

Book Reviews

Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology by Michael J. Gorman (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009*), xi + 194 pp.

THEOSIS in Paul is the main subject of Michael Gorman's recent intriguing study of Pauline soteriology. The author, a Methodist who is professor of Sacred Scripture and dean of the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore, further develops here the insights of his earlier works on Paul, especially *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*. The title of the present work captures the various elements needed for an understanding of theosis, which he defines as "transformative participation in the kenotic, cruciform character of God through Spirit-enabled conformity to the incarnate, crucified, and resurrected/glorified Christ" (7, 125, 162). In chapter one, Gorman establishes a foundation for his understanding of theosis in Paul by considering Philippians 2:6–11: Christ's self-emptying reveals both what God is like and what Christian life should be, through its participation in God's life (theosis). Gorman then links theosis to Paul's understanding of justification (chapter two) and holiness (chapter three). Applying these ideas in chapter four, Gorman considers nonviolence as an essential mark of a Christian's kenotic, cruciform existence. A conclusion synthesizes the main points of each chapter, summing up Gorman's understanding of theosis in Paul.

Gorman's work is valuable at many levels, as it contains both "careful exegesis" of selected passages and "bold, broad brush strokes" that paint the "big picture" (47–48). Regarding Pauline studies, it offers detailed insights into certain individual pericopes (such as Phil 2:6–11) but also sketches general lines for moving forward in the ongoing debates (for example, about the nature of justification) between traditional views on Paul and the "New Perspective." At the ecumenical level, the work also makes an important contribution, as Gorman himself suggests: "The

intersection of participation with justification, and both with theosis, is promising for the efforts at the reunion of Protestants and Catholics, and of Protestants and Catholics with the Orthodox" (8, n. 22). Also meritorious is the effort made to connect exegesis to theology and to practical Christian living. Moreover, the work is written in lucid prose; it is scholarly and yet accessible to a wide audience.

One general drawback of the book is that the bibliography is almost exclusively English-language, apart from a few older German works considered in English translation (by Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Käsemann) and one non-biblical (and highly polemical!) Spanish work (35). Since there is no interaction with current biblical scholarship in other languages, the dialogue in the book takes place among a somewhat limited set of conversation partners, thus ironically limiting its "ecumenical" appeal.

After a short introduction, chapter one focuses on Philippians 2:6–11. Like many exegetes, Gorman understands Philippians 2:6–8 as referring to a two-step downward movement: the incarnation of the pre-existent Christ and the acceptance of suffering by the incarnate Christ (17). Thus, Christ both in his divinity and in his humanity is kenotic; he thereby establishes the model for Christian living. Along these lines, Gorman provides an interesting discussion of a narrative pattern in Paul's letters (not [x] but [y] and [z]) (11, 16–17, 20–26, 157–58) found not only in Philippians 2:6–11 but also in autobiographical passages (1 Thes 2:6–8; 1 Cor 9:1–23). Moreover, arguing that the initial phrase of Philippians 2:6 is both concessive ("though he was in the form of God") and causative ("because he was in the form of God"), Gorman contends that the text also reveals the kenotic or cruciform character of God (10, 32–33). These considerations, among others, lead Gorman to refer to Philippians 2:6–11 as Paul's "master story" (12–13, 38–39). Actually, it might be more accurate to say that this pericope contains many elements of Paul's master story, while admitting that certain elements of that story are absent or merely implicit (for example, Christ as Son [Rom 1:3–4]; Christ's fulfillment of Israel's story, such as the blessing given to Abraham [Gal 3:14]; the saving significance of Christ's kenosis and exaltation [Rom 4:25]; Christ's parousia [1 Cor 15:23]).

Having presented theosis in chapter one as participation of human beings in the life of God, which is exemplified by kenotic and cruciform existence, Gorman in chapter two gets to "the soul of the book" (2), considering "how one enters into this life of God" (39). He thus deals with justification, studying Galatians 2:15–21, Romans 6:1–7:6, and other passages to explain that "justification is itself theosis" (2, 164). In other words, "[j]ustification is the establishment or restoration of right covenan-

tal relations—*fidelity* to God and *love* for neighbor—by means of God’s grace in Christ’s death and our Spirit-enabled co-crucifixion with him” (85). He summarizes this definition with the acronym JCC (justification by co-crucifixion [63]). It “therefore means co-resurrection with Christ to new life within the people of God and the certain hope of acquittal/vindication, and thus resurrection to eternal life, on the day of judgment” (85–86). Gorman explains that justification’s “judicial image must be understood within a wider covenantal, relational, participatory, and transformative framework” (55), and that it is experienced in community, not as “a private act of reconciliation” (55). These thoughts could be further developed by emphasizing Paul’s familial (filial and fraternal) language (see 91, 107, 117) of becoming children of God (cf. Rom 8:14–17; Gal 4:4–7) in the Son (*fili in Filio*), and thus brothers and sisters of one another (see, for example, Romano Penna, “La casa/famiglia sullo sfondo della Lettera ai Romani,” *Estudios Bíblicos* 65 [2007]: 159–75). Gorman’s “thick” (103) understanding of justification is certainly of great value in furthering ecumenical relations.

