Lent-Easter Triduum-Eastertide
March – June 2017
Year A
Vol 47, 2

Founding Editor – Russell Hardiman
Editors – Angela McCarthy, Vincent Glynn
Pastoral Liturgy
A Publication of the School of Philosophy & Theology, The University of Notre Dame Australia.
Pastoral Liturgy is published three times per year in January, June and October.
Essays are refereed by members of the International Peer Review Committee according to their respective disciplines.
Accredited as a Refereed Journal by the Department of Education, Science & Training Canberra, ACT Australia
ISSN 1446-0661

International Peer Review Committee
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Editors
Dr Angela McCarthy and Fr Vincent Glynn

Assistant to the Editors
Deborah Sinclair – 08 9433 0138

Logo “The Mustard Seed” designed by Iris Rossen (architect)
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From Angela

For Easter 2016 I was in Jerusalem, living in the Ecce Homo Pilgrim House run by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion. It is in the Muslim quarter of the Old City and has a beautiful basilica built in the 1850s by the founders of the community. My task was to direct the music for the Easter Triduum and also join the group studying the Scriptures at Ecce Homo. The experience deeply impacted my faith and my understanding of the Jewishness of Jesus and the historical place where these world-changing events took place. In this issue, one of my fellow students gives his account of his stay in the Holy Land. It is an experience that continues to form you long after you have left Ben Gurion airport. Another result of being in Jerusalem for Easter was that the principal celebrant for the Triduum was Fr Russ McDougall who is rector of Tantur Ecumenical Institute which is situated between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, in sight of both. His homilies for the Triduum deeply impressed me and so I asked if we could include them in this issue. The layout is therefore a little different but the value of the homilies will be appreciated.

We also have more commentaries on the Collects from Gerard Moore. I have found these to be very beneficial to my understanding of these prayers that are sometimes structurally difficult to understand.

Dr Elizabeth Fisher has contributed music selections for the recent issues but will be concluding with this one. She has completed the selections with wonderful care and interest and we are grateful to her.

Our plans to go online with this journal continue to develop but it certainly will not happen until at least 2018. We will also continue to make hard copy available where it is required.

Fr Merv Duffy from New Zealand has written from a point of view that I very much enjoy – using art as data for theological and liturgical exploration as well as text. He has used an image from the 1400s and a text from an earlier era to show the practice of the Church in the case of the sacraments. This is a well worthwhile reflection.

Angela McCarthy

From the Editors

Lex Orandi-Lex Credendi – Lex Vivendi: How we worship reflects what we believe and determines how we live.

On the 25th October 2016 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued an Instruction titled ‘Ad resurgendum cum Christo’ meaning to ‘To rise with Christ’ an instruction regarding the burial of the dead and the conservation of ashes in the case of cremation. This release was picked up by some media outlets within Australia and reported with the usual lack of background research and understanding required to comprehend the reason for the publication of the Instruction. Some media printed headlines stating that ‘the church bans cremations’. Most headlines presented the Instruction in a negative light. It is possible that many Catholics will never read this document and their only knowledge and perhaps understanding of it has come through the media. This is a pity because even a cursory read demonstrates that it is document that is positive and reaffirming of the Christian understanding of the human person and the Christian understanding of death. The Instruction states ‘Christian death has a positive meaning’ (3).

In Australia cremations are far more frequent than burials, this is primarily due to space and cost. While the document states the Church’s preference for burial as a way that most fittingly expresses faith and hope in the resurrection of the body, the document raises no objections to the practice of cremating the dead. The Instruction highlights that even a dead body is sacred and should be treated as such (3). This is something we do well in the Catholic tradition, it is often said ‘We Catholics do a good funeral’.

The Instruction highlights that regardless of a Christian person being buried or cremated the remains must be and should be placed where possible in a sacred place, either in a cemetery or a church. A tradition very evident in many parts of the world. This upholds the Christian tradition of the relationship between the living and the dead, the Church on earth and the Church in heaven (5). This relationship is most perfectly manifest when the Christian community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist.
Perhaps what may have caused some concern for people was the expression that the conservation of the ashes of a deceased person should not be in a domestic residence (5). What is missed in this statement is that permission for this conservation of the ashes can be given particularly within some cultural traditions (6). It is interesting to note that many parishes are now building columbaria in which to place their deceased loved ones within close proximity to the sacred place of their parish church. This development has clearly come about at the request of parish members who instinctively understood the link between the Church and their loved ones. They want their dead close to them when they gather to pray quietly or to worship communally.

