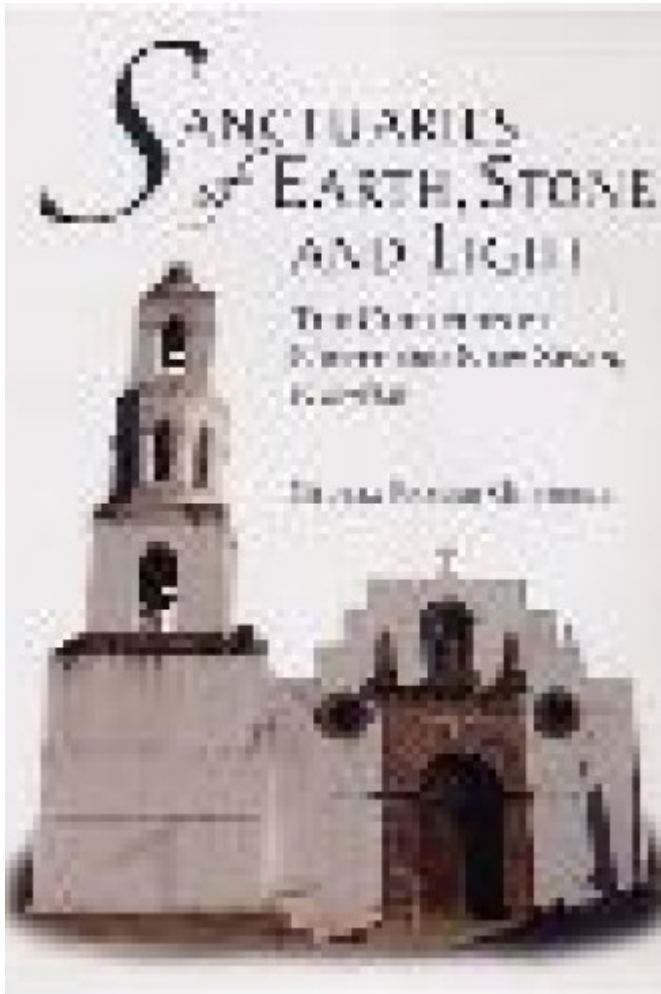


BookMarks

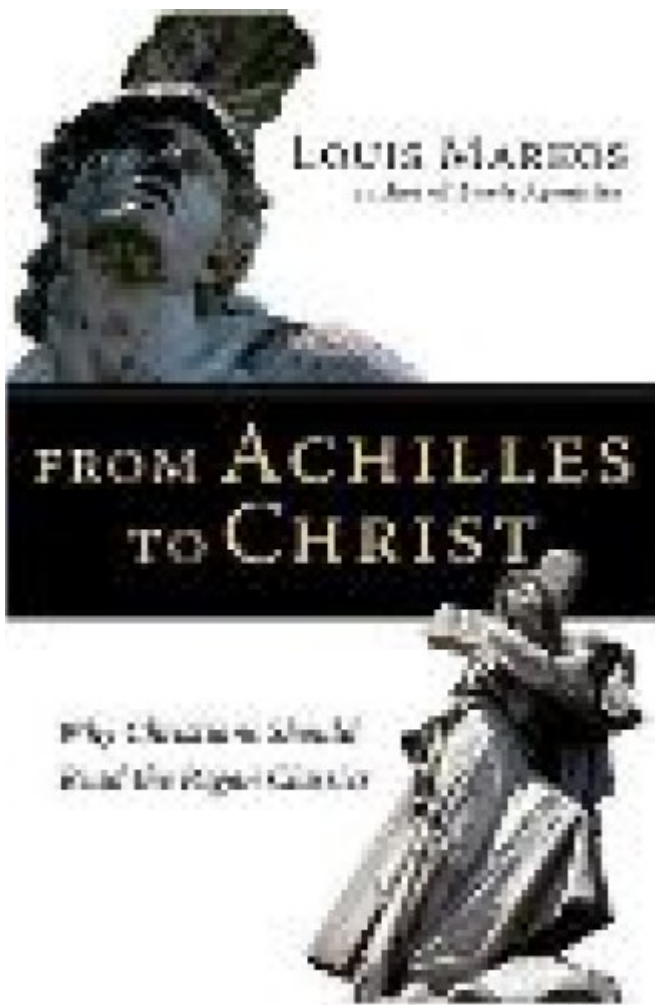
Books in the [May 20, 2008](#) issue

In Review



Sanctuaries of Earth, Stone, and Light: The Churches of Northern New Spain, 1530-1821

Gloria Fraser Giffords
University of Arizona Press



From Achilles to Christ: Why Christians Should Read the Pagan Classics

Louis Markos
IVP Academic

The 200 black and white photos are glorious enough to make this book worth the price, even without the rich accompanying text. Giffords spies architectural influence from five continents in the churches of colonial New Spain, which stretched from what is now central Mexico up to northern California. Occasionally the facades and interiors of these churches pile up architectural styles in a gaudy baroque, but much more commonly these sanctuaries allow the pale light and endless sand of colonial Mexico to play on altars, pews, side chapels and countless images of the Virgin and Child. A gorgeous reminder that all those “San” towns in California and that iconic image of the Alamo were once ecclesial markers before they became American ones.

Using biblical precedents from Acts, Paul and even Jesus, Markos explains not only why but how Christians should read the classics, with running engagements with Sophocles, Homer, Virgil and others. Part of this evangelical's rationale is deeply medieval and Catholic—the Word of God is not the Bible but Christ, whose truth may be inchoately seen throughout creation. A conclusion on the “word made fact” also draws on Tolkien's great mythmaking novels, and the recent blockbuster movies based on them, to show the hunger for this sort of Christian engagement with the classics.