisions, etc. We likewise suspect that in discussing Christianity he was thinking too much of the Catholic tradition. What about the Protestant variants? What about those so-called "Christians" who deny the Divinity of Christ and hence, deny the Trinity? Pikaza has also surprisingly kept quiet with reference to the Jewish origins of Christianity, though he spoke about the very close affinities of Judaism and Islam. This reviewer also finds too dramatized the emphasis on violence in terms of the sacrificial order. This is obviously an influence of French anthropologist René Girard on the author. The same goes with Pikaza's Rahnerian categories of Immanent and Economic Trinity which are thematically out of focus and place in this monograph given its general structure.

The conclusion of this beautiful monograph commences with a subtle analysis of hope in the three religions whether said notion in relation to the mentioned religions is truly soteriological in nature. Here Pikaza develops and makes use of the notion of messianism. Its corollary is the present situation: politics, paradoxes and even the problem of desacralization (secularization) — all of which have been slightly touched by the a. Towards the end Pikaza's criticisms, which have somehow been dormant in the beginning and in the middle, piles up to initiate a beautiful and opportune crescendo finishing with an open ended intent to dialogue with issues which affect religiosity in the present times (ideologies, democratization, economics, religious utopias-which we find somewhat bland for the a.'s evasion to use the stronger and more appropriate term of "fundamentalism").

Nevertheless, our perusal of this thin, small and absorbing monograph has been enjoyable, educating and somewhat restless; it makes the more advanced reader pause and rethink the well constructed theses of the a. — a profound and highly suggestive thinker, an excellent theologian and a dynamic

exegete of the New Testament. We hope that our readers will have more or less the same experience in their own private perusal of this monograph which is another feather in the prolific cap of our great friend and guide Prof. Dr. D. Xabier Pikaza Ibarrondo, O. de M. of the Pontifical University of Salamanca. As this reviewer rests his pen and places this book in his crowded shelves, he awaits the next works of Dr. Pikaza. Likewise, he wishes to express appreciation to him for sending this interesting monograph as a gift. Probably at the back of his mind Pikaza knew that this reviewer cannot resist reviewing it.

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Saranyana, J., *History of Medieval Philosophy*. L. Sapan and R. Asuncion trans. (Manila: Sinagtala Publishers, 1996), 277 pp.

Among the manuals of Philosophy produced by the *Opus Dei* run University of Navarra, this volume figures as this reviewer's favourites. This, however, is not due to the fact of our inclinations towards Medieval Philosophy, but this book is truly well written and is an authoritative survey of Philosophy in the Middle Ages. It is hands down the best among the textbooks of the same series. Hence, with gusto we recommend it to both professors and students of the discipline. Catalán Josep Ignasi Saranyana (b.1911) is a noted historian of theology teaching in Navarra and is a recognized specialist on the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Colonial Latinamerican Theology.

We are happy that the *Opus Dei* here in the Philippines through Sinagtala has decided to launch to the market the english translation of this excellent textbook which could rival the overused Copleston History of Philosophy, at least in the Middle Ages. This translation will prove to be a great service to Philippine and English speaking students. Copleston's manual lacks historical backgrounding, though it is fine or rather standard in terms of doctrinal exposition. Saranyana's opus is a balanced combination of both historical backgrounding or contextualization and doctrinal exposition. Both coordinates together with an exposure to the primary sources, even in translation, are indispensable in a History of Philosophy class. Unfortunately, our mentors here in the Philippines, aside from having still a lot to learn are incorrigible in their one sided manualism, unfounded biases usually of neothomistic flavor and gross ignorance of history and the historicist approach. Saranyana's manual has not really undertaken a profound doctrinal analysis, but has done us the great service of making an objective exposition of the various figures and doctrines in the Middle Ages.

