

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Ramon L. Bautista, S.J., “Discernment of Spirits in *The Shepherd of Hermas* and Origen,” explores the subject of discernment of spirits in the writings of two influential patristic writers of the second and third centuries AD. Bautista’s research into the early Christian sources provides the groundwork for a historical and systematic study on how to judge spiritual agents for their moral influence on human decision or action. The essay provides an invaluable contribution to spiritual theology, particularly in Catholic and Orthodox traditions that hold in high esteem the insights of the early Church Fathers.

Getting a cue from the seminal works of Michel de Certeau,¹ Jefferson M. Chua, “Travelling in the Secular Waste Land: de Certeau and the Irruptions of the Mystical,” explores how mystical discourse can help people navigate the rough seas of divergent faith-modalities in the postmodern age or the arid terrain of a secular world where faith has withered. Chua finds “two elements in mystic utterance—excess and exile—that showed both 1) their context of loss and degradation but also 2) an establishment of a space where an encounter with the Divine reorders the economies of knowledge and faith” (73). In this way the language of mysticism

¹Michel de Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 80–100; also *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

opens up a space for the transcendent to break forth into the secular sphere.

James H. Kroeger, M.M., “New Evangelization Today: Exploring Key Themes and Asian Links,” aims at “exploring some of the defining traits that characterize the ‘new evangelization’” (78). After a discussion of evangelization in general, ten characteristics of the “new evangelization” are identified: 1) the centrality of Christ; 2) ecumenism; 3) interreligious dialogue; 4) religious freedom; 5) evangelization—a multifaceted process; 6) social teaching; 7) evangelization of cultures; 8) social communication; 9) responsibility of all Christians; and 10) the role of the Holy Spirit. The author draws on the insights of several experts to present and describe these topics. He also shows their linkages to “three pivotal anchors”: the Second Vatican Council, the recent popes, and the Church in Asia (78).

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J., “The Parable of the Heifer in Hosea 10:11–13,” interprets Hosea 10:11–13 as a story rather than just an extended agricultural metaphor without a plot. The farming scene in Hos. 10:11–13 is framed by depictions of violence and atrocities in Hos. 10:9–10 and 14. The connection between the two contrasting scenes—agriculture and war—is often vaguely and tenuously explained. At best, the heifer (*‘eglāb*) is regarded as a veiled polemic against the bull images, disparagingly called “calves” (*‘eglōt*), of Bethel (Hos. 10:5; cf. 1 Kgs. 12:28–30, 32) and Samaria (Hos. 8:5–6; cf. 13:2). The author demonstrates that reading the text as a parable, a poetic narrative with a storyline, is better able to elucidate the prophet’s anti-war rhetoric.

Miriam R. Alejandrino, O.S.B., “Paul: A Misogynist?,” examines various biblical texts to determine Paul’s attitude towards women. She explains that such texts as 1 Cor. 7; 11:2–16; Col. 3:18–4:1; Eph. 5:21–6:9; 1 Tim. 2:8–15; and Titus 2:1–10, which seem to depreciate the role of women in the family and the early Christian community, need to be interpreted within the historical

and socio-cultural contexts, norms, and conventions of the time. She writes:

... we see how the early Church adapted to the prevailing customs, traditions, and social norms at that time while affirming the new teaching brought about by Christ as interpreted by Paul. With the changing attitude toward women today, these passages must not be used to justify subordination or oppression of women. More than anything else, we have to seek the mind of Christ as we try to interpret these texts. (137)

James McTavish, F.M.V.D., “A Pastoral Question on IVF and Embryo Adoption,” explains the moral issues involved in IVF (*in vitro* fertilization) and the reasons why the Church regards it as unethical and contrary to her teachings. In addition, McTavish discusses the morality of “embryo adoption” which is an option proposed to “rescue” the spare embryos which otherwise would be discarded. While some consider it a quasi-heroic act to save life, others regard it as a form of cooperation with the unethical practice of IVF. So far the Church has not made a definitive stand on the question of “embryo adoption.”

Included in this issue of *Landas* is a book review of Antonio V. Romualdez’s *The Paschal Mystery and Divine Compassion* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2014) by Cory O. Villafania.

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