Massimo Faggioli and Andrea Vicini, S.J., eds.

The Legacy of Vatican II. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 2015. Pp. xiv + 303. Pb, \$29.95.

Among the abundance, even over-abundance, of books commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Vatican II, this one stands out for several reasons. The product of a conference at Boston College which commemorated the half-century since the council opened, its publication, intentionally or otherwise, coincides more or less with the fiftieth anniversary of its ending. Such is sometimes the fate of books which are composed of multiple essays, when the cat-herding that is often needed to get all the texts together takes far longer than the editors would wish. But in any case, there is little difference between recognizing the beginning and the end of the council, and since many of the essays discuss its achievements rather than its promise, the end may be the more appropriate occasion for the collection.

The twelve essays of which the book is comprised are divided into three sections. The first, which to the great credit of the conference includes two written by outstanding theologians hailing from continental Europe, Christoph Theobald from Paris and Peter Hünermann from Tübingen, is subtitled “themes.” Following on John W. O’Malley’s opening essay reflecting on the theme of reconciliation, Theobald’s essay on pastorality is notable for suggesting that there are ways in which the later council texts expand upon, even change, elements in the earlier texts, a move away from the usual claim that the four constitutions are primary and the “lesser” documents simply apply their teaching to various subdivisions of ecclesial life. Hünermann follows up by exploring in more detail an idea Theobald touched upon, namely, the shift among the council fathers to a thoroughly historical understanding of theological reflection. The fourth essay included in this first section, quite curiously, is an interesting presentation by Leslie Tentler on the history of Vatican II and birth control. Curious, because what is interesting on this topic is the set of reasons why the bishops said little on the topic and why what they did not say in *Gaudium et spes* is quite intriguing. However, Tentler focuses more on the progress towards *Humanae vitae*, which is hardly the legacy of the council. The first three essays, however, set a distinctly scholarly tone exploring underlying movements in conciliar activity in some detail. Unfortunately, this pattern is not consistently maintained throughout the book. Perhaps individuals were not given clear accounts of what to talk about or just chose the topics they wanted to discuss, which might be fine in a conference but does not necessarily result in a coherent volume.

In the second section, subtitled “Engagements,” each of the four contributions, interesting enough in themselves, seem to display no particular common

awareness of the objective of the conference, or indeed of the volume. Some of the essays focus on summarizing the achievements of one or another document or series of documents. Richard Gaillardetz opens this section searching out evidence of Vatican II's recognition of the need for humility in the church in several key documents, and he makes a reasonable case that the council was concerned for a more humble church, though it evidently was not part of his brief to reflect theologically beyond the conciliar texts. Similarly, John Baldovin's work on the liturgy, while it takes an imaginative if somewhat peculiar path by linking stages in liturgical change to the funeral rites of John, Robert, and Edward Kennedy, mainly reports rather than analyzes. Lisa Cahill offers an interesting proposal that we are entering a "neo-Franciscan" moment in the church in what is on the whole a very sober and sobering assessment of where we stand in the realm of social ethics. And the section concludes with an essay by Bradford Hinze on the promotion of grassroots democracy which nods to Vatican II's interest in Catholic Action but picks up energy only when the author leaves the council behind and concentrates on what appears to be to him the more interesting topic of community organizing.

Section three contains four essays on Jesuit theologians whose work influenced the council in one way or another. Jared Wicks writes on Cardinal Augustin Bea, Dennis Doyle on Otto Semmelroth, Susan Wood on Henri de Lubac, and David Hollenbach on John Courtney Murray. All four figures deserve consideration, though some might argue that, if the text is intended to be representative, Karl Rahner should have found a place here. The inclusion of John Courtney Murray is clearly a no-brainer, but Semmelroth and Bea were mainly influential in the years leading up to the council, while de Lubac finally became very disenchanted with the way in which the "legacy" of the council seemed to him to have turned out. Of the four, Susan Wood's essay on de Lubac is most closely tied to a conciliar document, specifically *Gaudium et spes*, while the others either provide important background (Doyle and Wicks) or explore the wider influence of their chosen subject (Hollenbach).

Each essay in this collection, taken separately, rewards the reader. However, as a collection on the topic of the conciliar legacy, they lack coherence. Massimo Faggioli's introduction makes a game effort to represent the book as somehow focused on the Jesuit dimension of Vatican II, but this is neither the council's legacy, nor is it in fact what the essays as a whole present. But the biggest weakness may be in the use of the term "legacy." A legacy is something you inherit, that you will use now and into the future. This is surely what Vatican II has been to Catholics over the last half century. But this book has little or nothing to say about the future in which the legacy, if it is a valuable legacy, will

demonstrate its usefulness. That there are many useful insights here that could be turned to the benefit of the future is beyond doubt. I wish the editors had told their authors to do exactly that.

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DOI 10.1163/22141332-00302006-26