The scattering of ashes has also become a common event in our western culture. The Instruction warns against such a practice particularly when it is at odds with a Christian understanding of the resurrection of the body. Understandings that death is just a returning to Mother Nature or that death is the end of life and there is no possibility of the resurrection of the body and eternal life is not part of the Catholic tradition.

This instruction gives an opportunity within our parish communities to reflect on the understanding of Christian death and our understanding of the resurrection of the body. Often today our society talks about death in language that does not fully reflect our Christian understanding of death, phrases such as “they have passed” or “they have passed over”. This language is even now found amongst those who profess a Christian faith. This Instruction could well be a gateway to some fruitful adult faith education about what the Church does and teaches when celebrating Liturgies for the Dead.

Fr Vincent Glynn
The Catholic Church has been celebrating sacraments for a very long time. When dealing with liturgical history, it is often difficult to visualise precisely what an earlier form of the celebration of a sacrament actually looked like. This article endeavours to do this with respect to the late medieval celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation thanks to the account provided by Spanish pastoral manual from the early 1330s and a remarkable Netherlandish painting from the 1440s. The close agreement between sources from different countries and centuries suggests a widespread, stable form of the celebration of Confirmation.

The Medieval Text

The text is *Manipulus curarum* - Handbook for Curates - a manual for pastoral ministry prepared by one Guido of Monte Rochen. Thomas Tentler, in commenting on Guido, contrasted him with roughly contemporary original thinkers like Meister Eckhart, Dante, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. He did not earn fame like theirs because he was not a pioneer. He was an uncontentious and safe authority which leads Tentler to assert:

> Today, historians searching for the ever elusive “lived religion” of late medieval and early modern Europe value him precisely for those mundane qualities.

This avoidance of novelty and practical summaries of well-accepted thinkers made the *Manipulus* a standard text for clerical education and parish life for the next three centuries. Over 250 manuscript copies survive from before the age of printing, and once that technology was established, it appeared in 122 printed editions. The Handbook did the medieval equivalent of “going viral”, and is thus both an evidence of “lived religion” and a significant influence on it.

As one would expect with a pastoral manual there is a treatment of “the sacraments and their administration.” With regard to the recipients of Confirmation, the *Manipulus* says:

> All the baptised, both men and women, ought to receive the sacrament of confirmation because it is different for spiritual soldiers than for worldly soldiers. Whereas a worldly army ought not to receive women, but only men, because women are not suited for bodily fighting, yet the spiritual army can receive all without distinction, both men and women, because both men and women are suited for fighting spiritually against persecutors of the faith. But spiritual soldiery is given in confirmation, which is why the sacrament can be received by both men and women. And that is what the Apostle says, "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female" as if he wanted to say that for Christ there is no difference between male and female.

> But are children to be confirmed? The answer is yes, as soon as they begin to have the use of reason, because then they are fit for confessing the faith of Christ. And in this sacrament, the Holy Spirit is given for strength, so that the faith of Christ may be boldly received and confessed.

The dominant metaphor that Guido uses to interpret the sacrament of confirmation is “the soldier of Christ.” Confirmation equips the recipient for spiritual warfare. A limitation of this metaphor is immediately apparent; it does not fit half the recipients of the sacrament. In Guido’s world “soldiers” was a category that excluded women. He argues his way round this obstacle by appealing to a spiritual army which differs from a worldly army in that it can receive all persons without distinction. That is what governs spiritual realities he argues from Galatians 3:28 and suggests that it is as if St Paul “wanted to say that for Christ there is no difference between male and female.” Thus a sexist imagery is defended by a strong statement of the equal Christian
dignity of male and female, which Guido, perhaps trapped by his times, makes as a hypothetical statement.

The age envisaged for the reception of the sacrament is not entirely clear, and probably varied, but the age of reason is given as the lower limit. The “age of reason” is when a child can assume moral responsibility. After their seventh birthday a child is assumed to have attained to this age unless there is some other developmental factor which keeps them as “an innocent.”