It may be surprising to some that Gorman does not here deal at length with Abraham’s justification by faith (Rom 4 and Gal 3); this is probably a strategic move to frame the question in another way and thus highlight aspects of justification that tend to be neglected. Gorman does deal with Abraham and Romans 4 in chapter four, where he notes that Paul chose the paradigm of justification by faith (Gn 15:6) rather than that of justification by zealous work (Phinehas in Ps 106:31) (147–48). It would be helpful to go further by explaining the rationale for Paul’s choice, namely, that by using the rabbinic technique of *gezerah shawah* to combine Genesis 15:6 with Psalm 32:2, Paul in Romans 4:1–12 establishes justification by faith as the general rule (see Pasquale Basta, *Abramo in Romani 4: L’analogia dell’agire divino nella ricerca esegetica di Paolo*).

In chapter three, Gorman focuses on holiness, which he describes as an “actualization” of justification (2, 111, 125, 165). He thus draws attention to a somewhat neglected area of Christian living: the call to holiness. Gorman discusses Paul’s use of terms like “holy” and “holiness,” his description of the activity of the “Holy” Spirit, and other teaching related to holiness in the proto-Pauline letters. He also briefly explores how holiness should be lived today in community, in sexual relations, and in political life. Several of Gorman’s key points in this chapter interestingly echo writings of Pope John Paul II. For example, Gorman explains that the call to holiness understood as theosis means that Christian life is not so much “[i]mitatio Christi” but rather “*conformatio Christi*” (23; cf. 37, 71, 154, 166). In John Paul II’s encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, we find the following phrase,

complete with a reference to Paul's "master story": "*Following Christ* is not an outward imitation. . . . Being a follower of Christ means *becoming conformed to him* who became a servant even to giving himself on the Cross (cf. Phil 2:5–8)" (§21). Again, Gorman says that "[h]oliness (*hagiasmos*), for Paul, is both gift and task" (108). In the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, John Paul II writes that the "gift of holiness . . . in turn becomes a task" (§30). Gorman also explores the means for growth in holiness, asking the question: "How does this transformation into Godlikeness—this theosis—take place?" (93; cf. the discussion of Christlikeness on 113). Gorman's response differs from traditional treatments of theosis, which emphasize the sacraments (especially the Eucharist) as means of theosis. Gorman does indeed highlight baptism (72–79, 90, 93, 113), but only briefly refers to the Lord's Supper (89, 113). Moreover, while the "contemplative" dimension of growth in holiness gets only a passing mention (93, 170), Gorman often discusses its active dimension (for example, in political life)—so perhaps more attention could be given to "prayer" (a word not found in the book), since "training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in *the art of prayer*" (John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, §32). He also indicates that the tradition of holiness as theosis is largely an Eastern Christian heritage that the West has not developed (125, 170–71), but he must certainly be aware that holy Western theologians like Augustine and Aquinas also spoke of divinization or deification. These comments notwithstanding, this is an excellent chapter for helping Christians rediscover the call to holiness.

In chapter four, Gorman applies the material of the previous chapters to the problem of violence. He explains that the post-transformation Paul indeed turned away from the zealous violence of the pre-transformation Saul. He also clarifies that the event of the cross is not some kind of violence of the Father toward the Son. Very helpful are Gorman's comments against "sacred violence" (159–60), including his note that such violence involves not only international affairs but also "religiously based arguments for unrestricted abortion" (159, n. 111). His condemnation of sacred violence and emphasis on the scriptural message of peace find a recent echo in Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*; the Pope there says that "it is more necessary than ever to rediscover the word of God as a source of reconciliation and peace," and he affirms "once more that religion can never justify intolerance or war. We cannot kill in God's name!" (§102). When it comes to the broader issue of non-violence in general, however, Gorman's treatment needs some further development. His treatment of divine "wrath" in Paul is rather limited (155–58), dealing briefly with only a few Pauline texts (e.g., Rom 5:9; 12:19). He posits

that the manifestation of God's wrath takes place only at the eschaton (157–58), and hence he does not deal with passages that indicate that God's wrath is already being manifested in the present time (e.g., Rom 1:18). Indeed, if justification (cf. Rom 1:17) or theosis is an already present reality which also has a future, eschatological dimension (as Gorman says, 85–86, 166–67), then it is difficult to see why the same is not also true for divine wrath. Moreover, since he mentions Romans 13:1–7 only in passing (112), he does not consider that, according to Paul, the divine wrath may be manifested at the present time through human agents (Rom 13:4–5). The chapter also does not consider the question of how one's response might depend on one's position in society (for example, private individual or public servant) or in the church (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II–II, q. 40). Without these distinctions, it is difficult to understand a statement like “we may need to be prepared to absorb violence, but not to inflict it” (160), especially in light of events such as the massacre of Iraqi Christians in church, stopped only by military action. Regarding this issue, see Germain Grisez, *Living a Christian Life*, 905: “Sometimes people can rightly defend themselves and/or others with deadly force, accepting as a side effect the death thus caused, but not seeking it as an end or choosing it as a means.” Finally, a methodological challenge posed by this chapter regards the difficulty of constructing a complete moral theory based on Paul's largely occasional letters.

These observations are an indication of the fruitfulness of Gorman's book for stimulating further work and reflection. By emphasizing a single, integrated model of Pauline soteriology—cruciform theosis—Gorman has drawn our attention to a matter that not only has ongoing academic interest, but one that has crucial practical implications for the life of every Christian. N.V

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The Truth, the Way, the Life: Christian Commentary on the Three Holy Mantras of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Hindus by Francis X. Clooney, S.J. (Leuven: Peeters/Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 203 pp.

