

**Andrew Meszaros, *The Prophetic Church: History and Doctrinal Development in John Henry Newman and Yves Congar*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. ISBN is 978-0-19-878634-4. Pages: xvi + 268.**

Pope Francis surprised many when he stated recently that capital punishment cannot be justified any longer. How could a form of punishment that was accepted by the papacy as justifiable for so long, and indeed authorized by the papacy within the Papal States well into the nineteenth century, now be declared unjustifiable? Rather than development of doctrine, was this not an attempted change?

Similar questions are central to the present volume; even though capital punishment does not feature in it. How did Newman, surely the most influential theologian of the nineteenth century, and Congar, one of the most influential in the next, come to terms with new formulations in doctrine, which is taken to include moral teachings? Can such changes be viewed as developments rather than alterations? Andrew Meszaros, lecturer in theology at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, faces these questions courageously in this fine work based on his doctoral dissertation at KU Leuven.

After the Introduction, the book is divided into six chapters. The first, entitled 'Congar's reception of Newman,' brings together the two theologians, with sections entitled 'Newman in France,' 'Newman and Modernism,' 'Congar's encounter with Newman,' 'Newman's role in Congar's theological work' and 'Congar's reception of Newman in ecclesiology,' The second chapter 'The appeal of Newman: A Quintessentially "Modern" Thinker' focuses more exclusively on Newman. Its sections include 'Newman's attention to history' – a controversial issue inasmuch he is often considered to have fitted history into his own doctrinal preconceptions rather than treating it in its own right – 'History and doctrinal change: from *Arians* to the *Essay*,' 'The limits of history' and 'The distinction between dogmatic and historical tradition,' with a sub-section on the *Grammar of Assent*, and 'Newman's rhetorical rationality.'

The third to sixth chapters cover various topics treated by both theologians, under the following headings: "Doctrinal development, part 1: the role of the active subject": "Christianity and history": "Doctrinal development, part 2: the role of history"; and "The prophetic church in history".

An extensive and well arranged Bibliography (pp. 245-261) follows the Conclusion. Works of Congar are arranged into three chronological sections – 1930-59, 1960-79, 1980 onwards – with English translations of his works indicated as well as the French originals. Next come the

works of Newman cited in the book, together with a selection of French translations of these publications, and then titles arranged under “Other works,” “Unpublished works,” “Reference works” and “Archives.” The excellent “Index,” at the end of the volume, covers subjects as well as persons and places.

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