

Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God. By Kelly Brown Douglas. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015. xv + 240 pages. \$24.00 (paper).

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Once again, theologian Kelly Brown Douglas has written a thoughtful and compelling monograph. *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* addresses what she calls the stand-your-ground culture that has permeated the consciousness of US citizens and has thus contributed to a climate where the murders of Trayvon Martin and countless other young, unarmed black Americans fail to evoke outrage among the masses.

In part 1, Douglas takes her readers back to AD 98, when Roman historian Tacitus penned *Germania*. There he extolled the unique traits of the Germanic tribes, the forebears of the Anglo-Saxons. The Germanic tribes were believed to be a pure race whose members were gifted with political acumen. This contributed to the eventual construction of the Anglo-Saxon myth that informed understandings of American exceptionalism and its related corollary, manifest destiny. Thomas Jefferson and other founding fathers were likewise enamored of the idea of Anglo-Saxon heritage and were committed to preventing the tainting of the race through intermixing. To be sure, immigrants from Ireland and Eastern European countries, though not initially of this heritage, were eventually incorporated into the Anglo-Saxon community. In sum, this is what contributed to the stand-your-ground culture, which is characterized by the “‘hypervaluation’ of whiteness and the denigration of blackness” (xiv).

The stand-your-ground culture is also informed by pseudobeliefs that include understandings of the black body as chattel, hypersexualized, dangerous, and always guilty. This is evident in the trials of those who shot and killed Trayvon Martin, Renisha McBride, Jonathan Ferrell, and other unarmed black daughters and sons. In each case, “it was as if these black victims were ‘being charged with [their] own death[s]’” (49). In the manifest destiny war on dangerous black bodies, they were collateral damage. Thankfully, their stories do not end here.

In part 2 of this work, Douglas retrieves the faith claims of mothers and fathers of African ancestry—enslaved and free—and displays how these faith claims have “provided a counternarrative to the grand narrative of Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism” (154). This counternarrative continues to this day in new voices and energizes present and future generations to embody innovative dispositions and acts of resistance. These faith claims include those of the father of Trayvon Martin, who stated after the verdict of his son’s murderer was handed down: “My heart is broken, but my faith is unshattered.”

Douglas maintains that these murders of our daughters and sons are stand-your-ground crucifixions and twenty-first-century lynchings that are not of God. They are evil. Inspired by resurrection faith, Douglas affirms God's power that transcends the power of death in nonviolent and corrective ways. *Stand Your Ground* concludes with Douglas's searing words, "This book is my refusal to be consoled until the justice that is God's is made real in the world" (232). This sentiment is captured in the artwork that graces the book's cover, "Fear Not: I Got You" (2013) by Margo Humphrey. Here we see an inconsolable black Madonna embracing her dead son, whose raised fist is displayed—a reminder of resistance and resurrection. Color-coded candies punctuate the Madonna's garb, while an empty bag of Skittles remains in her son's other hand. Trayvon Martin was killed while returning to his father's home with Skittles and Arizona iced tea.

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Sacraments and Justice. Edited by Doris Donnelly. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014. viii + 112 pages. \$16.95 (paper).

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This book is an anthology on the sacraments. Chapters on baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist (written by John Baldovin, Edward Hahnenberg, and Michael Driscoll, respectively) constitute the strength of the book. Baldovin, for example, makes fine use of the baptism scene in the movie *The Godfather* to address the question of meaning what we say when we baptize. Hahnenberg observes that emphasis on the "gift" of the Holy Spirit in confirmation is a function of God's choosing the one to be confirmed and not, as often happens in consumer society, a matter of making choices for oneself to promote the illusion of self-sufficiency. Driscoll opens his chapter on the Eucharist with a discussion of a mass held at the US-Mexico border in 2009, and draws attention throughout to the eucharistic impulse to care for the needy.

The chapter on reconciliation (by volume editor Doris Donnelly) provides an overview of the history of the sacrament but does not provide dates for the rise of the Irish penitential system and implies that weekly confession of sin to a priest was a feature of Roman Catholic life from Trent to the time of Pope Pius X (54). Apart from an important mention of the problem of the preconciliar church regarding missing Mass on Sunday as a mortal sin while not using such strong language about racism (54–55), the chapter does not much engage questions of justice but instead provides discussion of the decline in recourse to this sacrament since the 1960s.