IN THIS carefully and densely written study Francis Clooney undertakes two distinct but related projects: a detailed commentary of the three holy mantras within the theological tradition of Śrīvaiṣṇava Hinduism, and an exploration of what it might mean for Christians to engage with and comment on sacred texts from other religious traditions. Clooney states

his purpose as offering a Christian commentary on the three holy mantras of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Hindu tradition, exploring how they have been understood within that tradition (following the Śrīvaiṣṇava commentator, Vedānta Deśika, 1269–1370), and asking what they can mean for readers today, particularly Christian readers (5).

Before embarking on the commentary itself, Clooney makes the case for the value of close commentary on sacred texts, and the necessity of submission and self-effacement before the text, especially if it originates from a religious tradition other than the commentator's (8–9). What he "asks" for here is not entirely clear. On the one hand he claims that commentary is an intellectual activity that becomes a "spiritual activity" (10), and consistently throughout the study he acknowledges the limits of how a Christian can fully grasp another theological tradition. But on the other he claims (as an illustration) that a *Christian* commentary on the Gospel of John would have little to distinguish it from any commentary on John except for "pious and pastoral comments after the scholarly exegesis" (12). He seems to want it both ways, that is, that the results of genuine commentary have little to do with religious commitment, and that we must respect and acknowledge the limits of what commentators from one religious tradition can gain from texts in another. This is not fully coherent, and it is the latter perspective that is more persuasive and that in fact informs Clooney's own approach to the Hindu mantras throughout the commentary, illustrated by his "Christian hope that meaningful and efficacious learning across religious boundaries is possible in the 21st century" (26).

The three mantras that Clooney will explore are remarkably brief and easily cited: the Tiru Mantra: "Aum, obeisance to Nārāyaṇa"; the Carama Śloka: "Having completely given up all *dharma*s, to Me alone come for refuge. From all sins I will make you free. Do not grieve"; and the Dvaya Mantra: "I approach for refuge the feet of Nārāyaṇa with Śrī. Obeisance to Nārāyaṇa with Śrī" (15). The outline of the book follows the three mantras (one chapter dedicated to each), with the Carama Śloka divided into two chapters to serve what Clooney believes is the divine-human interaction in play (27). Beginning and ending each chapter, and scattered throughout, are brief "reflections" that consider the results of the commentary thus far for the Christian reader. They function as occasional editorials that challenge the Christian reader to consider what impact the spiritual fruits of the commentary might have for Christian believer.

Clooney is a careful and competent commentator. He offers an impressive example of what any commentary should be like, as well as how a Christian can respectfully enter into sustained dialogue with the sacred texts of another tradition. He is judicious in his commentarial

judgments and careful in the way he applies the findings to a Christian reader. The result is that, by the book's conclusion, the previously uninitiated reader has gained a significant understanding and appreciation for the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition of Hinduism. For this achievement alone Clooney's commentary can be highly recommended.

Clooney insists that his aims in this volume are modest. While he admits to being favorably disposed towards the texts he is commenting on, he maintains that his commentary is intended to be "pre-systematic and pre-dogmatic" and that he does not intend "to promote covertly or build the case for any definite theology of religions, or of the Christian and Śrīvaiṣṇava religions" (175). Still, theological and even dogmatic commitments cannot be avoided in the kinds of recommendations and suggestions that Clooney puts forward.

The first, and more modest, theological claim Clooney makes is that an appreciative reading of the Hindu mantras by a Christian can prompt and provoke a Christian reader to appreciate and assimilate the *Christian* textual and theological tradition more fully. In other words, after reflecting on the truths present in the Hindu mantras, the Christian reader can return to the text of the New Testament and to Christian belief with new insight and conviction. The mantras then become "a mirror in which we see ourselves" (63). This perspective is present in many of Clooney's "reflections" and is sharply contoured in the comparison Clooney makes between the respective mantras and certain "parallel" or "similar" texts in the New Testament. For example, he places the Tiru Mantra in juxtaposition with the phrase "Abba, Father," and suggests that a dialectical reading can help the understanding of both traditions, leading the Christian reader to a greater appropriation of this central New Testament text (69–72). Grounded in the considerable "theological and spiritual common ground" (157) between the two traditions, this comparative and appreciative reading of parallel texts has much to commend it. By seeing how a Hindu prays, and by recognizing the qualities and attributes of God that the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition acknowledges, the Christian can return to his/her own tradition with renewed understanding and appreciation for engaging Christian prayer.

A second and more radical step that Clooney explores is whether a Christian can actually *pray* the mantras in some fashion. Here he is careful and normally suggestive, but it is clear by the end that he wants to see this as a possible and potential result of interreligious commentary. Yet, it is difficult to see that Christian praying of the Hindu mantras can be justified from a Christian perspective (which Clooney adopts throughout). Clooney consistently makes the distinction between the "universal

meanings” that are embedded in the Hindu mantras and the “specific” divine persons that are identified (e.g. Nārāyaṇa and his consort, Śrī). It is the former that allows the Christian reader to recognize similarities between Hindu and Christian beliefs and gain significant insights; it is the latter that would seem to preclude *praying* the mantras as Christians.

