

the wake of clerical sex abuse. Whatever these possibilities, one merit of this fine study is Guardado's grounded fidelity to a specific crisis and testimony: the decades-long anguish of Central America's vulnerable poor.

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*A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation.* By Gustavo Gutiérrez. Translated and edited by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. 50th Anniversary Edition, with a new Introduction by Michael E. Lee. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2023. lxiv + 301 pages. \$32.00 (paper).  
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This new edition of the revised and expanded edition (1988) of *A Theology of Liberation* marks the fiftieth anniversary of the original (1973) English translation of Gustavo Gutiérrez's classic, a book that has changed the course of Christian theology. Along with the early work of James Cone on Black liberation theology and Mary Daly on feminist Christian theology, it laid the foundation for the praxis-based theologies that emerged in the last half-century, reshaping theology and the praxis of discipleship.

The text and translation of this edition remain identical to the 1988 edition with two notable exceptions. First, the publisher changed prior editions' endnotes to footnotes. This changes the pagination but allows readers to follow Gutiérrez's engagement with his interdisciplinary interlocutors more easily. Second, this edition includes a new introduction by Michael E. Lee.

Lee's introduction, which contextualizes Gutiérrez's work in four ways, is a *tour de force*. First, he situates Gutiérrez's use of the word "liberation" within its political, economic, and social meanings in Latin America and his theological development of liberation within Vatican II's call to attend to the signs of the times. Lee argues, Gutiérrez's "bold step was to hear the cries for liberation and to see theology as the critical reflection on the struggle for that liberation" (xiv). Second, Lee outlines the book's major theological contributions, noting that Gutiérrez's engagement in theology as "critical reflection on Christian praxis in light of the Word" (16) changed conversations in the areas of theologies of revelation, theological method, Christology, sin, soteriology, and ecclesiology. In the third and fourth sections, Lee traces the development and legacy of the book, respectively, including the emergence of the central insight of liberation theology, the preferential option for the poor.

Rereading *A Theology of Liberation* reminds one that Gutiérrez's work anticipates several emphases of Pope Francis by a half-century. Francis has

echoed Gutiérrez's call that theologians serve the church's "evangelizing mission" by demonstrating how the gospel demands "an ongoing commitment to the poor, who are the privileged members of the reign of God" (xlvii). When considering Francis's invitation to discern synodally how the church might more fully live into its mission, theologians would do well to attend to three themes of Gutiérrez's classic book. These seem especially critical when read in light of part 1's treatment of theology and liberation, parts 2 and 3's contextualization of that relationship in the church, academy, and society, chapter 11's eschatological vision, and chapter 13's treatment of authentic solidarity.

First, Gutiérrez develops an epistemic preferential option for the poor, building on the biblical insight that God's self-revelation in history is encountered most concretely at the margins of society (chapter 10). Theology's critical reflection, then, must be done synodally, accompanying in authentic friendship those whom society has cast aside.

Second, Gutiérrez argues that salvation—the life God invites creation to share through God's self-revelation—is found in communion with God and others (chapters 9–13). Although this communion is fully realized in the eschaton, God's gratuitous self-gift in the incarnation demands that disciples seek to make that communion real in history, struggling with the poor to overcome the sources of human alienation.

Finally, although many Catholic ecclesiologies after Vatican II centered on questions pertaining to life within the church's communion, Gutiérrez reflects first on the church's mission in the world (chapter 12). Emphasizing the church's role as "a sacrament of salvation," which should make present that which it signifies, "enables us to think of the Church within the horizon of salvific work and in terms radically different from those of the ecclesiocentric emphasis" (240). Thus he highlights that the church's nature is shaped by its mission. This leads him to make a compelling case for ecclesial reform, arguing "the Church should signify in its own internal structure the salvation whose fulfillment it announces. Its organization ought to serve this task. . . . The church itself ought to be a place of liberation" (242).

This new edition of a classic, in large part due to Lee's introduction, should be included on university library shelves. Like previous editions, it would serve well as a text in undergraduate major and graduate seminars on fundamental theology, liberation theologies, Vatican II, theological method, and ecclesiology.

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