As to the contents of the book (erudition, explanation, etc.) we are all praises. As to its pedagogical approach, a book review is not sufficient to enumerate and comment on its excellent features. Never has a textbook on Medieval Philosophy been so clear in its exposition, purposes and limits. I do not agree with the a. in some aspects: for example, it wasn't St. Thomas who

discovered the difference between *esse* and *essentia* — the Arabs were already conscious of this (p.7). The creeds are apologetic statements, i.e., synthetic responses to heresies (p.12). Personally, this reviewer would not give too much concession to Gilson's notion of "Christian Philosophy" — this phrase is very integralist (*integrista*). We are more inclined to opine that there were philosophers who happened to be Christians, but they did not really intend to found in the institutional sense a Christian Philosophy. This matter definitely and urgently requires more clarification.

Perhaps in future editions, an anthology of texts (similar to that of Canals) be included and a bibliographical list of excellent editions of primary sources be made to complement the excellent bibliography (mainly in Spanish which the English editors did not alter or seek to revise in terms of existing English editions of some works cited therein) at the end of the volume.

Excellent manuals such as this one can cause something negative especially in the Philippine setting: it provides the suitable temptation for students and especially professors to rely on them, base their lectures entirely on them and ignore completely the primary sources. This is deplorable, but very, very much a reality.

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Lana, T., O.P., *Ethos et Eros. The Ethical Link of Lovemaking and Lifemaking in Christian Marriage.* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 1997), 385 pp.

This monograph under review is the published version of the author's dissertation (doctoral thesis) read at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Santo Tomás. After obtaining his degree, Lana moved on to become Dean of the same faculty and Rector of the University. At the outset, the excellent presentation, typographical editing and likewise the a.'s painstaking research efforts is worth noting. Said efforts were crowned by the maximum rating the a. received from the panel which evaluated his dissertation.

The subtitle of this "definitive" (Cfr. "About the Autor," unpagged) study expresses the still complex thematic which has captured the a.'s interest and which he expounds on from an ethical, theological (moral) and bioethical perspective. In spite of a fleeting allusion (p.249), the study is bereft of a sacramental perspective (the subtitle contains the expression "Christian Marriage") something which could be deemed as novel or perhaps a lack or limitation on the part of the a. given his interests, capabilities and time.

Since the beginning of his study, Lana makes a contraposition between theological conservatives or "loyalists" and progressives or "revisionists." The a. leans heavily on the Magisterium (whether Papal, Conciliar or Congregational) giving the reader the impression that he is on the side of the "loyal-

ists." Perhaps the more appropriate term would be "orthodox", but definitely "balanced" is the better sounding adjective. Indeed, the intelligent reader can intuit a balance in Lana's exposition which is an honest attempt to weigh things accordingly.

With the documents of the Official Church Magisterium serving as hinge or principal source, and aided by Patristics (mainly St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas) and authoritative exegetical commentaries, the thematic is developed via the summarizing, presentation and highlighting of diverse theological interpretations of the source almost exclusively in the English language. The end result is a patchworked sourcebook or reference book (for instant consultation and perusal) showcasing various authoritative interpretations.

The book's four uneven in length and depth chapters make this work a not so easy, perhaps disconcerting, reading especially for interested laypersons and students of theology and bioethics who would most likely be the monograph's greatest beneficiaries. But due to the option taken in developing the thematic with its subthematics, it would be difficult for us to recommend this monograph to laypersons and students alike. The texts of the magisterium are not expounded on in their content, implications and applications. As stated, Lana opted to view said texts from various hermeneutical prisms. Chapter One contains the *Status Quaestionis*. Chapter Four contains the contemporary bioethical applications. It is quite hard to make out Chapters Two and Three in terms of order and cogence. Plowing through them could lead the reader to various byways and intersections. Perhaps "definitive" would mean, and we could (and hope to) be wrong, the exhaustion of all the a.'s resources in this still brewing area.

We await with eager anxiety further developments on this still debatable, interesting and important thematic especially in the growing science of Bioethics.

MACARIO OFILADA MINA, PH.D.

Gerosa, Libero, *El Derecho de la Iglesia*. Valencia: EDICEP, 1998, 364pp.