Clooney himself acknowledges that “Śrīvaiṣṇava are no more pleased with ‘God in general’ than most Christians are” (104). But one cannot pray to God in general; one cannot pray to shared divine attributes; one can only pray to a specific God. Regarding the Dvaya Mantra, Clooney says that “faith is required” to engage the spiritual power of the Mantra, and that “of course we must determine what degree of faith in the Mantra is possible for the Christian” (117). But faith must of necessity be directed to a *specific* God, not a universal meaning. How can one who is a Christian by confession put faith in a Mantra directed specifically to another God? To “engage in the full surrender intended by the Mantra as a Śrīvaiṣṇava confession of faith” is not just a “daunting level of involvement” (141), as if it were a matter of daring and courage; the problem lies at the level of truth and of the specificity of the God to whom one makes surrender. In the same way, for a Christian it is not “considerably more demanding to say that Nārāyaṇa is the divine person upon whom all depends” (179); it is simply inconceivable, and would seem to preclude praying a prayer directed to Nārāyaṇa.

Clooney claims that he is not proposing a fully-fledged theology of religions, and this is true enough. But he clearly does want to advance, especially in the closing pages, significant elements of a theology of religions that is, for example, open to praying (in some sense) the prayers of another religious tradition, and that is ready to concede that whether the two traditions “are equal in inspiration, revelation, the presence of God” are “questions that can be left open, until more interreligious commentarial work has been done” (184). But given the specificity in each tradition regarding the personal identity of who God is, it is difficult to see how Christians can “utter the Mantras with a certain reverence and understanding, even if incompletely and with reservations” (191). And given that Christian conviction holds Christ is personally and specifically “the way, the truth, and the life” to whom they have access in the Holy Spirit, it is difficult to see why Christians would wish to pray with the mantras at all.

N V

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Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom: Engagements with the Theology of David Novak by Matthew Levering (London: Continuum, 2010), xiv + 204 pp.

THIS IS a welcome book. As the title indicates, it is an engagement with the theology of David Novak, Professor of Religion and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. That Novak is a religious Jew whose work in Jewish law, theology, and ethics leads the field, and that Levering is a deeply committed Catholic theologian also at the forefront of his field, makes this book all the more interesting and engaging. In effect the book becomes something of a test case—and, I will suggest, a model—for Jewish-Christian dialogue. Particularly noteworthy is Levering's ability to use and integrate Novak's (Jewish) work for his own (Christian) purposes without being patronizing. As Novak himself mentions in his foreword to the book, Levering's contribution is a "sincerely patient effort to learn something important *from* my work *for* his own theological purposes rather than trying to either judge my work by his own religious certitude or simply compare it *with* his own theology" (ix).

The book is structured around five main topics: Supersessionism and Messianic Judaism (chapter 1); Providence and Theonomy (chapter 2); The Image of God (chapter 3); Natural Law and Noahide Law (chapter 4); Election and the Life of Wisdom (chapter 5). Each chapter provides a careful, in-depth account of Novak's thinking, and Levering often engages Novak's work in dialogue either with Thomas Aquinas or with Christian theology more generally. Levering's detailed descriptions of Novak's work are presented in an engaging manner. At times readers are given a clearer view of Novak's ideas than they might gain through reading Novak's work itself. This is a significant accomplishment, yet the more one reads the clearer it becomes that no one will want to read Levering in lieu of Novak. We have, therefore, something of a primer to Novak's work.

To give the reader a taste of the book's content, in this short review I will focus on the first chapter of the book before commenting more briefly on the others. This first chapter, which sets the stage for those that follow and is particularly important for Jewish-Christian dialogue, will undoubtedly interest readers, if only because of its controversial nature: "Supersessionism and Messianic Judaism." The very word "supersessionism"—the idea that Christianity in some way "supersedes" Judaism—raises a host of serious historical and theological issues. Add the topic of Messianic Judaism (or Jewish Christianity), and the reader will sense the thinness of the theological ice on every page. For many scholars it is tempting to sidestep or ignore the latter issue in particular because it

raises so many difficulties. However, as Levering makes clear, engaging the question of modern-day Messianic Judaism is (quoting Markus Bockmuehl) “crucial for any further substantive progress in contemporary Jewish-Christian understanding” (13).

Levering begins the chapter by detailing Novak’s position that supersessionism is inherent to Christianity and therefore cannot be entirely excised. Levering does so by revisiting Novak’s fundamental question: if Christianity does not understand itself as in some ways improving upon or going beyond Judaism, that is, in some sense superseding it, why should Christians not become Jews? (16). Therefore, the main issue is not that supersessionism exists but how it presents itself. As Levering shows, for Novak the question is to what extent Christian supersessionism denigrates and condemns Judaism. We have in Novak’s work therefore a plea for a “mild supersessionism,” that is, one that respects past and present-day Judaism as a living religion in relationship to YHWH, the Lord God, even while Christians will perceive that religion as deficient. To be sure, Novak makes clear that for Jews who are true to their identity and self-understanding, Christian faith will be perceived as excessive. Thus, as Levering outlines, in Novak’s view Christianity might be accepted as “a valid gentile relationship with the Lord God,” but for Jews it is still “in many ways a grave distortion of the Torah” (15). Therefore, the two groups will always be “‘strangers’ at the deepest theological level” (16) whose “communal identities are mutually exclusive here and now” (141, n. 21).

