If one were prone to judging a book by title, the present volume would immediately cause that person to question whether yet another study commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council was, in fact, necessary. To be sure, there has been no shortage of golden anniversary volumes over the last five years. There comes a time when it is necessary to separate the wheat from the chaff. In the case of *50 Years On*, a new standard has been set for scholarly volumes concerning Vatican II. As Stephen Schloesser, S.J., writes in his lengthy and informative Introduction to the volume, “the most important question in theology is ‘So what?’” (xii). It is this question that permeates the pages of each of the nineteen essays (including the aforementioned Introduction and Gilles Routhier’s Afterword) in the volume. Each essay answers “So what?” in one way or another, making the volume’s existence more than simply worthwhile; indeed, it is a necessity for all people shaped by the council.

The editor of the volume, David G. Schultenover, S.J., was editor-in-chief of *Theological Studies* from 2006 to 2014 and decided to run a series of articles in that journal focused on different aspects of the council’s work some fifty years after it took place. His motivation for this volume, as Schultenover expresses it, “was twofold: (1) to provide a text that informs readers about the reception of the conciliar documents during the 50 years following the council; and (2) to inspire readers to return to the documents themselves to see where the articles published here came from” (viii). What becomes clear while reading the essays contained in *50 Years On* is that Schultenover not only received contributions from the most intelligent scholars in the field, but that the essays all complement one another and so make the volume engaging throughout—no small feat in a collection of essays written by different scholars.

The first section of the volume features essays from two scholars who have written more about the council than almost anyone else: John W. O’Malley, S.J., and Massimo Faggioli. In O’Malley’s “The Hermeneutics of Reform: A Historical Analysis,” the reader is treated to a careful study of the dynamics of reform in key points of church history, and of the way that the term “reform” comes into focus when reading the conciliar texts. As O’Malley concludes, “The council, we might now say, was animated by a spirit of reform” (34, emphasis in original). For his part, Faggioli provides a scintillating background of the council with his “Vatican II: The History and the Narratives.” In the course of his essay, Faggioli points to two extreme narratives of the council: the ultratraditionalist and the ultraliberal. Neither, Faggioli contends, is helpful for the church as a
whole: “The rise of the narratives in today’s church has intellectually weakened the awareness of Vatican II as a historical event” (78).

In dealing with “specific interpretations” of the council, part two of the volume touches on a selection of important issues. Most fascinating to this reader is Francis A. Sullivan, S.J.’s study, “Developments in Teaching Authority since Vatican II.” Written with Sullivan’s characteristic clarity and erudition, the essay deals with: “(1) the subjects (the authoritative teachers); (2) the object (what they teach about); and (3) the exercise (how they teach)” (115). What follows is invaluable material on the dynamic of teaching authority in the church, focusing on controversial issues such as the USCCB’s ill-advised doctrinal notification of Elizabeth Johnson’s *Quest for the Living God* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007) in which the American Catholic bishops registered their belief that Johnson’s work contained certain “misrepresentations, ambiguities, and errors” concerning the Catholic faith; the doctrinal authority of statements promulgated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and the doctrine of infallibility.

The third part of the text deals with church mission. Two of the three chapters deal with particular aspects of *Nostra aetate*, and are both outstanding resources. In particular, Mary C. Boys, S.N.J.M., is to be commended for her “What *Nostra Aetate* Inaugurated: A Conversion to the ‘Providential Mystery of Otherness.’” Most college instructors who teach the council to their students recognize that the shift in church teaching regarding other religions (especially Judaism) is one of the most eye-opening parts of the council for their students. In an especially astute move, Boys explains that *Nostra aetate* and the post-conciliar documents on relations with the Jews are more helpful than the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* “because a supersessionist perspective pervades the *Catechism*” (266). This essay, along with Edward Kessler’s, will assist students in placing themselves into the seismic shift experienced at and after the council.

The penultimate part of the volume deals with the reception of Vatican II in three geographical regions: Africa, Asia, and Latin America. As the volume’s subtitle promises, the reader will indeed find a great many riches in these essays. Since Vatican II has often been studied as dominated primarily by European interests, these three essays fill a gap in the scholarship by pointing to the ways in which the global church has benefitted from the council. Most interesting was O. Ernesto Valiente’s “The Reception of Vatican II in Latin America” because it traced the roots of Latin American liberation theology. As he explains, “The church’s faithful observance of the signs of the times led her directly to the concept of the preferential option for the poor, itself a development of the position of John XXIII, who envisioned the church of Christ to be