There is in our time an increasing demand for *Handbooks* or *Manuals* for use in the teaching of the different subjects of the ecclesiastical disciplines. Canon Law could not be an exception, in spite of having in the 1983 Code its basic textbook. The book under review is a comprehensive Manual of Canon Law. Actually, it is the Volume XII of a collection of Manuals of Theology, edited by an international team of experts, such as G. Bedouelle, G. Chantraine, E. Corecco, L. Gerosa, A. Scola and Ch. Schonborn.

That is precisely the first thing that may strike the reader: the fact that canon law has found a place within a theological collection. The surprise is not

due to the fact of such a thing being incorrect — as if Canon law had nothing to do with Theology—, but rather to the fact pointed out by Card. Arch. Rouco Varela in the Preface of this book that “canon law, in spite of being one of the main theological disciplines (*Sapientia Christiana*, art. 51, n. 16), continues being a matter whose topics and problems theologians hardly care about” (p.13). Indeed, there is today a general narrowish understanding of canon law as related to a positivist, sociological dimension of the Church, something merely external to her life. Accordingly, “Law” and “faith” in the Church seem to be two perfect strangers for many believers. Such popular conception is contrary to the Vatican II key concept *communio ecclesiarum* and to the mind of the Council itself that has no doubt regarding the place the canonical science has within the whole theological studies.

The basic thought that inspires the present Manual is precisely the author’s conviction that everything in canon law, whether it is seen as the internal structure of the ecclesiastical community or as an epistemological science with its own methodology, finds citizenship among the original elements of the Church: Word, Sacrament, Apostolic succession and Charism. This is something in perfect harmony with with the words of the 2nd Vatican Council (OT, 16, 4) that in the exposition of Canon Law the mystery of the Church has to be always present.

The book is divided into six chapters, each one containing a short bibliography at the end. The book is also complemented with several indexes or Reference Tables of Vatican II documents, of canons corresponding to the CIC of 1917, to the 1983 Code and to the CCEO.

In the first chapter, entitled *Theological Foundation of Canon Law*, the author summarizes the main attempts of providing a theological foundation to canon law, by some contemporary authors and schools and the 2nd Vatican Council itself. The author likewise describes the current methodological paths on which canon law moves today. Given the diversity of stands on the matter, the chapter resembles rather a mosaic of opinions which go from those who base canon law ultimately in biblical categories (G.Phillips), in grace (G. Sohngen), in eschatology (K.Rahner), etc., to those who see canon law as a metaphysical consequence of the principle of incarnation (W.Bertrams), a sociological need (P.Hizing) or based in elements such a Word and Sacrament (K. Morsdorf). Somewhere in the middle we could place the stand of the *Escuela de Navarra* which, by basing canon law on the ecclesiological category of “People of God,” conceives canon law not as a theological science, but as a juridical one, even when its object is a law defined as *ius sacrum*.

The second chapter deals with the *Sources, Method and Means of Canon Law*. After offering a short history of canon law with its most important codifications, the author speaks of canon law as a methodological science, pointing the way toward a new definition of the “lex canonica” and the peculiarity of canon law from the point of view of its contents. The originality of this chap-

ter can be seen mainly in some personal insights, as for instance, two regarding the “newness” of the present (1983) codification, namely, the apparent predominance of the principle of theological certainty over the juridical certainty, and the change of identity of the main subject of the whole juridical ecclesial structure: not the clergy anymore, but the *christifidelis*, that is, the faithful as the primordial figure subjacent in the lay, the cleric and the religious (cf. p. 79).

The third chapter deals with the third book of the Code, *The Teaching Office of the Church*. Terms like *magisterium*, preaching, catechesis, schools..., and expressions like *plantatio Ecclesiae*, *professio fidei*, *nihil obstat*, and *missio canonica* enter necessarily into the picture. Debatable questions, too, like professors of theological subjects in universities or ecclesiastical faculties always teaching in the name of the competent ecclesiastical authority and not under their own responsibility, which seems to be a violation of the freedom acknowledged in c. 218 as a right.