**How the Sacrament of Confirmation was Celebrated**

Here is what the *Manipulus* has on the rite of confirmation

The rite of the sacrament of confirmation is that when someone is confirmed, he is anointed with the sign of the cross with chrism by the bishop on his forehead under the form of words given above, namely, “I sign you, etc.” And this rite is appropriate. The reason is that in the rite of a sacrament, the power and effect of the sacrament ought to be signified. Now the power and effect of the sacrament of confirmation are that through it the Holy spirit is given for boldly confessing the faith of Christ; through it, the one confirmed is made a fighter for Christ. And this is signified in the rite of this sacrament, for through anointing it is signified that by confirmation the one confirmed is made a fighter for Christ, for long ago fighters were anointed.

And through the other [part of the rite], it is signified that the one confirmed ought to boldly confess the faith of Christ. For one can be hindered from confessing Christ on account of two things, namely, on account of shame or on account of fear. Against the first, the cross is made with chrism on the forehead of the confirmed, so that, it is easy to see, he should not blush to confess the faith of Christ, because shame first appears on the forehead, since when a person is ashamed, the forehead begins to turn red first. Therefore the forehead is anointed against the blush of shame. But against fear, the sign of the cross is also made on the forehead because when a person is afraid, his forehead and even his whole face begin to turn pale. Therefore, the one confirmed is armed against fear with the sign of the cross.

The slap on the cheek which is given to the one confirmed does not belong to the sacrament of necessity, but is given only to aid the memory. And the place of anointing ought to be wrapped with a clean linen cloth on account of reverence for the sacrament.

**The Theological Basis**

Guido, as indicated above, is not an innovator, his theology is an unpacking of the ideas of Thomas Aquinas as can be seen by comparing his text with that of Thomas writing in the century before:

The perfection of spiritual strength consists properly in a man’s daring to confess the faith of Christ in the presence of anyone at all, and in a man’s being not withdrawn therefrom either by confusion or by terror, for strength drives out inordinate terror. Therefore, the sacrament by which spiritual strength is conferred on the one born again makes him in some sense a front-line fighter for the faith of Christ. And because fighters under a prince carry his insignia, they who receive the sacrament of confirmation are signed with the sign of Christ; this is the sign of the cross by which He fought and conquered. This sign they receive on the forehead as a sign that without a blush they publicly confess the faith of Christ.4

Guido’s guiding metaphor is reasonably elastic. ‘Soldier for Christ’ becomes ‘fighter for Christ’ when he wants to give an explanation for the use of oil. The responsibility that is laid on the confirmed is “to boldly confess the faith of Christ” which seems to abandon the military metaphor entirely. The idea of ‘signification’ is key to his sacramental theology. In each element of the rite he looks for a ‘similitude’. Hugh of St Victor (1096-1141) had defined a sacrament as:

> A corporeal or material element set before the external senses, representing by similitude, signifying by institution and containing by sanctification some invisible and spiritual grace.5

Hence Guido is looking for a symbolic connection between the corporeal or material elements of the rite and the spiritual effect that the sacrament produces. He is forced to give an “explanation” of the symbol because the experience of it has been so diminished by the minute quantity involved. The tiny bit of oil administered is, by way of the full-body anointing of a boxer, linked to being strengthened to fight for Christ by boldly confessing the faith. That it is the forehead which is signed is deemed significant because of the beautifully observed and very bodily reason that the face shows shame and fear,6 and that the sacrament, by the power of the cross arms against both those impediments to bold Christian witness.

The gesture of the slap on the cheek probably indicated a willingness to receive blows in defence of one’s Lord. Guido knows of the custom, does not consider it an essential part of the rite, and sees it as an ‘aid to the memory’, which may say something about the education system of his time.

His description of the rite could apply to a modern Confirmation ceremony 7 apart from the detail introduced in the last sentence “the place of anointing ought to be wrapped with a clean linen cloth”. By context, this too, is not part of the essential material of the rite, but a custom that shows reverence for the sacrament, in particular for the sacramental element of oil on the forehead of the recipient.

