

part on Mission. For a semester course, I have added two "theses": one on the understanding of mission in Asia which the FABC documents give us, and another on the understanding of church mission in the Philippines which emerges from studies like, e.g., Fr. James Kroeger's excellent 1985 Gregorian dissertation on *The Philippine Church and Evangelization, 1965-1984*. These two areas of reflection complement the Forte book adequately, I believe. A fundamental theology of mission can be drawn from Forte's own pages, but we have to spell it out more concretely, and FABC (echoing the experience and thought of Asian churches) and the "Philippine experience" — well detailed in the Kroeger book — spell out its concrete meaning in our local contexts. Too, the kind of thing Vincent Cosmao has done with his *To Change the World, Agenda for the Church* needs to be integrated *more fully* into this synthesis.

When I have spoken with some enthusiasm of the Forte book, people ask me if it can be made into a textbook. My answer would be: not for undergraduate classes in the seminary, unless the professor "fills it out" with rather full lectures and notes. But for a "renewal course" for, e.g., priests who want to see as a whole the "new ecclesiology" and to catch its vision, power and sweep — I can think of nothing better at the present time. This is not to say that it is not too dense and too difficult for airport-lounge reading, or any hurried reading for that matter. This is also not to say that I make my own every single position Forte takes in these pages.

We still await a really good *de ecclesia* textbook for seminaries in the Philippines. Until it comes (may it come soon!), a competent teacher of ecclesiology can take Forte's synthesis and build on it. I have read it attentively more than fifteen times over and still find many new things at each re-reading. The overall vision, *ni fallor*, is along Congar's lines. (But what ecclesiologist today, whoever he is, does not stand on the shoulders of that giant of a theologian and man of the Church?) Still Forte's work has an originality, grandeur and beauty of its own, and one can only be grateful that it has been made available to us.

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EARLY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY. Edited by Charles Kannengiesser. Translated by Pamela Bright. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986. Pp. 119. (Philippine edition, Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1987.)

At a time when "new spiritualities" are proliferating, many without any clear theological foundation, and owing more to the presumed needs (or fads) of the moment than to any roots in ecclesial tradition, this little collection of various key strands of the spirituality of the patristic era is more than wel-

come. Originally published by Fortress Press in its series "Sources of Early Christian Thought," its relatively lengthy introduction (pp. 1-36) and the selection of the texts is due to the well-known patristic scholar, Charles Kannengiesser, of the University of Notre Dame (U.S.A.). In addition to numerous publications in both French and English, the editor is the author of the impressive synthetic article, "The Spiritual Message of the Great Fathers," in the first volume of the recently published encyclopedic work, *Christian Spirituality*, edited by Bernard McGinn, John Meyendorff, and Jean Leclercq.

The book under review here contains selections from a wide variety of early Christian sources. There are hymns like the pseudepigraphical "Odes of Solomon" (2nd century), and that of Romanos the Melodist (6th century) on the coming of the Holy Spirit. The spirituality of martyrdom in its early stages is represented by the letter of the 2nd century martyrs of Lyons, while Ambrose's letter "Concerning Virgins" expounds the spirituality of virginity. Other selections are in the more conventional forms of sermons or treatises by Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Augustine, and Maximus the Confessor. In his introductions, Kannengiesser places the selection within the context of the author (or of the work, for those without identifiable authors) and his life, and shows in detail its place within the particular theology of the patristic source. It is this integration of spirituality and theology which makes the collection so worthwhile.

Of set purpose Kannengiesser has excluded "mystical documents produced by institutions," as well as liturgical texts, monastic rules, and synodal statements. He adverts also to the necessary fact that this is a collection of literary sources, but that Christian experience of God is most often expressed in contemplative silences. Though such is by its nature irrecoverable, other silent witnesses to Christian spirituality, mystical and popular, have enshrined their message in the archeological remains of catacombs, mosaics, monasteries, and others. Though not capable of being transmitted in a book like this, Kannengiesser's warning to be aware of the existence of other than literary sources is a point well-made.

This book will be useful particularly for courses in early church history, patristics, and spirituality. For the last-named discipline, though competently initiating the student into the Christian spiritual tradition's mainstream, some selections will, in spite of the thorough introductions by Kannengiesser, be appreciated only by those who have a previous or accompanying course in early church history. It is to be hoped that further volumes of this series of Christian sources may be reprinted in Philippine editions, at such a reasonable price.