

Any council must be seen within its historical context and Colberg provides a good summary of the cultural, political and religious background at the time of the council — mainly that of western Europe — together with some consideration of earlier councils and movements — principally the two councils of Constance and Trent as well as Gallicanism and allied movements — though more attention might have been given to relevant issues in the church during the fourteen centuries before Constance. She also illustrates well that ecumenical councils should not be seen in isolation from each other, rather there is development. Vatican I, therefore, must be seen within the context of Vatican II.

However, the importance of context and hermeneutics should not be pushed too far. Text always has priority, even though the text of a decree cannot be understood without some appreciation of the language and historical context within which it came to be composed. In the case of Vatican I, the crucial section on papal infallibility is short and was highlighted: a single paragraph which is introduced with a higher level of authority than is found anywhere else in the council's decrees: 'We teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma...' It is regrettable that Colberg does not give the reader the text of this short paragraph. Maybe she also downplays the importance of papal infallibility within the overall agenda of the council (p. 22). The original agenda was to debate quite a wide range of topics and this programme had to be radically shortened to just two decrees — that on faith and reason, and that on the Church — on account of the capture of Rome by the troops of the Italian Risorgimento and the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war. Even so, Pope Pius IX made it clear before and during the council that the definition of papal infallibility should be the council's principal objective.

The text is well supported with references to primary and secondary sources, which are indicated in the footnotes. Regrettably these sources are not collected together into a Bibliography. An index comprising topics as well as persons concludes this excellent and thought-provoking study.

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Luigi Giussani, *Christ, God's Companion with Man*, Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. Pages: 128, £10.99. ISBN: 978-0-7735-4566-3

This is the English translation of the Italian original, *Cristo compagna di Dio all'uomo*, published in 2014. Luigi Giussani (1922-

2005) is best known as the founder of *Comunione e Liberazione* (Communion and Liberation), one of the “new movements” which have much influenced the Catholic church in recent times. The origin and early development of this lay movement (as it is described) were in Italy but today it reaches out to many countries around the world.

The Introduction (pp. 3-16) is written by Giussani’s successor as head of the movement, the Spanish priest Julián Carrón. He guides us through the principal stages in the founder’s eventful life. Born and brought up by his devout mother and hard-working father in Lombardy, northern Italy, Luigi was a seminarian from the age of eleven until he was ordained priest aged twenty-two. An outstanding student in terms of piety, learning and good company, also broadminded with Giacomo Leopardi as his favourite poet, he was assigned to the staff of the minor seminary at Venegono. However, he was almost immediately struck down by a respiratory illness that would plague him for the rest of life. Through a long recovery, he gradually realised that God’s call to him was to be with young people and educate them in the faith. The eventual result was the foundation of *Comunione e Liberazione* and its ecclesiastical approval, with support later coming most notably from Pope John Paul II.

Extracts from the writings of Giussani follow the Introduction. They are arranged into thirteen chapters, each focusing on one aspect of his spirituality and apostolate. The centrality of Jesus Christ, his call to each of us, his companionship, understanding and sympathy; the role of the Church; religious and civil authorities; Eucharist / Mass; the importance of prayer which embraces thoughts, words and action; solitude and community; education, especially of the young; women and their vital roles; thoughtful charity; joy and recreation: these are some of the topics covered. The theology is more practical or applied than academic. There is no doubt about Giussani’s zeal, his capacity for friendship and his promotion of a well ordered Christian life.

The extracts are well chosen by Carrón and he provides introductions to them in each chapter. Attractively produced and reasonably priced, this compact booklet can be recommended to anyone wishing to know more about Luigi Giussani and *Comunione e Liberazione*.

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