FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ RELIGION

Wake Up, Lazarus! On Catholic Renewal

Pierre Hegy
iUniverse (Jan 18, 2012)
Softcover $19.95 (328pp)
978-1-936236-96-1

In Christian tradition, the Lazarus metaphor symbolizes the physical resurrection of the body and the dormant spirituality of human beings. Pierre Hegy's methodical and thoughtful analysis of the present crisis in worldwide Catholicism adds a third symbol to the metaphor, the church, and he encourages it to wake up and renew itself.

Hegy devotes the first three chapters of *Wake Up, Lazarus!: On Catholic Renewal* to "inconvenient statistics," which illustrate the depth of the predicament: the monumental decline in church attendance, the consolidation of Catholic schools, the closing of parishes, and the abandonment of the church's leadership, both religious and clerical. These tribulations have been exacerbated by the sex scandals of the clergy. The statistics are familiar, but their comprehensive review creates a sense of urgency. Hegy concludes with a sobering statement: "Today, the losses of the Catholic Church are of the magnitude of those of the time of the Reformation."

Hegy, who wrote his doctoral thesis on the role of authority in the Catholic Church after Vatican II, analyzes the behavior of two thriving Christian churches, a nondenominational evangelical congregation and a Roman Catholic parish. These two extensive case studies reveal a surprising number of similarities in worship and liturgical celebrations, not on theological issues.

The essence of Hegy's thesis is twofold. First, the Catholic Church has suffered as it has resisted the vast cultural changes that have transformed society over the fifty years since Vatican II.

Second, Catholicism's church-centered structure has lost its appeal for some who have been drawn to the evangelical emphasis on Jesus as one's personal savior; in fact, data shows that many of the new evangelicals are former Catholics seeking a personal spirituality they lacked as members of the church.

The subtitle of the book indicates the intended audience. Catholics interested in contributing to church renewal will appreciate Hegy's insights and his numerous practical suggestions on revitalizing the liturgy and invigorating their parish life. Hegy is both critical of and optimistic about the future of the Catholic Church, despite the gloom presently hanging over it. The author avoids polemics and presents an honest analysis of the church's current problems and constructive ways to remedy them.

This scholarly, readable book contains extensive bibliographical references and an exhaustive index.
THOMAS H. BRENNAN (August 17, 2012)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The author of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have his/her book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Review make no guarantee that the author will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.