



St. Francis Virtual House of Studies



**Readings in The
OLD CATHOLIC TRADITION**

Peter F. Anson, *Bishops at Large*. London: Faber and Faber, 1964; reprinted by Apocryphile Press, 2006.

Anson presents an unsympathetic, but fair, assessment of the many Old Catholic bodies including a few that seem to have no membership beyond an array of bishops and a few other clerics. As such it is an instructive warning about an ecclesiology that places structure and succession above Gospel ministry. The bibliography (pp.545-572), though dated, is useful.

Henry R. T. Brandreth, *Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947; reprinted by Apocryphile Press, 2006.

This brief report was the stimulus for the much more comprehensive treatment by Anson.

Robert W. Caruso, *The Old Catholic Church: Understanding the Origin, Essence, and Theology of a Church that is Unknown and Misunderstood by Many in North America*. Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2009.

Caruso is an Old Catholic priest in one of the many jurisdictions in the United States. His critical assessment of the American scene is deserved. One may differ with him on how we address the problems (as the compiler of this bibliography does), but the dialogue is useful.

Ross Fuller, *The Brotherhood of the Common Life and Its Influences*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

This is a useful study of the early influence of a reform movement on the Archdiocese of Utrecht and Old Catholic ecclesiology.

Gordon Huelin (ed.), *Old Catholics and Anglicans, 1931-1981: To Commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of Intercommunion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1893.

This is a collections of essays by both Anglicans and Continental European Old Catholics celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Bonn Agreement establishing intercommunion between the Anglican Communion and the Union of Utrecht.

C.B. Moss, *The Old Catholic Movement: Its Origins and History*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1948; rev. editions 1964 & 1977; reprinted by Apocryphile Press, 2005.

Moss gives a sympathetic overview from an Anglican perspective. He provides a brief background to the early 18th-century developments leading to the secession of the Archdiocese of Utrecht (Holland) and then provides considerable detail on the development of both polity and doctrine. His chapters on the prelude to the First Vatican Council, the Council itself, and the outcome of the Council are particularly detailed and insightful. The revised edition provides a perspective on Vatican II by Michael J. Woodgate.

John Mason Neale, *A History of the So-Called Jansenist Church of Holland; With a Sketch of Its Earlier Annals, and Some Account of the Brothers of the Common Life*. Oxford: J. Henry and J. Parker, 1858; reprinted by Apocryphile Press, 2005.

This nineteenth-century book is still worth reading for any who are interested in the origins of the Old Catholic phenomenon.

John P. Plummer, *The Many Paths of the Independent Sacramental Movement: A Study of Its Liturgy, Doctrine and Leadership in America*. Dallas: Newt Books, 2004; reprinted by Apocryphile Press, 2006.

This is a study of the more esoteric branches of the Old Catholic successions, such as the Liberal Catholic Church and various Gnostic bodies.

John P. Plummer and John R. Mabry, *Who are the Independent Catholics? An Introduction to the Independent and Old Catholic Churches*. Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2006.

This is a useful brief overview of the multifaceted world of Old Catholic / "Independent" Catholic bodies in the United States. That having been said, read this with a critical eye and explore further. For example, there is no discussion of Carfora in the historical chapter, and the brief statement on Protestant views of the Eucharist ignore Calvin's variation on "Real Presence" and the wide-spread renewal of sacramental theology in the United Methodist Church.

Karl Pruter and J. Gordon Melton, *The Old Catholic Sourcebook*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1983.

Anson concludes his forward to Bishops at Large with the following warning: ". . . I must warn readers of this book that by the time it is in their hands, there is no certainty that the information about the present state of any of the autocephalous churches dealt with will be correct." (p.30) That warning applies equally to this source. In addition, there are numerous errors that were evident when The Old Catholic Sourcebook was first published. Nevertheless, there are nuggets of useful information to be gleaned if one reads with a critical and skeptical eye.

J. Michael Raley, *The Devotio Moderna and Freedom of Association: A Case Study in the Medieval Theory of Rights*. University of Chicago Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, 2007.

This is the single best study in English of the Brethren of the Common Life who had such an important impact on the ecclesial culture of the Archdiocese of Utrecht and the formation of an Old Catholic ecclesiology. Hopefully this massive work will find a publisher, but in the meantime it is well worth the trouble to consult the dissertation.