

not least by the fact that Fuchs has to provide distinct definitions of the terms.

Perhaps the neologistic tendencies point to a deeper problem with the book as text: it is based on the author's doctoral thesis, and still bears the strong stamp of the academy. A much more rigorous process of rewriting and editing would have helped to make these insights and analysis much more widely available. This is a pity, because the author clearly has a great deal to say, and it would have been good if she had communicated her proposals for a way forward more accessibly.

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*The Infallibility of the Church in Orthodox Theology*, Stylianos Harkianakis, trans. Philip Kariatlis (Sydney, Australia: ATF Press, 2008), 277; paperback; ISBN 978192069181.

This book is at once insightful and useful but also so dated in some respects as to raise the question of why it was finally translated and published nearly a half-century after it first appeared in Greek as a doctoral dissertation. The author himself attempts, in a new foreword, to answer this question, but his rationale for ignoring a half-century of scholarship is unconvincing: 'the theme as such would not allow any serious alterations, at least in terms of Orthodox Ecclesiology.'

In any event, Harkianakis, the primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia, has made important contributions to theology and ecumenism over the last several decades, and so attention must be paid to this book. That attention very much rewards the reader with a lucid articulation of Orthodox understandings of the infallibility of the Church, and a compelling case stressing the necessity of synodality in the life of the Church. This part of the book is the most engaging and important, for here the author lays out his definition of infallibility as 'that attribute of the Church which, by the power of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, safeguards the faith entrusted to it from all error, and at the same time rightly teaches the word of truth.' Truth, then, is intimately connected to infallibility, and this stress on truth should be useful to Catholics struggling with the doctrine and trying to see it interpreted in a way that does not place so much emphasis on the question of papal authority, but re-centres

the doctrine on the Holy Spirit in whose power the Church, in the person of the pope, participates.

Infallibility ‘refers only to matters of faith and morality’ (as Catholics would unhesitatingly agree), it only ‘covers these articles of teaching in themselves... but not the concrete form in which they appear’ (as Catholics would agree), and it is ‘first and foremost understood negatively’ (as Catholics would again readily agree), merely keeping doctrinal pronouncements free from error.

Where Catholics and Orthodox differ is in the manner in which infallibility is demonstrated or invoked. Harkianakis argues that it needs to be more clearly seen as an ecclesiological and pneumatological exercise of the episcopate as a whole and not the prerogative of one man. It is at this point that Harkianakis argues forcefully that ‘if at any time the Church were to reject from its life, even for a moment, the idea of the synodical system, it would cease automatically to be a Church.’ The synod, according to the author, ‘constitutes the instrument by which the voice of the Church is declared and is accordingly the instrument of infallibility of the Church.’

These are extremely important arguments, and it would be very useful to have a Catholic ecclesologist or ecumenist undertake a systematic study of the author’s presentation and set it alongside contemporary Catholic treatments of infallibility and synodality. I very strongly suspect that such a comparative treatment would discover that the two traditions are not nearly as far apart as many have often blithely assumed, especially in the wake of Vatican II, and that, with further work, both traditions can be more closely brought together via a hermeneutics of differentiated consensus.

Of the five chapters in this book, the first three deal with Orthodox ecclesiology in general and infallibility in particular. I grant the author’s point that not much recent work on Orthodox understandings of infallibility has been done, which makes this book very valuable; but so much work has been done on Orthodox ecclesiology (not least by the author’s compatriot, John Zizioulas—to say nothing of Christos Yannaras, and many others) that readers should know that this section of Harkianakis’s book (which, to be fair, is quite short) is outdated.

It is a pity that the author did not end his book after the first three chapters because by the fourth chapter the book has become *very*

outdated. Here he purports to treat Catholic understandings of infallibility from Vatican I onward. Studies of infallibility and of Vatican I have undergone something of a revolution in the last two or three decades, and it is no longer possible or permissible for an author treating this topic to be ignorant of the pioneering work of such as Margaret O’Gara, Jean-M. Roger Tillard, Peter Chirico, Yves Congar, Richard Gaillardetz, or, more generally, Francis Sullivan, Klaus Schatz, and others.

Harkianakis’s fifth and final chapter does not fit in well with the other four, both in substance and especially in tone. Harkianakis takes on the lay theologian and slavophile A.S. Khomiakov, who is sneeringly dismissed as ignorant of almost every aspect of Orthodoxy (‘One should also ask: did Chomiakov [*sic*] have any knowledge of the texts of the divine liturgy of the Orthodox?’), and whose theology is damned as Protestant, ‘excessively moralistic’ and ruined by its ‘extreme *pneumatocracy* (rule of the Spirit), *relativism*, and especially for its *physiocracy* (rule of nature).’ This chapter adds almost nothing to the book, and it could - and should - have been deleted, not least because it diminishes Harkianakis to see him engage in such harsh and polemical attacks.

Overall, then, the first three chapters of this book are still very relevant and important nearly fifty years after being written, and an ecumenical engagement with them would be extremely useful for the ongoing search for the unity of the Church. This book, then - with the caveats noted above - has much to commend itself to ecclesiologists and ecumenists alike.

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