THEOLOGY UNPLUGGED:
A WORD TO THE STUDENT IN ALL OF US

Our recent issue on globalization reminded us of the ambiguity of our cultural and technological developments in the world economy. The insights give us reason to pause and ask: What are the implications of this ambiguity for the way we do theology? In the age of the mega search engines, the 140-character "Tweet," and the one-sentence Facebook post, our attention span for research threatens to become as short as our attention span for interpersonal communication in general. It is already a practical reality for many students that if a source is not available electronically it may as well not exist. If a source is not available via digital search (whether through a library database, an academic database, or a popular database such as Google or Wikipedia) it is entirely fair to assume that the typical undergraduate (and I dare say some graduate students as well) will never know of its existence. A trip to the bound journals section of the library is no longer par for the course among students researching a thesis-driven article.

Apart from their shortened attention span for research, the new generation of graduate students is being forced to deal with an ever growing overspecialization and fragmentation within the field of theology. Scholars have been aware of this trend for some time, many attempting to reverse it. The sheer increase of information available to researchers electronically has in part compounded the problem. First, as the quantity of electronically accessible information increases, the section of that data any one researcher can digest, synthesize, and convert to a contribution to understanding, even over a lifetime, becomes ever narrower at an ever faster rate. Second, as searching databases continually improves finding precisely what researchers are looking for, the likelihood of reading material that touches on the question of interest, while relating to another question, decreases. Research necessarily becomes increasingly specialized and, simultaneously, increasingly parochial.

While we do not decry the new, extremely fruitful tools of research that enable significant advances in all specializations of theology, this brief word is meant to encourage a pause to consider whether or not we ought to let die the former scholarly habit of carrying about a paper copy of a theological journal—enjoying the feel of the pages, the smell of the ink, skimming some articles, and rereading others. There is something to be said for "theology unplugged"—something tactile, something more permanent, something one can come back to again and again after putting it on a shelf. More than a desperate plea for subscriptions, this brief word poses a question for reflection: What will it mean for theology to be no longer the study of the Sacra Pagina but of the Sacra Web-pagina?

Kent Lasnoki, Ph.D. Candidate and Assistant to the Editor of Theological Studies
MANNION, G. (ED.): Comparative Ecclesiology .................................. 944
JERSAK, B., and M. HARDIN: Stricken by God? ................................. 946
GAILLARDETZ, R. R.: Ecclesiology for a Global Church .................. 947
GOCKEL, M.: Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election ...... 949
POWELL, M. E.: Papal Infallibility .............................................. 950
CORNILLE, C.: The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue ............. 952
CLOONEY, F. X.: Beyond Compare ............................................. 954
VONDEY, W.: People of Bread ................................................ 955
JENKINS, W.: Ecologies of Grace .............................................. 957
MOSER, P. K.: The Elusive God ................................................ 959
SCHINDLER, J. K.: Christianity and Civil Society ......................... 960
HEYER, K. E., M. J. ROZELL, and M. A. GENOVESE (EDS.):
   Catholics and Politics ...................................................... 962
SALZMAN, T. A., and M. G. LAWLER: The Sexual Person ................. 963
RUSSELL, R. J.: Cosmology ................................................... 965

SHORTER NOTICES

SCHIFFERDECKER, K.: Out of the Whirlwind, 967
LEVINSON, B. M.: Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel, 967
SWEENEY, M. A.: Reading the Hebrew Bible after the Shoah, 968
PATTARUMADATHIL, H.: Your Father in Heaven, 968
MCCLYMOND, K.: Beyond Sacred Violence, 969
WILLIAMS, M. S.: Authorized Lives in Early Christian Biography, 969
HOUGHTON, H. A. G.: Augustine's Text of John, 970
MURRAY, W.: A Mended and Broken Heart, 970
LARA, J.: Christian Texts for Aztecs, 970
SELL, A. P. F.: Hinterland Theology, 971
KAUL, O. U., and A. LOW (EDS.): Interpreting Contemporary Christianity, 971
WOOD, C. M.: The Question of Providence, 972
HOFFMAN, A.: Kenosis im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars und in der Japanischen Kyoto-Schule, 973
LARDINOIS, O., and B. VERMANDER (EDS.): Shamanism and Christianity, 973
BEAUDIN, T.: Witness to Dispossession, 973
MATTISON III, W. C.: Introducing Moral Theology, 974
BASH, A.: Forgiveness and Christian Ethics, 975
BRENNAN, P. M. (ED.): The Vocation of the Child, 975
HICKS, D. A., and M. VALERI (EDS.): Global Neighbors, 976
SCHUBECK, T. L.: Love That Does Justice, 976
BALDOVIN, J. F.: Reforming the Liturgy, 977
BOUMA-PREDIGER, S., and B. J. WALSH: Beyond Homelessness, 977
BORDEYNE, P., and B. T. MORRILL (EDS.): Sacraments, 978
GRAVES, M.: Mind, Brain, and the Elusive Soul, 978
MASTERSON, P.: The Sense of Creation, 979

BOOKS RECEIVED ................................................................. 980