

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

Lessons from the Church's History: Reform of the Church

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Philippine Studies vol. 13, no. 3 (1965): 746–747

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

are fully understandable only if one does not overlook the organic relationship between the Word of God and the Church.

In his introduction, Pastor Lackmann makes the observation that "it is time that separated Christians learned to know each other." This book has been written in order that Roman Catholics and Lutherans can cast away what has for so long burdened the names of "Protestant" and "Catholic"—the "mortgage of a polemic which falsifies and renders unintelligible what happened and is supposed to have happened four centuries ago." For his success in this, Pastor Lackmann deserves the congratulations and, indeed, the attention of Protestant and Catholic alike.

ANTONIO V. ROMUALDEZ

LESSONS FROM THE CHURCH'S HISTORY

REFORM OF THE CHURCH: Crisis and Criticism in Historical Perspective. By Robert E. McNally, S.J. New York: Herder and Herder, 1963. 140 pp.

The complaint is frequently made against the professional historian that he is only interested in heaping up names, dates, and facts, concerning himself with obscure events and persons of the past which have no relevance for us today. The book under review is a pointed answer to such criticism. The author, a Professor of Church history, while carefully avoiding the fallacy of seeking answers from the history of the past for modern problems, paints on a broad canvas the life of the Church over two and a half centuries of crisis, while wisely pointing out its contemporary and perennial relevance to her total life.

Though the book makes no pretensions to original discoveries concerning the history of the Church from the end of the thirteenth century to the completion of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth, its author has drawn the research and conclusions of the best professional historical scholarship into a dynamic picture of these years in the life of the Church. With an eye to all the multiple facets of Church life—Church-State relations, liturgy, theology, and spirituality, — he traces the growing decadence which came on the Church from the end of the thirteenth century, culminating in the immense scandal of the Great Western Schism, in which the helplessness of the Papacy to revivify the Church was made manifest by the spectacle of a Christendom divided between two and even three rival Popes. In desperation, a remedy was sought in the ecumenical Councils of the fifteenth century. Though they restored the unity of the Papacy, the effort of the Con-

ciliar Movement to subject the Popes to the Councils once more doomed the efforts to reform the Church, because it was a denial of her divine constitution. But with the decline of the Conciliar Movement, the worldly and corrupt Renaissance Popes showed themselves even more incapable of reform, and dragged the Church down to further depths of degradation, finally laying her open to the tragic destruction of Christian unity consummated in the Protestant Reformation. Only then were the forces of reform coming from the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, able to achieve anything lasting, this time by Popes and Council together at Trent.

Certainly, as McNally points out, the situation of the Church today is not that of the late Middle Ages. But she is faced with the ever-recurring problem, so well illustrated in the history here traced, of "the cultural adjustment of the Church to the new civilization which is being born, and her effective integration into contemporary life." The inability of Popes, theologians, and Councils to understand the new issues of that age of transition from the medieval to the modern world, and their readiness to condemn or ignore erroneous solutions rather than examine the truth contained in errors, brought disaster on the Church then, as the history traced here makes clear. No less today, in what may prove to be an even greater transition from what was known as the Modern Age to a new age, is it necessary for Christians to understand the problems of their own time, and to appreciate and make use of what is valid in the criticism directed against the Church of today. The Church and her message are perennial, guaranteed by her Divine Founder. But it is up to the Christians of each age to make that message relevant for their contemporaries. If they do not, the Church will not cease to exist, but she will fail to achieve God's purposes for her and for men in that age.

JOHN N. SCHUMACHER, S.J.

SPIRITUAL NOTES OF A POPE

JOURNAL OF A SOUL. By Pope John XXIII. Translated by Dorothy White. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965. lvii, 453 pp.

The welcome given to the *Journal of a Soul* by Pope John XXIII is best seen in the fact that the second edition was issued just a month after the first had been out, while, at the same time, a third, plus translations into other languages, was being readied. The first part of the book includes an introduction by Mgr. Loris Capovilla, the late pope's secretary, and a "meditation" by Fr. Giulio Bevilacqua, two brief essays that prepare the reader for what superficially might