The reader will notice that for Novak Christianity is a valid way for *gentiles* to be in a relationship with Israel’s God. This in turn broaches the difficult question of Messianic Judaism, that is, Jews who are Christians. With this topic Levering now shifts the discussion of the chapter and makes Novak’s position clear: “combining Torah observance according to the practice of Judaism, with faith in Christ Jesus and the practice of the Christian sacraments” is not possible (23). Key here is the development of Christian doctrine; the combination might have been possible in the first century, but since the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, a Jew cannot, in good faith, believe in a divine Jesus as the messiah. To do so would be a sin. As Novak states, such persons are still Jews, “but they are no longer practicing a religion Jews regard as part of Judaism” (25). They have become apostates, excluded from communion with normative Judaism.

Having outlined the position of Novak, Levering moves to discuss the problem from a Christian perspective, and it is here (as in subsequent chapters) that Levering shines in his ability to synthesize Novak’s scholarship and to appropriate it when possible for his own theology. Levering begins by asking whether Torah-observant Jews who identify Jesus as

messiah should be understood as Christians. Important here is how Torah observance relates to Rabbinic Judaism, for it is clear that for Jews observing the Torah is not simply a matter of consulting the books of Moses. To simplify Levering's position: he concludes that for a Jew to accept Jesus as the messiah (and worship him as the second Person of the Trinity, partaking in the sacraments), and yet to practice Judaism according to Rabbinic Judaism is not possible, since Rabbinic Judaism has ruled that worship of Jesus as God incarnate is not permitted. In effect, if Christianity accepts such Messianic Judaism as a legitimate form of Christianity, it is effectively saying "that Christians not only understand Israel's Messiah better—mild supersessionism—but also that Christians . . . understand Rabbinic Judaism" better as well (26).

This is but a taste of the book, and equally important are the remaining chapters. The second, "Providence and Theonomy," not only engages Novak's thinking on "theonomous morality" but also examines Maimonides' treatment of providence. Both are explored in dialogue with John Paul II and his important idea that "understanding what it means to be human requires recovering a God-centered account of human life, marked by trust in providence" (51). Levering suggests that all three thinkers "support and enrich each other" (47). The third chapter, "The Image of God," shows how Novak's insights can enhance Aquinas's reading of the *imago Dei*. Chapter four, "Natural Law and Noahide Law," exposes a key difference between Novak and Aquinas; for Novak, natural law is found in the pre-Sinai state, something Israel fulfilled as a prerequisite to receiving the fuller Torah; for Aquinas, "it seems more promising to look for natural law precepts *within* the Torah . . ." (97). The final chapter, "Election and the Life of Wisdom," surveys the positions of Harold Bloom and Leon Kass before summarizing Novak's work, essentially forming something of a synopsis of Novak's book *The Election of Israel: The Idea of the Chosen People* (Cambridge University Press, 1995). Here Levering discusses Novak's idea that God's election of Israel is bound up with a hope for the larger world: in the final redemption "a universal reconciliation . . . takes place in and through the particularity . . . of 'God's redemption of Israel'" (128).

Overall, the book is clear, well laid out, and engaging. Perhaps some minor criticisms would be the occasional need for a clearer and slightly more linear presentation (for example, in chapter 3) and the tendency, in a few places, toward verbosity. The editorial decision to use endnotes rather than footnotes earns more serious criticism. Levering's notes are full of important material and the attentive reader will forever be turning to the back of the book to locate an important detail. These notes make up about a third of the book's main content.

It has often been said that true dialogue can take place only if both parties are willing to end up somewhere other than where they first began. If this is true, I cannot help but feel that Levering models true dialogue in the book, in that he is one who is clearly learning from his dialogue partner. As I noted above, Novak discusses this in his foreword, and he also rightly points out that Levering does this in a manner that is not disputational, comparative, or syncretistic (ix). Levering's interest in learning is never at the cost of his own tradition, and he has no interest in diluting either his own or Novak's faith claims, finding the lowest common denominator, or minimizing the things on which Jews and Christians differ.

At the conclusion of the book, Levering highlights Novak's profound idea that Jewish-Christian dialogue might in fact be one way of bringing hope to the larger world. Key here is that both groups start from the point of view that they will indeed meet in the "all-mysterious end" (131) and that their dialogue can point to the fact that hope for the world's survival is ultimately bound up in a hope for its final redemption. For both authors this idea is more than mere pious sentiment or wishful thinking, and it is clear that this book is truly a living example of this hope. The dialogue here is rich, respectful, and true to each tradition. The theology is fruitful and engaging. It is a fine example of Jewish-Christian dialogue and the reader will learn much, not only about the topics covered, but also about how two human beings, though separated by their identities as Jew and Christian, can learn from and enrich the other. On that score, I cannot recommend this book highly enough. NV

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The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism by Edward Feser (*South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2008*), xi + 299 pp.

HOW BEST to respond to "the new atheism" is not obvious. The blest people who haven't heard of it can ignore it, and those who have heard of it only in passing can profitably do the same. For those who have caught the bug, however, or who care about others who have caught it, ignoring the problem isn't enough. For these I can think of three solutions: (1) begin a long and deep education in the *philosophia perennis* and in Catholic theology; (2) find some intelligent, wise, and very well-read person to help you see the limits of the new atheistic critiques; (3) find a book that explains enough about authentic philosophy and intellectual

history to refute the new atheism's core claims. The last solution, for most people, will be the most practical. And for these the book of choice must be Edward Feser's *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism*. The book is not perfect, but it is still superb.

