



*Mrs. Mattingly's Miracle: The Prince, The Widow, and The Cure that Shocked Washington City.* By Nancy Lusignan Schultz. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011. 288 pp. \$30.00

Nancy Lusignan Schultz has written a fascinating account of the miraculous cure of Ann Carberry Mattingly in Washington DC in 1824 and 1831. Schulz describes her work as "a biographical voyage to discover the charismatic Prince Hohenlohe and the enigmatic Ann Mattingly." Schultz shows her mastery of genealogical research in tracing the heritage of both figures. Prince Alexander Hohenlohe was a

German Catholic prince and priest renowned as a miracle worker. Mattingly is cured of late stage breast cancer purportedly through the intercession of the prince. Ironically, the prince is not actually involved in the celebration of Eucharist, celebrated by Washington priests, that effected the miracle.

Schultz traces her story against the background of the American Catholic Church. She appeals to the background of the Maryland tradition in which an Anglo American minority sought to stem the influence of the emerging immigrant church. Archbishop Ambrose Maréchal of Baltimore feared that the controversy over the miracle might revive anti-Popery sentiment against the church. In this light, Schultz traces reactions to the miracle in the American press, which reflect the belief of most American Protestants that the age of the miraculous ended with the apostolic age. She also traces reactions against the Prince in Europe, which had a heritage in enlightenment rationalism.

Schultz also aptly interprets the miracles against the background of gender. She argues that "Mrs. Mattingly's body, like the bodies of many antebellum women, was almost always under the control of men." She relates that Catholicism had a "eucharocentric" form of devotion in the nineteenth century that privileged the priest's role in church ritual that played out in Hohenlohe's cures, including that of Ann Mattingly. The cures, she observed, were performed by male clergy and documented by male physicians. One critic of the Mattingly

miracle of 1824 compared the opinions of male doctors to those of "five Roman Catholic ladies" and was dismissive of the women. The main objections of the Protestant critics of the miracle, she claims, reflect the frank and graphic descriptions of the female body in the account.

Schultz also appeals to the work of Susan Sontag in her essay "Illness as Metaphor." Schultz applies the notion of the "cancer personality" to Ann Mattingly. Sontag observed that cancer is a disease that afflicts those who are sexually repressed. Dr. William Buchan, of the eighteenth century, also claimed that it was common in convents. Schultz notes that breast cancer in the time of Ann Mattingly was known as the "nun's disease." Mattingly's self-cure of an injured foot in 1831, by appeal to the Blessed Virgin Mary, may have reflected her effort to wrest control of her body from men. I find her argument to be persuasive.

All in all, it is an excellent book. It would be very suitable for inclusion in the classroom, especially in a course on American Catholic history or American women's history. I believe that it should have a privileged place in any university library.

JOSEPH G. RYAN, O.S.A.  
*Villanova University*