**The Medieval Image**

Reconstructing how this linen cloth might be applied is facilitated by my second source, a detail from Rogier Van Der Weyden’s Seven Sacraments Altarpiece. This triptych, now in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp was intended to face a congregation from the top of an altar. It is likely that it was commissioned by Bishop Jean Chevrot of Tournai, Rogier’s home diocese in Belgium, and that the celebrant in the Confirmation scene is Bishop Chevrot himself. Each of the seven sacraments is depicted being celebrated within a grand imagined church. The Sacraments are at smaller scale than the representation...
of the crucifixion which dominates the foreground and centre of the altarpiece. It is a strongly theological artwork, deliberately posing the sacraments about the Calvary event from which they draw their power and efficacy. It is not the record of a particular celebration of the sacraments, but given that it is commissioned by a Bishop, who is himself depicted, it is presumably “true to life”.

Confirmation is shown as being celebrated on the left hand side of the church, between Baptism and Reconciliation. The Baptism which is of an infant is celebrated by a priest wearing choir dress topped with a stole. The celebrant of Confirmation is the Bishop wearing his mitre and a magnificent cope. He is shown anointing the brow of a youth of perhaps twelve years of age. There are four other newly-confirmed visible in the painting, all youthful, within the 7-14 age range.

Reverence for the Material Element

On the right-hand side of the bishop confirming is another tonsured cleric in choir dress “wrapping the place of anointing with a clean linen cloth”. The fastening of the cloth around the head does not look very dignified, but the three young confirmed walking away are clearly marked out by this sign of the sacrament just celebrated. We can imagine their families showing them off as “newly confirmed” with their linen headbands being worn with pride.

In the altarpiece, in all four sacraments involving the use of oil, the celebrant is shown using a stylus to anoint with the oil rather than using his own hand which would be the usual contemporary method. The quantity of oil being applied by this method looks very small. This supports the contention that medieval clerics were “minimalist” in their use of sacramental matter, and their liturgical instructions stress the minimum required for validity rather than the ample symbols that make for good liturgy. Guido mentions “reverence for the sacrament” as the motive for the headbands and, in the altarpiece, the range of elaborate oil containers, the consistent method of dispensing it without the celebrant touching it, and the care shown to wipe it after the anointing of the sick, all suggest a reverence for the power and spiritual potency of the oil.
In his description of Extreme Unction, Guido instructs:

When someone sick is anointed, there ought to be some servant there who wipes the place of anointing with a linen cloth, and afterward the cloth should be burned.\(^8\)

This detail, too, is represented by Rogier van der Weyden. In the Anointing scene, there is a priest celebrant with an elaborate oil stock using a stylus to apply the oil to back of the hand of a dying person. An assisting cleric is ready to wipe the place of anointing with either a piece of bread or a small cloth, moreover he holds beneath the hand of the sick person a platter ready to catch any oil drops that may fall. Over his arm is clean piece of linen. It is a reverence for the oil similar to that which moderns show to the consecrated host.

Conclusion

Van der Weyden’s painting makes it easy for us to visualise the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Netherlands in the 15th Century and the close correspondence with the description given by Guido of Monte Rochen suggests that the sacrament is administered in the same way across Europe for at least a couple of hundred years. In contemplating the altarpiece and considering the Handbook for Curates we can glimpse the rationale and practice of medieval Confirmation, its integration into the sacramental system, and its inner logic.

Mervyn Duffy is a Marist Priest who lectures in theology and is the Dean of Studies at Good Shepherd College in Auckland, NZ. He has a research interest in how faith is expressed in, and nurtured by art. He is the author of How Language, Ritual and Sacraments Work (2003) and co-author of Verguet’s Sketchbook (2014).

Image credits: The pictures illustrating this article are details from the file https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Sacraments_Altarpiece#/media/File:Seven_Sacraments_Rogier.jpg where it is identified as being in the Public Domain. This image is in colour and is of high resolution and can easily be accessed and viewed in a browser.

\(^{2}\) Guido of Monte Rochen, Handbook for Curates, 40-1.
\(^{4}\) Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, IV, 60. Thomas does have a much fuller treatment of Confirmation in the Summa Theologiae III, 72.
\(^{5}\) Hugh of St Victor, De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei, P. IX, c.2; PL 176, 317b.
\(^{6}\) The observation “people who feel disgraced blush, and those who fear death turn pale” comes from Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, iv, 9, by way of Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae III, 72, 9.
\(^{7}\) There is variation today in the age that Confirmation is celebrated and in the order of celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. There are dioceses that have taken up the patristic model of Confirmation – the restored order – as more closely aligned to Baptism and Eucharist, and so administer Confirmation at about the age of seven. There are dioceses where Confirmation is generally administered in the teen years; after the celebration of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. The Seven Sacraments Altarpiece has the sacraments in the order Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Eucharist.

