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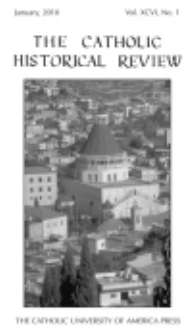
No Ordinary Fool: A Testimony to Grace (review)

Christopher Ruddy

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from official Catholic practices elsewhere in America. Chapter 4 centers on the World War II era and the struggle to preserve Mexican American versions of Catholicism within the larger Euroamerican Catholic establishment.

Chapters 5 through 8 center on the flourishing of the Chicano movement in the 1960s and 1970s. There are close studies of organizations such as Católicos por la Raza (Catholics for the People) and PADRES, a group of Chicano priests who sought to fulfill the promises of Vatican II and a nascent Liberation Theology. Biographical studies include that of Father Luis Olivares, a pioneer of the sanctuary movement, which sought to shelter undocumented immigrants, especially those fleeing conflicts in Central America. Olivares and other local priests often found themselves fighting the upper Catholic hierarchy. Chapter 8 and a final section called “Reflections” seek to summarize the foregoing chapters.

Despite the success in showing the important role of religion in Chicano politics and history, García overlooks some of the developments in Europe that may have affected the United States. In particular, Pope Pius XI's concordat with Germany (1933) expressly discouraged Catholic involvement in politics due to fear of persecution by Hitler's fascist regime. Thus, the American hierarchy may have adopted those timid or cautious attitudes toward political activism by local Chicano priests. García also leaves the impression that “oppositional historical narrative” is a new concept, when it is as old as history itself.

But, overall, García offers a solid contribution and offers hope that Latino religious history will become a prominent part of American religious history.

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HECTOR AVALOS

No Ordinary Fool: A Testimony to Grace. By John Jay Hughes. (Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing. 2008. Pp. 344. \$19.99 paperback. ISBN 978-1-606-04182-6.)

John Jay Hughes is *sui generis*: the first Anglican priest conditionally ordained to the Catholic priesthood; a direct descendant of John Jay, the first chief justice of the United States, and so perhaps the only person whose name appears in both the *Social Register* and the *Official Catholic Directory*; a groundbreaking scholar and gifted teacher who never received tenure. Yet, *No Ordinary Fool*—his deeply personal, even idiosyncratic, memoir—opens windows into modern and contemporary Christianity.

Two themes, entwined, dominate this book: Hughes's love for the priesthood and his journey from Episcopalianism to Catholicism. This is a man who yearned from age twelve to serve at the altar. A gifted preacher who has published several volumes of homilies, he makes clear that the high point of his day is the Mass: “no man ever longed more ardently for the arms of his beloved

than I for that daily encounter with the Lord" (p. 305). The priesthood, he writes, is "all I ever wanted" (p. 28).

This vocation was threatened by his reception into the Catholic Church. Hughes was an Anglo-Catholic whose faith was thoroughly liturgical. He never had a Protestant bone in his body, by his own admission, but harbored doubts about papal infallibility and primacy. He also was repulsed by the anti-intellectualism and sloppy worship of an immigrant, Irish-dominated American Catholicism. He wrestled, too, with betraying the church that had given him his faith, fed him with its sacraments, and ordained him to the priesthood. After a decade-long struggle that included thoughts of suicide, he entered the Catholic Church on Easter Monday, 1960.

"Leaving the Episcopal Church was, beyond question, the most difficult thing I have ever done in my life," he writes, but "entering the Catholic Church was the best thing I have ever done" (p. 194). He never again saw his beloved priest father, who deemed the move to be a rejection of the validity of Anglican orders. Most profoundly, Hughes also accepted that he might never serve again as a priest—his greatest joy and deepest identity—for he held absolute ordination as a Catholic priest to be a rejection of his Episcopal ministry. Aided by a letter from the Holy Office that indicated no barrier to his conditional ordination, he was finally ordained a Catholic priest in 1968 by Bishop Joseph Höffner of Münster (later cardinal archbishop of Cologne).

His ordination was soon followed by the completion of a dissertation at the University of Münster that argued for a reconsideration of Pope Leo XIII's condemnation of Anglican orders. Published as two landmark books—*Absolutely Null and Utterly Void* (Washington, DC, 1968) and *Stewards of the Lord* (London, 1970)—Hughes's work decisively changed the state of the question and continues to influence ecumenical dialogue.

Throughout, *No Ordinary Fool* is by turns delightful, wrenching, and insightful. It is delightful in its humor and reminiscences of a "magical" (p. 30) upbringing in Manhattan and Newport; as well as wrenching in its accounts of the early death of Hughes's mother, estrangement from his father, and his sufferings caused either by others or himself. It is insightful in its ecclesial acuity and spiritual wisdom, not least on the futility of Christian ministry apart from a discipline of daily prayer.

The reader wishes, selfishly perhaps, for more comment on the conciliar and postconciliar eras. Hughes experienced Vatican II's ecumenicity and humility as one who had "backed a dark horse and saw him come home a winner" (p. 226), but his reservations about some postconciliar developments merit expanded discussion. His account of doctoral studies at University of Münster likewise offers tantalizing, but undeveloped, anecdotes about an all-star faculty that included Karl Rahner, Walter Kasper, Johann Baptist Metz, and Joseph Ratzinger (whose lectures remain the most beautiful Hughes has ever

heard). His dismissive and unsympathetic portrayal of preconciliar American Catholicism raises questions, while his comment that those Catholics lacked “interest in the social dimension of the Gospel” (p. 126) seems unfair in light of their unparalleled network of schools, hospitals, and other social service agencies.

These caveats aside, this “no ordinary fool” has had no ordinary life, and his memoir is marked by uncommon grace and profound gratitude. It is required reading for anyone interested in the life of the Church and the life of the heart.

The Catholic University of America

CHRISTOPHER RUDDY

Latin American

Latin American Religions: Histories and Documents in Context. Edited by Anna L. Peterson and Manuel A. Vásquez. (New York: New York University Press. 2008. Pp. xii, 324. \$25.00 paperback. ISBN 978-0-814-76732-0.)

This is one of those rare books that is at once accessible—as any introductory survey such as this one ought to be—and subtly sophisticated. An ideal teaching manual, it will dramatically sharpen students’ analytical tools while leaving them blissfully unaware of how “good for them” this book really is.

The volume’s introduction sets out key theoretical vectors in a refreshingly unencumbered style: popular versus official religions; orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and syncretism; domination, agency, and resistance; personal conversion versus social change; race, gender, and postcolonialism; and globalization and transnationalism, just to name a few. Once the terms of analysis are in place, the book moves on to description. The categories selected by the editors for the whirlwind tour are appropriately encompassing: Indigenous Religions, Colonial Encounters, Religions of the African Diaspora, Independence and Modernity, Protestantism in Latin America, Postconciliar Roman Catholicism, and Contemporary Religious Diversity and Change. Each section consists of two chapters: first, the editors’ introduction to the key issues at stake and to selected sources in which those issues are especially visible, and then a chapter composed of original sources and representative secondary sources. This two-step format cues the reader as to the pertinent issues to come and the reasons they matter, before approaching original documents that vary widely in rhetorical style, perspective, epistemology, and standards of evidence. This approach works beautifully. It yields an unlikely harmony from what could have been a cacophony and makes the volume a genuine pleasure to read.

The original and representative primary- and secondary-source materials were artfully chosen. They include both much of what one might expect