

who desire to perceive baptism from within the biblical narrative, in the first place priests and deacons who celebrate the sacrament or those involved with forming persons to be baptized. The text is also sufficiently accessible to be used in a setting such as a Lenten book study for lay Catholics in preparation for the celebrations of the Paschal Triduum.

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Robert Imbelli

*Christ Brings All Newness: Essays, Reviews, and Reflections*

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xxv + 368 pages. Hardback. \$29.95.

In *Christ Brings All Newness: Essays, Reviews, and Reflections*, Robert P. Imbelli, a theologian with a storied vocation as a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, offers a rich theological corpus explicitly grounded in Vatican II's transformative vision. A scholar who bore witness to the unfolding of the council while studying in Rome, Imbelli carries the torch of its teachings through over five decades of preaching and teaching. With a Ph.D. in theology from Yale University, he has cultivated a nuanced and sober understanding of the Catholic imagination, reflected in his previous award-winning work, *Rekindling the Christic Imagination*. In this current volume, Imbelli delves into the inexhaustible newness of Jesus Christ, examining how this *novum* has been, and ought to be, the pulsating heart of Catholic thought and praxis. The collection is poised as a bridge spanning scholarly exegesis and pastoral ministry, calling believers to re-encounter the transformative presence of Christ in an era where such a center often seems perilously close to erosion.

More specifically, the volume is a compilation of writings that navigate the complexities of contemporary theology through the lens of historical fidelity and ecclesiastical tradition. The book is neatly partitioned into three sections: essays, reviews, and reflections. Each section underscores the enduring relevance of Christocentric theology, argu-

ing for a return to the vibrant heart of Christian faith—a heart that pulsates with the *novum* of Christ’s transformative presence.

The essays pivot around Vatican II’s themes of *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, suggesting a perennial need for the Church to reclaim its rich heritage and respond to the modern world’s thirst for authenticity. Imbelli’s reviews serve as a dialogue with contemporary thinkers, inviting an exchange that sometimes sharpens and, in other instances, seems to diffuse the central Christological focus in favor of broader intellectual engagement. The reflections section veers into the aesthetic realm, employing art and literature to evoke an embodied understanding of faith—a method that resonates with the spiritual hunger of today’s sensory-engaged culture.

The volume exemplifies a robust engagement with the rich and vast landscape of Christian Scripture and tradition, drawing on the wisdom of luminaries like Augustine and Ratzinger while addressing the pressing questions of contemporary theology. The essays form a mosaic of reflections, with Imbelli deftly navigating the interpretative challenges of modern biblical exegesis and the spiritual profundity of traditional Church teachings. The essay, “The Paschal Rekindling of the Catholic Imaginary,” showcases Imbelli’s capacity to link the resurrection’s transformative power to a renewal of the Catholic imagination. By drawing on Augustine, he invokes the North African bishop’s blend of intellectual rigor and spiritual fervor, setting a precedent for integrating doctrine into lived experience. This showcases the author’s thesis that the newness of Christ is as much about intellectual apprehension as it is about affective transformation. In his engagement with Ratzinger, notably in “Joseph Ratzinger’s ‘Spiritual Christology,’” Imbelli amplifies the German theologian’s Christological insights. Ratzinger’s influence is evident as Imbelli explores the notion that an encounter with Jesus Christ is an encounter with Truth itself. Here, Imbelli is at his strongest, presenting a synthesis of Ratzinger’s thought that is faithful to its source and innovatively applied to contemporary issues.

Yet, the depth of insight that characterizes Imbelli’s work is double-edged. While his scholarly approach offers a feast for the theologically inclined, the richness of his prose and the density of his ref-

ferences may prove challenging for those less versed in theological discourse. The esoteric nature of some discussions, for example, those surrounding the “Eucharistic Vision of Pope Benedict XVI,” might limit the book’s accessibility and immediate relevance to a broader readership. Furthermore, while Imbelli demonstrates a seasoned grasp and understanding of his subjects, there is an occasional lapse in the coherence across essays. Though intellectually refreshing, the shift from dense academic argument to more pastoral reflection occasionally disrupts the thematic continuity. However, these moments also offer respite and a space for the reader to engage with the material from a different vantage point, a testament to Imbelli’s pastoral sensitivity.

Notwithstanding, the strength of the work undeniably lies in its unwavering focus on Christ as the anchor of all theological exploration. Yet, the real test of Imbelli’s integrative approach is whether it equips the faithful to navigate the complexities of modern existence with a Christ-centered compass. The essays argue affirmatively, depicting Christianity as vibrant and capable of meeting the modern world’s challenges. Yet, they also call for a discerning reader to weave these disparate threads into a coherent whole. Imbelli’s erudition and depth of analysis offer a substantive contribution to contemporary theological discourse, even as they demand a rigorous engagement from the reader. The volume comes highly recommended.

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Reginald Lynch, O.P.  
*Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae and Eucharistic Sacrifice  
in the Early Modern Period*  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023  
239 pages. Hardback. \$100.

Following his 2017 book, *The Cleansing of the Heart: Sacraments as Instrumental Causes in the Thomistic Tradition*, Dominican