\(^{8}\) Guido of Monte Rochen, Handbook for Curates, 123.
Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have touched with our own hands (1 John 1:1).

Firstly, a bit about myself - despite being a cradle ‘Catholic’, it was only about two years before my visit to the Holy Land that I had really come to embrace a mature faith in Christianity. St. Thomas the Apostle, commonly known as ‘Doubting Thomas’ played a pivotal role in my conversion. Like Thomas, and like most people of my generation in the Western World, I am compelled to base my beliefs on evidence and seeking more evidence on which to ground my recently found faith was one of the key motivations behind my visit to the Holy Land.

A faith rooted in history

The fact that the Judaico-Christian narrative plots itself right in the middle of a verifiable historical context gives me comfort that my faith is reasonably grounded. The land that is described in the Biblical books of the Prophets, the Gospels and the Epistles, is not a mythical land, roamed by trolls and dragons, but a land that we can witness and touch today. When standing in front of the grand structures built by Herod the Great, including the steps rising onto the Temple Mount, I got the sense that the events described in the Bible were a lot closer in time than I had previously perceived, and as a result, those events became more connected to my reality.

I experienced this feeling many times on my visit, however, one of particular significance was our visit to the Siloam tunnel (also known as Hezekiah’s tunnel). According to the Biblical books of the Kings and Chronicles, Hezekiah (in around 700BC) diverted a spring running through ancient Jerusalem so as to restrict its availability from besieging Assyrians. It was remarkable to walk through a 500 metre long tunnel leading to the pool of Siloam which is believed to be this tunnel referred to in the Bible. The experience really lifted my appreciation for the Bible as a document rooted in, and a product of, history, rather than just simply a narrative unconnected to reality.

The Fifth Gospel

St. Jerome has coined the Holy Land the fifth gospel – the lens through which the other four will open. This point was not lost on me as I studied the Gospel of Matthew at the Biblical Formation Centre with the Sisters of Sion, right next, in a small way, experienced the wider conflict in the region.

Along with experiencing the conflict within Israel, we also, in a small way, experienced the wider conflict in the region on a trip to Dan in the North of Israel close to the Golan Heights, the mountain range that is the border between Syria and Israel. At quite a reasonable distance from the mountains, we could hear and feel the vibration from the shelling and devastation that was taking place on the other side. Firmly putting my little personal anxieties into perspective and feeling truly blessed to have such a comfortable life.

A special thanks

In conclusion, I can only say how grateful I am to have had this experience, most and foremost for God for giving me the opportunity to understand my Faith and the Gospels in context. Secondly, to the Barry Hickey Biblical Foundation for helping me financially to do this trip.
This rather small book holds some gems for sacred experiences that are the product of very creative energy. Wotton calls them ‘liturgies’ but in the Catholic sense many of them would not come under this term. She describes liturgy as being a communal response to the sacred but liturgy within the Catholic Church is much more structured as it is the public worship of the Church. Perhaps these sacred ceremonies therefore need to be referred to as just that, sacred ceremonies. There is no doubt that the activities that Wotton describes can lead one to the sacred and provide very meaningful experiences that are deeply spiritual.

To begin the book Wotton outlines her understanding of sacred ground and emphasises that this concept is as old as human society. The sense that there is something ‘Other’ than us in the Universe has been expressed by human beings for a very long time and we have the remnants of the material expression of such things in museums around the world. There are other places that are sacred ground; Wotton refers to mountains, temples and palaces that engage us in communication with the sacred. Of course, in our Scriptures there are important meetings between God and humans on mountains. Moses spoke to God on Mt Sinai/Horeb, and of course there is the Transfiguration in the New Testament where Jesus is momentarily glorified.

