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EVANGELIZATION FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

By Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.

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Reviewed by Pasquale T. Giordano, S.J.

During his confinement at Murray-Weigel Hall, the Jesuit infirmary at Fordham University, coping with the illness that would eventually take his life, Cardinal Avery Dulles with the help of his assistant, Anne-Marie Kirmse, O.P., Ph.D, completed this crowning work in his distinguished career of writing. Struggling with his rapidly declining health that eventually took away his power to speak and move effectively, Cardinal Dulles chose ten articles from the twenty-three lectures he had given on evangelization. He supervised the editing and correcting of the text. This book is his final gift, his writings on evangelization, guiding the Church for the Third Millenium.

The ten articles are truly comprehensive, encompassing much that is necessary to know about evangelization. The book is written with the customary clarity of a Dulles text, getting to the roots of the question, exploring it thoroughly, historically and doctrinally, and projecting forward to future challenges. In this review, I will reveal the treasures present in each chapter.

Chapter 1, "Evangelization: New Testament through Vatican II," defines evangelization, and answers the questions of why evangelize, who should be evangelized, who should evangelize, and the ways of

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evangelization. Chapter 2, "Paul VI and Evangelization," discusses the great apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* written in 1975. It analyzes the favorable and critical responses and presents its implementation in the United States. The footnotes are especially valuable in this chapter. Chapter 3, "The Program: Paul VI, John Paul II, and the New Evangelization," addresses what is distinctive to the New Evangelization: centrality of Christ, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, religious freedom, continuing process, social teaching, evangelization of cultures, new media, involvement of all Christians, and the primacy of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 4, "The Gospel: Point of Contention and Convergence," discusses the differences in evangelization between the Protestant and Catholics, beginning with the debates between the Lutherans and Catholics in the sixteenth century and ending with Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue in the year 2000. Chapter 5, "Evangelization and Ecumenism," discusses the four main types of ecumenical activity and their relationship to evangelization: spiritual ecumenism, collaborative action, witness, and dialogue.

Chapter 6, "The Evangelization of Culture and the Catholic University," is a particularly rich chapter discussing the idea of culture, Christ and culture, the transmission of Christian culture, evangelization and culture, evangelization and higher education, and the contemporary situation dealing with the secularization process and the attempts of John Paul II in *Ex corde Ecclesiae* to counter this process. Chapter 7, "The New Evangelization and Theological Renewal," presents the seven trends in contemporary theology that are less than friendly to evangelization: the radical separation sometimes made between faith and belief, metaphysical agnosticism typified in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant who maintains that nothing speculatively true can be said of God, because the human mind can have assured knowledge only about phenomena—things that appear to the senses, religious pragmatism, cultural relativism, religious pluralism, a false concept of freedom, an antiauthoritarianism that militates against evangelization.

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In the final three chapters, Cardinal Dulles employs his well known model approach. Chapter 8, "Models of Evangelization," reflects upon the different dimensions or styles of evangelization: personal witness, proclamation by word, worship, community, inculturation, and works of charity. Chapter 9, "Models of Catechesis," discusses the different ways the basic elements of the faith are proclaimed: doctrinal, kerygmatic, liturgical, experiential, and praxis. Dulles comments that each of these five models of catechesis have their merits, inasmuch as they represent valid dimensions of integral Christian formation. Religious educators should use them appropriately. The final chapter (chap. 10), "Models of Apologetics," discusses the use of apologetics as a special discipline spelling out why the message is credible and thus assisting and supporting evangelization. Dulles presents seven approaches: classical apologetics, biblical evidentialism, religious experience of believers, the yearning of the human heart, the theological aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar, the presuppositionalist approach, and finally, patterns of history. Dulles concludes by saying that the combination of all the arguments is more impressive than anyone of them taken alone.

Although this book was written from the context of the American Church, there is much of value in it for the Philippine Church. It is an essential book for any library. It is necessary reading for any seminarian and pastoral minister, cleric, or lay. It presents the way of the Church for the Third Millenium. Avery Cardinal Dulles has left us a fitting memorial to his life.

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CONTRIBUTORS

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