The gist of the latest rash of atheist books is that modern materialistic science has made belief in God intellectually untenable. Since all smart people are now atheists, it is said, fatuous superstitions like faith and traditional morality are revealed as no better than a belief in elves and fairies. This leads, in Feser's words, to "the condescending assumption that belief in God could only be the product of wishful thinking, stupidity, ignorance, or intellectual dishonesty." To refute this assumption Feser provides a condensed and abridged education in pre-modern philosophy and in the foundations of "scientific" secularist materialism. Feser's overall point is that, contrary to what the new atheists say, "belief in the existence of God and the falsity of materialism" rests, at least in the traditional Western religious understanding, "firmly and squarely on *reason*, not 'faith'."

Feser works out his refutation in six chapters. Except for the first, introductory chapter, each of these runs more than forty pages, plus some long endnotes. The introduction, "Bad Religion," outlines the work of the new atheists and points us to the intellectual tradition they ignore, the *philosophia perennis*. Here Feser names Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennet, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens as targets, but his argument applies to others as well. Observing that most great Western scientists have also been monotheists, he argues that the new atheists have failed to face the philosophical issues involved in an adequately reasoned dispute about God. Examining these issues forces us to see facile materialism for what it is: "when one seriously comes to understand the classical philosophical tradition represented by Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas . . . one learns just how contingent and open to question are the various modern, and typically 'naturalistic,' philosophical assumptions that most contemporary thinkers (and certainly most secularists) simply take for granted without rational argument." Presenting that classical tradition and those rational arguments, or many of them, is the work of the rest of Feser's book.

Chapter 2, "Greeks Bearing Gifts," teaches the reader about the core ideas of realism, nominalism, conceptualism, the four causes, hylomorphism, and act and potency. These are presented in a narrative running from Thales through Aristotle, with cogent, accessible arguments all along to keep any educated reader on top of these basic claims and insights. Chapter 3, "Getting Medieval," takes us to the question of God's existence as treated by St. Thomas Aquinas in the five ways (though all five are not treated in detail). Feser's goal here is to show theism's basis in

reason itself. The fourth chapter, "Scholastic Aptitude," continues into a broadly classical account of the soul, natural law, evil, and the possibility of religious faith. In Chapter 5, "Descent of the Modernists," Feser first presents something akin to A. E. Burtt's *Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, explaining how modern priorities in experimental science and morals led to an abandonment of the older tradition. He then describes how and why the "universal acid" of modern philosophy ate away at confidence in reason, at the awareness of induction's limitations, and at reasonable accounts of personal identity, free will, natural rights, and natural law.

On the whole, chapters two through five are superb, an excellent condensed introduction to what the classically minded recognize as some of philosophy's most crucial lessons. Here Feser is clear, cogent, a fluent writer, and an excellent teacher. When it comes to discussing the Christian faith, however, Feser is less helpful. From the very beginning of *The Last Superstition* there is ambiguity in his seemingly interchangeable references to faith, belief, and the view that God exists. When faith is briefly discussed as a supernatural gift on page 165, the reader is told that "[f]rom the point of view of Christian theology, at least, whatever reasons might lead us to belief in God and in what He has revealed, divine grace, acting in the interests of our salvation, is its ultimate cause." In this context it would have been profitable to distinguish (1) between what can be known by unaided reason and what can be known by faith, and (2) between what can be known by faith or reason and what can be known only by faith. It is true that grace can bring us to the rational conclusion that God exists, but it is worth stressing that this conclusion can also be reached by unaided reason. To believe both "in God and in what He has revealed" is indeed the work of grace, but Feser's treatment of these matters is hurried and unduly focused on faith as the reasoned acceptance of religious authority. According to Feser, "reason tells you to have faith in what Christ teaches, because He is divine. And that is at bottom what faith is from the point of view of traditional Christian theology" (p. 157). This kind of faith is a fine thing, but it does need to be compared with and distinguished from the supernatural virtue. Feser's quick remarks on grace and faith would have been better omitted, and the book left entirely philosophical.

The final chapter of *The Last Superstition*, "Aristotle's Revenge," treats materialism's incoherence and the scientific community's own discontent with its anti-metaphysical heritage. Modern empirical science, it turns out, cannot do without appeals to causality, teleology, and undetermined human thought. Here Feser's knowledge of Hume shines particularly, and helps lead the reader to see how the new atheists' materialism is neither

new, nor profound, nor representative of the latest physical science. Feser meets his goal of refuting the new atheism in its own terms, convincingly and with panache.

There is no book, to my knowledge, that comes anywhere close to accomplishing everything that Edward Feser does in this timely work. Feser's palpable anger toward the new atheists will not be every reader's cup of tea, nor will all his popular and political references be as effective when *The Last Superstition* is read a decade or two from now. For the ordinarily educated adult of the present, however, this text stands alone: there is no better place to begin understanding what is fundamentally wrong and misleading in the new atheism. Cautions are in order for Catholic readers, who might come away with an inadequate view of grace and supernatural faith, or who might be upset by one or two lapses into coarse language, but otherwise *The Last Superstition* is pure gold. This marvelous refutation of the new atheism is appropriate for undergraduate and adult education, could be very useful for seminary-level courses on atheism or the philosophy of God, and merits a place in public libraries and in higher-education collections of philosophy, theology, apologetics, and intellectual history. N V

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“In the Beginning . . .” A Theology of the Body by Eduardo J. Echeverria (*Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publishers, 2011*), xxvii + 339 pp.