Chapter four is about Sacramental law. Eucharist, baptism, confirmation, penance, anointing of the sick, sacred orders and marriage are given separate treatment, with especial emphasis in the Eucharist and Marriage. The Eucharist, because “all the other sacraments are intrinsically ordained to it” (p.149); and Marriage, because of its civil implications. Penance is given also some deserved space. With such a vast content, no wonder this is the longest chapter of the book (150 pages) and the most important as well from an ecclesiologico-juridical point of view.

By interrelating the concepts of “*communio eucharistica*” and “*communio Ecclesiae*,” the author grants systematic priority to the Eucharist, both at the dogmatic and juridical level, following in this point K. Rahner and especially, Corecco, his venerated professor and master, whose ideas are spread all over the book. Dealing with Christian priesthood and eucharistic communities, a topic that soon appears is the close relationship between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood. On this point, the author echoes the stand of the *Commissio Theologica Internationalis*, stating that on one hand, the common priesthood of the faithful, “as participation in the formal subjective aspect of Christ’s priesthood, continues to subsist in the holder of the priestly ministry, which is, in turn, participation in the formal objective aspect of Christ’s priesthood. On the other hand, the priestly ministry, although not subsisting in the common priesthood of all the faithful, cannot do away with it, because in the Church the priestly ministry “*non existit nisi in ordine ad exercitium sacerdotii communis*” (p.159). Their substantial complementarity explains how the difference in *essentia et non gradu tantum* of these two types of Christian priesthood does not imply separation and still less opposition between them. After dealing with different aspects of the Eucharistic celebration, the author comments on some other “particular questions,” such as the partaking in the Eucharist by non-Catholic Christians, and the situation of those married anew divorcees.

Included under the sacrament of Holy Orders is the question of the unity and origin of the "sacra potestas." Here the author laments the fact that the new Code of Canon Law had not fully assumed the 2nd Vatican Council's unitarian notion of *sacra potestas*, — expression that does not even appear in the text of the Code—, and the "surprising" return by the legislator to the traditional distinction between power of order and power of jurisdiction, called among other things *potestas regiminis* (p.250).

Chapter five entitled "Charism and Types of *Aggregationes Fidelium*" is the shortest, probably due to space constraints. Hence no justice is rendered by the author to the Institutes of Consecrated Life, Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life, which are simply mentioned in the book.

The sixth and last chapter is devoted to the internal organization of the Church. The author stresses that the institutional organisms of both the universal and the local Church can only be understood in their essential relation with the "*communio Ecclesiae et Ecclesiarum*," and henceforth in their multiple connection with the juridical dimension of the Word of God, Sacraments and Charism, as the primary constitutive elements of the Church.

Most books on canon law deal with particular areas or topics of the Code (e.g. laity, religious life, sacraments, marriage, tribunal ministry...) or offer some sort of scholastic commentaries to the text of the canons. In contrast, the present book offers a global vision or interpretation of canon law, but without entering into the discussion of any canon in particular. Logical to its being part of a collection of Theology Manuals, the present volume contains a vision of canon law altogether inseparably connected with the mystery of the Church. With a line of thought well defined, a place of honor is given in it to the so-called "School of Munich" and most especially to Prof. E. Corecco, from whom the author acknowledges himself deeply indebted, to the point of considering him as co-author of the book. The sources of the original footnotes speak eloquently on this regard.

One of the merits found in the present manual, *El Derecho de la Iglesia*, is the high quality of its language, something rather uncommon in translations. Impeccably edited by EDICEP, only minimal mistakes or inconsistencies can be detected in it, as for instance, in the Table of Contents the main head "Primera Parte" (First Part) appears, when later on no mention is made of "Second Part" or other parts.

The present Manual is valuable for students of canon law and experts alike. For the former, the book may be an excellent mind-opener; for the latter, a reference point that sets the bases of a dialogue on some debatable ecclesiological-canonical questions.

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