Massimo Faggioli

The Rising Laity: Ecclesial Movements since Vatican II. New York; Mahwah, NJ:

Paulist Press, 2016. Pp. x + 165. Pb, \$19.95.

Over the course of the last decade, practically no scholar of church history and the history of Vatican II has distinguished himself as much as Massimo Faggioli, a new addition to the theology department at Villanova University. In this work, Faggioli studies yet another aspect of the council by exploring the various movements that emerged in the years immediately following the conclusion of Vatican II. What is so fundamental about these movements, as the book's title suggests, is that they initiated a tectonic shift from the pre-conciliar to the post-conciliar church: the laity formed the backbone, leadership, and public face of each of the movements Faggioli describes in this volume. As Faggioli argues, however, there are other important side effects of lay leadership that sometimes stunt ecclesial growth rather than enhance it. In the prologue, Faggioli informs the reader that the present work "is part of my ongoing effort to establish better lines of communication between the historical experiences of European and American Catholicism" (x). I can think of few books that succeed so valiantly on this point.

The book is comprised of six previously published, and updated, essays, with a seventh chapter that was written originally for this manuscript. In the first two chapters, Faggioli introduces the reader to the phenomenon of "new Catholic movements" and employs a number of typologies that further explain the differences between the movements he describes in greater detail later in the book. He does, however, explain the fundamentals of the movements: "a group of Catholics with a charismatic founder, a specific charism, some form of expression of communal life or frequent and regular meetings, predominantly lay membership, radical commitment to the gospel, some form of teaching or formation closely linked to it charism, with special attention and commitment paid to bringing its particular charism into the life of the Church" (3, 88). Even with the typologies that describe these movements, it is clear that they are not easily put into one group or another, and so these movements may not easily be differentiated from one another.

Faggioli does a fine job in the text of introducing the reader to a number of movements, including Catholic Action, Communion and Liberation, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the associations of Catholic Boy Scouts and Catholic Girl Scouts, Focolare, the Neocatechumenal Way, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and Opus Dei. In each case, the reader learns something of the heritage of the movement, who its founder was, and a general understanding of its ecclesiology. Throughout the remainder of the book, Faggioli

makes it clear that some of these movements had better fortune with the popes than others.

A significant chunk of the book is devoted to historical examination of the movements and theological descriptions of them. On the historical side, Faggioli first examines the 1968 student protests that occurred in the wake of the conciliar years and were crucial in bringing about a “new Catholic elite.” Faggioli also makes it clear that each post-conciliar pontificate is important in the life of these new movements. The history of ecclesial movements surely reached a high point (in their own self-understanding, at least) during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II (1978–2005). For John Paul, the movements took pride of place in his ecclesiology. As he stated in 1981, “the Church herself is a movement” (20). This papal support was also returned in kind by the movements themselves, most of which felt intense loyalty to the successor of Saint Peter.

From the theological perspective, Faggioli describes the movements in chapters five and six especially in the light of Vatican II. In my estimation, these are the most interesting chapters in the book. Faggioli writes, “Vatican II represents, in the official biography of the new Catholic movements, a crucial moment: the movements’ ‘birth certificate,’ evidence of their orthodoxy, and shield from every possible criticism against them” (97). He explains that historically, however, the relationship between Vatican II and movements is not as obvious. From a historical point of view, the new Catholic movements are actually much more like the mendicant orders or the Jesuits. As Faggioli explains it, even though the movements had different political ideologies, “their success comes at the expense of the ecclesiology of the local church, thus helping to undermine the quest for a new balance between center and periphery in modern-world Catholicism” (100). In other words, the movements expressed absolute obedience to the pope, which sometimes meant that they would ignore or disrespect the authority of their local ordinary (bishop). Therefore, in the longstanding debate on whether the local or universal church held primacy, the opinion of the movements, regardless of their ecclesiology, was in favor of the universal church.

Scholars of Jesuit Studies will find a number of interesting tidbits in these pages. In addition to the parallel that Faggioli draws between the founding of the Society of Jesus and these movements (their common strong devotion to the pope), two of the most fascinating Jesuits of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries play a role in this volume. A lesser role belongs to the late Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J., who served as archbishop of Milan from 1980 to 2002, and was often considered a favorite “liberal” possibility as pope. Faggioli reminds the reader that Martini often spoke negatively, especially at the 1987

synod of bishops, against the role of movements, considering them to be “parallel churches” (22). In one of the great understatement of the text, Faggioli explains that had Martini been elected pope in 2005 instead of Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), things would have been much more challenging for the leaders of the movements (27). A starring role, however, went to another Jesuit who serves as the subject of the final chapter of the text. Since his election in 2013, Pope Francis has taken the church by storm in many areas, not least of which has been his dealings with the movements. While he is not an opponent of the movements per se, Francis certainly paints a much more sober outlook than either of his two immediate predecessors. While Faggioli is clear that Francis’s membership in the Society of Jesus is of secondary importance to his own experience of these movements, it is worthwhile to note Faggioli’s point: “Identified sometimes as the model par excellence of a movement within the Catholic Church, the Society of Jesus is undoubtedly part of the long history of the quest for new ways of living in the Church” (132).

While I am hard-pressed to identify any weaknesses of this text, one that does stand out is that sometimes it reads a bit too much like a collection of essays rather than one integral volume. This comes out in repetition of some text and some major points. On the flipside, however, it is good for readers to be reminded of themes that are very consequential. I most heartily recommend this book for any class on movements and organizations in the church. Along with Kevin Ahern’s recently published *Structures of Grace* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015), Faggioli’s work here should be treated as the gold standard. Many undergraduate and graduate students could benefit from reading this rich text.

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