IN THE very last homily of Blessed John Paul II's sublime treatise on the theology of the body, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, he states that he is responding to an appeal of the 1980 Synod of Bishops on the Family “to work out more completely the biblical and personalistic aspects of the doctrine contained in *Humanae Vitae*, namely the inseparability of the unitive and procreative dimensions of conjugal intercourse.” It is important to keep this in mind in considering Eduardo J. Echeverria's fine book “*In the Beginning . . .*” *A Theology of the Body*, in which he seeks philosophical and theological principles in the pope's magnum opus for counteracting erroneous views on homosexuality. While John Paul II's main orientation is to present a compelling vision of the Church's teaching on marriage, procreation, and sexuality, Echeverria's primary focus is to draw on this vision to illuminate the grave distortion of homosexuality, which, itself, flows from the separation of what is intrinsically inseparable.

Echeverria goes about his task (1) by showing the defects of biblical scholars, theologians, and philosophers who call on their disciplines to justify homosexuality, and (2) by demonstrating the validity of John Paul II's methodology and the correctness of his anthropology, which provides the principles for invalidating this departure from Magisterial teaching. He omits—and it may have been too much to ask—showing how *Man and Woman* affirms in a radical way the personhood of the homosexually oriented person, and the chaste communion based on that personhood. My review will treat all three of these aspects, the primary emphasis being laid on (1) and (2), since it is here that Echeverria has provided an indispensable analysis of both incorrect and correct methodology and anthropology.

From the time of the 1977 publication of the Catholic Theology Society of America's *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought*, we have become familiar with attempts to read into biblical texts, justification for deviations from received Catholic teaching on marriage and sexuality. These attempts have become more sophisticated in the ensuing decades, in parallel with the increasing acceptance in secular society of the "normalcy" of homosexuality and homosexual "marriage." An equally sophisticated response to such biblical hermeneutics was called for. By giving full value to the arguments of the leading revisionists, the first of whom is Luke Timothy Johnson, and carefully engaging them, Echeverria succeeds in demolishing their arguments step by step. He summarizes at the outset his indictment. Johnson's revisionism, ascribing to experience an alternative authority to Scripture, inevitably leads to "a doctrinal dismissal of the orthodox doctrine of objective revelation; it confuses objective revelation with the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, that enables us to grasp the full meaning of that revelation, and it denies the existence of fundamental revealed moral truths" (2, 3).

In claiming authority for contemporary cultural experience, Johnson cites the familiar case of slavery; Echeverria refutes his argument by stating that there is no mandate for slavery in the Bible and no penalty for releasing slaves. Slave traders are to be put to death and refuge is to be given to runaway slaves (Dt 23:16–17). For the Israelites, freedom from their slavery in Egypt as a fundamental biblical message influenced Deuteronomy's discouragement of slavery. By contrast there is a scriptural mandate for confining intercourse to heterosexual couples. In other words, over time there is a softening on slavery but a hardening on homosexual acts. As to personal experience, in an attempt to validate "the theological implications of millions of stories of believers," namely gays, as a source of authority, Johnson points to the analogy of admitting the Gentiles into the Church. Again Echeverria responds there is a warrant

for this in the Old Testament but none for homosexual acts (12). To the yet more extensive claim that the way the New Testament came into being over time supports a doctrine of continuing revelation from experience, Echeverria points out that Johnson assumes the post-apostolic community to be the same as the apostolic, denying that objective revelation, expressing the words and deeds of God, closed with the death of the last apostle.

In this methodical way, Echeverria takes apart the arguments of the dissenters. At the base of Johnson's revisionism is the effort to replace the canonicity of Scripture, the sacred Tradition, and the role of the Magisterium in interpreting Scripture with the authority of private interpretation and experience. Echeverria gives a comprehensive account, based on *Dei Verbum*, of the relation of biblical revelation and authority and the proper role of Tradition, which encompasses "the way of life, and faith of the whole Church—the institutions, liturgy, sacraments, councils, creeds, catechisms, and practices as well as the supreme rule of faith, which is the Holy Scripture" (43). The Magisterium in interpreting Scripture "must be a servant and not the master of the word of God" (45), and its grace is one of assistance or discernment, not inspiration. Above all, it acknowledges what is in Scripture and it does not create (48). He goes on to elaborate the difference between objective revelation and its subjective illumination in the person; he gives priority to the objective, the normative authority of Scripture, and the nature of Scripture's inerrancy.

Chapter Two, "Catholic Biblical Hermeneutics and Ethics," provides a masterly review, again based on *Dei Verbum*, of the Church's teaching on Catholic hermeneutical principles. Echeverria cites three principles with particular relation to sexuality: (1) the teaching of Scripture as a whole on the meaning of the body-person, the moral life, sex and marriage; (2) Christ as the overarching interpretive key for unlocking the meaning of the Law; and (3) the unity of historical and theological exegesis. Echeverria identifies "core values," one of which is the limitation of sexual intercourse to male and female. In the next chapter he moves to a more in-depth analysis of the link between experience and revelation, since Johnson makes personal experience the ultimate arbiter, claiming that it is offensive to God's creation to say a gay person is disordered. (More will be said about this assertion in the latter part of this review). Here Echeverria (a convert to Catholicism) draws on his earlier background in the Dutch Reformed Church. He quotes Calvinist Herman Bavinck, "revelation precedes, and is experienced in, faith," as meaning that the content of revelation can never be subordinated to experience (124). Of course, as Aidan Nichols says, "we can and must vindicate the Church's dogma

in our own experience.” But that is very different from privileging experience over Scripture and Tradition, as, for example, Echeverria asserts that Margaret Farley and others do.

