

ops until 1933—due to the opposition of the Apostolic Delegate Piani, and the Spanish religious orders—to take advantage of the admittedly insufficient law permitting religious instruction in the public schools; the first abortive effort by Father Ned McCarthy, in spite of the support of Protestant president Jorge Bocobo, to minister to the Catholic students of the University of the Philippines, beset as they were by a few key viciously anti-Catholic professors; the ecclesiastical opposition to McCarthy's introduction of Catholic Action into welcoming non-denominational schools; the enormous success of his Student Masses in Sta. Cruz and Quiapo churches, where his English sermons reached 5,000 each Sunday at Masses celebrated by Filipino priests, but unable to preach in English, by then the language of college students.

Both ordinary readers, interested in the history of their Church and of their country, and historians concerned to follow up and develop the many leads offered here, will find this book a treasure. We can only hope that Father O'Brien is able to give us the second volume of Father Martin Noone's scholarly labors hinted at.

THE TRIPERSONAL GOD:
UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE TRINITY

By Gerald O'Collins

New York: Paulist Press

1999, 224 pp., paper ISBN 0-8091-3887-5

Reviewed by Joseph L. Roche

A partial list of twenty-two "Other titles by Gerald O'Collins, S.J.," ranging from *The Case Against Dogma*, *Jesus Risen*, *Jesus Today*, *Interpreting the Resurrection*, *Retrieving Fundamental Theology*, *Faith and the Future*, *Concise Dictionary of Theology*, to *All Things New*, testifies to the expertise and wide-ranging theological interests of this well-known professor of systematic theology in the Gregorian University, Rome. This present study is a generally helpful introduction to an intelligible current defense of the basics in Thomistic Trinitarian theology.

The work opens by developing a three-pronged approach to reflecting on trinitarian faith. First, through a study of the historical experience of salvation recorded in Scripture and Church teaching, the task is pursued of uncovering the meaning and truth of what was revealed about God—faith seeking “scientific” understanding/truth. Second, public worship is studied as source and setting for trinitarian theology—faith seeking worship/beauty. Thirdly, what trinitarian faith leads Christ’s followers to do or leave undone is examined—faith seeking social justice. The three approaches involve the combined exercise of **head, heart and hands**, since “any integral Trinitarian theology entails searching for the truth, lifting our hearts in worship, and putting ourselves to work for a transformed world” (4).

The first of three major sections, “The Scriptural Roots,” traces the foundational story of the divine self-revelation in Jesus Christ through Old Testament background (names and images of God as Father, Word, Wisdom and Spirit), the trinitarian face of Jesus’ own history (his virginal conception, baptism, experience of special sonship and mission), the Father/Son relationship, the Son of God, and triadic formulas in St. Paul, and the Gospel trinitarian witness of Luke, Matthew, and John. The following section offers a four chapter survey of “The Historical Developments,” from the pre-Nicene Fathers (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen), Arius, an extended creedal comparison of Nicea I with Constantinople I, followed by a chapter on Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Augustine, Boethius, Richard of St. Victor, and Aquinas. The section closes with a brief introduction to “Our Modern Setting” focusing on the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and some “Twentieth-Century Influences” such as personalism and liberation movements.

The final section on “Contemporary Thinking” selects four specific current problem areas in trinitarian theology, namely, the personal existence of the Holy Spirit, the Trinitarian persons and actions, naming the Trinity, and images of the Trinity. In the Epilogue, entitled “A Coda,” the author expresses the desire to conclude with a hymn to the Trinity—“where words fall away into silence, music may

help.” He chose a fifteen line hymn to the Trinity, “How Wonderful the Three-in-One,” by Brian Wren, put to music by Marty Haugen.

The book’s major value consists in offering a readable, accurate introductory “genetic approach” to the Trinity in line with the Thomistic tradition. In addition, it provides brief but often incisive comments on a good number of current theological issues: the pre-existence of Christ (61-62); the difference between metaphor and simile in describing God as Father (13, 186-87), the use of “person” for the “Three” in God (175-78), and Father, Son and Spirit as the principle but not the exclusive way of naming the Christian God (186-91). More, however, would be needed to gain a broader, deeper perspective of trinitarian theology today, as provided, for example, by Colin Gunton in his *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, [Second Edition] (T&T Clarke, 1997). Or in stressing the realism of the “first level act of calling on God by the triune name,” as explained in Robert W. Jenson’s “What is the Point of Trinitarian Theology?” in *Trinitarian Theology Today*, edited by C. Schwobel (T&T Clarke, 1995). Finally, O’Collins’ work, with its stress on the spirituality at the core of all trinitarian theology, could profitably be developed from Michael Downey’s *Altogether Gift: A Trinitarian Spirituality* (Orbis Books, 2000). On the other hand, O’Collins’ study could perhaps supply the latter’s minimalist view of trinitarian doctrine as merely a grammar of a gift with a badly needed metaphysical basis.

GOD-SENT: A HISTORY OF THE ACCREDITED APPARITIONS OF MARY

By Roy Abraham Varghese

New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company

2000, xv, 214 pp., cloth, ISBN 0-8245-1843-8

Reviewed by John N. Schumacher

The introduction to this book gives an overall view of alleged Marian apparitions, their supposed biblical and theological context, and a definition of terms. Unfortunately, one term that is not defined is the word “accredited”—by whom, with what authority, and