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### [Review of the Book *Desegregating Dixie: The Catholic Church in the South and Desegregation, 1945-1992*, by M. Newman]

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Mark Newman, *Desegregating Dixie: The Catholic Church in the South and Desegregation, 1945-1992*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2018. Pp. xviii, 455. \$90. cloth, \$30. paper.

Virgil Elizondo in *The Future is Mestizo* (2000) noted, "It is far easier to pass laws of desegregation than to create a desegregated culture." No text confirms this truth better than Mark Newman's exhaustive examination of desegregating the U.S. South post-1945, especially in a Catholic context.

Newman's text has three sections. The first two chapters review the theology and sociology drawn upon and practiced by Southern Catholics in their engagement of the race issue. The next five chapters examine this engagement respectively by Catholic segregationists, progressive white Catholics, Catholic institutions, and African-American Catholics. The final two chapters prior to the conclusion synthesize the Southern Catholic desegregation approach between 1945-71 and then 1971-1992.

Especially the middle section of this text has the feel of the movie, *Rashomon*, insofar as the same event is retold from multiple perspectives. For example, the Selma protest is referenced several times. But in this case, unlike that film, keeping track of the repeated events and players becomes maddening. Newman does provide five valuable appendices to help guide the reader, but it would have been helpful to have an appendix that gives a timeline of the key events on southern desegregation between 1945-1992.

Still, the detail of Newman's approach is a valuable text for researchers focusing on faith-based engagements of the racial divide in the United States over the past eighty years. His following substantive points are noteworthy. First, theological notions, such as the Mystical Body of Christ which suggests a path for bridging diverse races, were of limited impact in actually effecting desegregation. Second, for the most part, the Southern Catholic Church largely followed the lead of the U.S. federal government in pushing desegregation, but rarely was ahead of the government in this effort. Third, the paternalistic attitude of Church leaders toward blacks in engaging this issue was inherently counter-productive to desegregation efforts. Fourth, many black Catholics wanted to sustain their congregations rather than be merged into white parishes and in other instances, black Catholics were rankled that their perspectives were not considered in desegregation initiatives. Fifth, the reality was that most white Southern Catholics were quite comfortable with segregation, putting pastors in a difficult balancing act between putting moral principles into action and sustaining the support of their white parishioners. Thus, Newman shows, little more than token desegregation was achieved in secular and religious arenas.

Texas clergy, especially Robert Lucey, Wendelin Nold, John Morkovsky, Joseph Fiorenza, and John McCarthy, in Newman's narrative, do emerge as proactive leaders on the issues presented in moving past desegregation to integration. On the other hand, in the Texas context, the emergence of multicultural issues, especially with the expansion of Hispanic and Asian Catholics, from the 1980s going forward gains many

a mention by Newman. Nevertheless, this text is an excellent resource for grasping the complex political and ministerial issues involved in breaking down walls and building bridging between diverse races.

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