

## Social justice becoming mainstream concern, finally

How could I go wrong? A new book on globalization and justice, with an endorsement by Walter Brueggemann, one of my favorite Scripture scholars! Since the Second Vatican Council, I have read a large number of books on social justice; some of them classics, such as *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* and *The Faith That Does Justice* and others not quite so exciting. Would Fr. Daniel J. Groody's *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice* (2007) offer anything new?

This book — a volume in the exciting new Theology in Global Perspective Series by Orbis Books — did not disappoint. After a much-too-short look at globalization, Groody quickly goes to the heart of the book — social justice. He begins with chapters on sacred Scripture and the sayings of Church Fathers. In this regard, he covers ground that has been covered before.

What is different is his chapter on social justice in other religions — Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Bahá'í and the African indigenous religions. All of them regard the dignity of the individual and the practice of justice as essential. For example, Groody writes: "Justice is the cornerstone of Islamic life and faith" and Buddhism "prizes being over having, people over profit, and interconnectedness over individualism." Thanks, in part, to globalization, we in the West are more cognizant of the importance of other faiths now than we were in the 1960s and '70s.

### BREAKING THROUGH

Despite the abundance of social teaching that has appeared since the Second Vatican Council, many North American Catholics (clergy and laity alike) have been slow to pay attention. Social justice has remained on the periphery of the Catholic faith, like something we might look at after we have

taken care of all the essentials. Perhaps, this is due to some of the rhetoric that accompanied it in earlier days or because it deals with the economic and political aspects of our lives or because it calls for lifestyle changes. Whatever the reason, it is in the final two chapters that Groody succeeds in bringing social justice into mainstream Catholic life. The chapter titled *Worshipping in Spirit, Living in Truth* brings together work for social justice and the liturgy, especially the Eucharist. With the Eucharistic Congress taking place in Quebec City in June, this chapter adds new and important insights.

Groody's final chapter is on Catholic spirituality. "Christian spirituality involves living out what Jesus most valued," he writes. "In other words, Christian spirituality is about following Jesus, living out the values of the Kingdom of God, and generating a community transformed by the love of God and others." Spirituality, he says, is based on four fundamental relationships: with God, others, the environment and ourselves.

Groody has an interesting chapter on liberation theology or, more correctly, liberation theologies. He reminds us that

liberation theology is a reflection on God from the perspective of the poor. In a world where so many people are poor, if not destitute, where our planet is suffering despoliation at the hands of humans, particularly those of us living in the West, we must pay attention to the voices of its victims. After all, Jesus identified himself with them.

I highly recommend this book, which is written in an accessible style. Fr. Daniel Groody, CSC, is an associate professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

**Fr. Ernie Schibli**

*Fr. Schibli founded the Social Justice Committee of Montreal.*

### REVIEW

Globalization,  
Spirituality,  
and Justice

Daniel G. Groody

**Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice, by Daniel J. Groody, CSC, (Orbis Books, 304 pages) sells for \$24 at the Diocesan Book Room.**