Women Engaging the Catholic Social Tradition: Solidarity toward the Common Good. Edited by Erin M. Brigham and Mary Johnson, SNDdeN. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2022. xxviii + 200 pages. $29.95.

In this collection of six essays, female scholars highlight the lack of women’s perspectives and experiences in Catholic social teaching, indicating how the social thought and action of Catholic women could more effectively inform the formal teachings of the tradition. They demonstrate an understanding of Catholic social teaching as an evolving tradition rather than an essentialist view focused on the application of universal principles. The editors’ preface consciously positions the volume in continuity with the work of Lisa Cahill, M. Shawn Copeland, Christine Firer Hinze, and Maria Pilar Aquino, who have been “particularly influential in integrating women’s experiences” (xvi) into Catholic teachings.

Kathleen Maas Weigert examines the modern social encyclical tradition’s discussion of women and work, while Erin Brigham explores the intersection of race, class, and gender in domestic work and the possibility of employer/worker solidarity among women. Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos considers the transnational dimension of women’s management of work and family responsibilities by examining the migration of women, especially those who undertake domestic labor. All three see a need for Catholic social teaching to better reflect the actual lived experiences of twenty-first century women. They raise questions about what constitutes work, the gendered distribution of reproductive and caring work, and whether paid work and the ability to lead a dignified life should be linked.

The late Shawnee Daniels-Sykes draws attention to the disproportionate rate of Black maternal mortality and the inadequate response by Catholic ethics. She says that social teaching must move from a merely pro-birth to an unconditionally pro-life stance. Such a stance would not conflate reproductive health and maternal mortality with elective abortion. It would consider Black women’s experience at the intersection of racism, sexism, and classism, respect the health and wellbeing of women prior to pregnancy, support healthy pregnancy, and extend concern beyond birth.

Jeanette Rodriguez highlights women’s nonviolent leadership for social justice as contributing to Catholic social thought by providing a methodology and ethic of nonviolence. Such Spirit-led nonviolence is scripturally based and discovered through authentic encounter and exchange that transforms and heals. Mary Johnson also considers insights for Catholic social thought and teaching from the leadership praxis of women by examining religious women’s creation and transformation of institutions that serve the vulnerable. Creativity, commitment, and collaboration with multiple partners of different
types are hallmarks of these efforts. Simone Campbell’s afterword reflects further on the praxis of solidarity.

The essays in this volume are directed to societal issues rather than the internal life of the church, unlike Phyllis Zagano’s book *Just Church: Catholic Social Teaching, Synodality and Women* (2023), which uses Catholic social teaching as a framework for assessing the justice of the church itself. An essay examining the relationship between the internal life of the church and the credibility and effectiveness of its social teachings would have been a useful inclusion in this volume.

*Women Engaging the Catholic Social Tradition: Solidarity toward the Common Good* raises the visibility of women in the field of Catholic social thought and action. However, Diana Hayes’s foreword simply states that “the presence and participation of women in the research, writing, and content of these [social teaching] documents is almost nonexistent” (ix), and the volume does not examine or uncover women’s contributions to the development of formal Catholic social teaching documents.

Teachers of the Catholic social justice tradition will find this volume a useful tool for stimulating reflection in classrooms internationally. However, the specificity of this volume should be acknowledged. The authors write almost exclusively from North American contexts and perspectives. Only Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos engages her transnational experience as a migrant and child of migrants, and First Nations perspectives are absent. Nonetheless these essays may encourage further reflection by women grounded in a wider range of contexts and experiences. The website and blog associated with this book project (womenengagingcst.org) provide a space for a truly international conversation among women on the Catholic social tradition.

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With *One Church: How to Rekindle Trust, Negotiate Difference, and Reclaim Catholic Unity*, Charles C. Camosy offers popular readers a roadmap past the divisions in the Catholic Church. Built on an array of case studies (“The Progressive Professor,” “The Christmas-and-Easter Catholic,” etc.), Camosy employs a hermeneutic of generosity that invites readers to see past stereotypes to engage the motives and perspectives of their fellow believers.