Chapter Two develops spiritual ideas about journeys and how that can be expressed in a sacred ceremony. A truly ancient one of course is the use of the labyrinth and Wotton offers some very useful ideas on how to make that a fruitful experience. In Chapter Seven she moved into the stories that are truly foundational to Christian faith and speaks of bread, that most important daily event where we break bread together and then fulfil it on a very special level with bread and wine that becomes Jesus’ body and blood.

Wotton’s final chapters are on meditative silence and then light and shadow. Following her short discussion on these aspects she offers resources on how to enact, to ritualise the sacred ceremonies and she provides original music that can be included.

This small book is rich in resources for those who would like to have sacred ceremonies that are intimate in the most part, and fulfilling in their spiritual content.
Roman Catholicism: The Basics


Book reviewed by Angela McCarthy

Every Catholic needs a good reference point that is readable and correct. Too many times one's favourite search engine gives too many options and some of them are wrong. Michael Walsh has provided a second edition of his clear and valuable work, Roman Catholicism: The Basics. Walsh is a former editor of the Heythrop Journal and works in the UK.

My initial approach to books of this kind is to check out the bibliography to see who is noted and to look at the index to see if important items are covered. Next step is to see if there is a glossary and how extensive it is. In Walsh's book all of these aspects come up with full marks. When teaching students in the University of Notre Dame Australia who have no contact with Catholicism outside the confines of their study, it is very useful to have a book that conscientiously and carefully gives the required information. For Catholics too, who have grown up in the faith, knowledge of detail can be very hazy and sometimes lead to difficulties that can easily be overcome with a good resource such as this book. It is also a small book that fits neatly into accessible places, unlike some other large tomes on the same subject.

In his introduction, Walsh is very clear on what he sets out to do and states that Catholics reflect much more on what they do rather than what they believe and so he describes the things that we believe but also our religious activities. In a book like this it is always good to look up your favourite questions and one that I am often asked is ‘What is the Holy See?’ Such a strange name which gives no indication of its function. Walsh gives a very good account, in a succinct way and separates the actions of the Holy See from that of the Vatican City State which is often a confusion of ideas.

In Chapter Ten Walsh negotiates difficult ground in the business of the Church that causes pain and disquiet: sex abuse, women in the Church, contraception, pro-life attitudes, relations with other Christians and other faiths, and the governance of the Church. These issues have challenged the Church in the extreme and continue to do so. The most important attitude that the Church can encourage is transparency and compassion. Pope Francis has been adamant about the abolition of hiding the difficulties that continue to hurt the survivors. Walsh points out that on the issue of women in the Church, Rome still tends to honour the role of women in the family as being her central focus. This has changed in wider society and there are women leaders, and even women on major bodies in Rome itself, so there is room for movement in grasping the complexities of these social changes. On the issue of contraception Walsh states that the Church has lost ground with Catholic families and that it has undermined Papal authority as people no longer accept things unquestioningly as they have done in the past.

There are many interesting facts in this book and it will have a prominent place on my bookshelf and be very useful with students here at Notre Dame. My only regret is that it is quite formal in some respects so does not include the joy that the Gospel brings to the life of Catholics.
Evyatar Marienberg has also provided a reference book about Catholicism. There are similarities between this book and the one reviewed above both in content and supportive sources. Both also come under the Routledge banner.

Whereas Walsh’s book jumps straight in to deal with the nature of the Church, Marienberg begins with a potted history of Catholicism. This is very useful and in itself can answer some of the most asked questions such as ‘what is the difference between a Catholic and a Christian?’ Many Catholics cannot answer that question because they have never considered it important. Actions seem to be more important than beliefs. Marienberg is situation in the USA and that is shown in some of the differences of his emphases. He too speaks about the relevance of the current Pope and the changes that will ensue but over the long term it is yet to be seen how much will actually change. He states that Pope Francis has certainly caught the imagination of our contemporary world and I can appreciate that among my students who have previously had very little contact with the Church. They understand that the issues that Francis speaks passionately about are issues about which they care as well.

The chapter structure that Marienberg uses are more far reaching and his footnotes are extensive whereas Walsh deliberately did not use that kind of academic style. His list of challenges that confront the Church today is also more extensive and he deals with them in a more thorough way which is valuable. There is no glossary but the list of contents is so specific that information can be readily accessed.

It is refreshing to have two books that give a thorough account of Catholicism but without being too unwieldy.