Homosexual acts are acts of the body. In the chapter entitled “The Phenomenology of the Body,” Echeverria begins to construct from Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II’s philosophical and theological anthropology cogent arguments to dismiss any justification for homosexual acts at the objective level of the body, at the same time, giving due place to “lived experience” in an adequate anthropology. A perceptive student of Karol Wojtyła’s *The Acting Person* and philosophical essays will recognize the fine summary Echeverria makes here of the future pope’s use of phenomenology as a method, grounded in a metaphysics of being, to illuminate the experience of the acting subject. Echeverria is concerned to show here how “the reality of a human being . . . is not constituted by consciousness but instead constitutes it” (170–71). That reality is a concrete unity of body and soul. Consciousness, which accompanies action, enables the person to experience himself as the author of his acts, when he integrates what happens in him at the somato-vegetative level with what he chooses to do. Because of the unity of body and soul, the body is personal and can become the author of truly human acts, which fulfill him.

As he outlines the familiar triadic structure of John Paul II’s theological anthropology in *Man and Woman He Made Them*—original solitude, original unity, and original nakedness—calling it the “deep substratum of a theology of the body” (198), Echeverria wants to emphasize that union can be expressed only in the body. The subject of the act in marital sexual intercourse, two in one flesh, is the male and female as a bodily unity. This “is absolutely fundamental for refuting the claim, that ethical criteria alone, rather than the bodies in a same-sex relationship, are the morally decisive factor” (196). Furthermore, through the generative act there is a sublation of the body to a higher level in a procreative partnership with the Creator. Key to Echeverria’s reading of John Paul II’s theology of the body is the recognition that the marital bond is grounded in both creation and the Church’s sacramental theology (218–19). In other words, the affirmation of homosexual acts denies the created structure of the universe and the cosmic dimensions of the redemption of the body. “In particular, the antithesis between the Gospel and anti-Gospel is felt in the spousal meaning of the body” (226). Here, too, he is drawing on the resources of Dutch Reformed Christianity, especially Herman Dooyeweerd, for whom the doctrine of creation and the healing power of salvation in Jesus Christ are central (xviii). A homosexual orientation, even if partially innate (which has not been proven by science), would be

a manifestation of the concupiscence arising from original sin and would thus be open to the healing power of redemptive grace. This perspective is further strengthened by Man's moving toward a new fulfillment in the eschaton, where human bodiliness will be constituted differently and there will be a new submission of the body to the spirit (238).

Finally in Chapter Six, Echeverria presents the Church's magisterial teaching on homosexuality, bringing out the distinction between homosexual acts and a homosexual orientation. The latter is not sinful, although, like infertility, it is objectively disordered. However, infertility in a couple differs from homosexuality in that a real bodily union ordered to procreation takes place, whereas same-sex acts are incapable of being reproductive and without the couple becoming one organism, expressing the total self gift of the "language of the body" such acts cannot effect the interpersonal unity essential to marriage. Echeverria would like to see greater clarity in the response of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to revisionist arguments here.

The final chapter, "*Caritas in Veritate*" has somewhat the appearance of an add-on and is the least satisfactory. The useful points it makes in outlining the Church's pastoral approach to the homosexual are: applying the law of gradualness but not the gradualness of the law in accepting the person where he is; the power of grace; chastity as an infused moral virtue; and the call to holiness through the forgiveness of sins. What Echeverria misses is the anthropology that John Paul II lays out in the theology of the body right "at the beginning" with his concept of original solitude. John Paul II makes the pivotal statement that Man, being constituted as a body, is even deeper than being male or female, although he is always either one or the other (*Man and Woman* 8:1). Being a body belongs to him first and foremost as a person, made in the image of God. This is the state that Pope Benedict XVI calls filiality, which must precede the spousal relation. John Paul II goes on to say that "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" means first a relation of brother and sister, so that a communion of persons is the deepest level of the man-woman relation, and conjugal union is one expression of it in historical time (*Man and Woman* 18:5). This is the true meaning of St. Paul's assertion, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free." Woman is called a "double solitude," a person before she is a spouse (*Man and Woman* 9:2). The homosexual commits the error of defining himself by his sexual orientation first. Chastity, which John Paul II calls a requirement of love, restores the integrity of the person and the communion of persons and applies as much in marriage as in the celibate state, a fundamental message of *Humanae Vitae*.

With this caveat, the book is a *tour de force* in its comprehensiveness, clarity, and contribution to the ongoing debate about homosexuality and so-called homosexual “marriage.” In searching for a response to the revisionist arguments of biblical scholars, theologians, and philosophers on homosexuality, Echeverria has, at the same time, provided an invaluable service in illuminating John Paul II’s own biblical, theological, and philosophical anthropology in the service of life and love. N V

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Rediscovering Aquinas and the Sacraments: Studies in Sacramental Theology edited by Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais (*Chicago/Mundelein: Hillenbrand Books, 2009*), vi + 143 pp.

THIS SMALL volume aims at giving students, scholars, and pastors a brief, accessible introduction to the content and scope of the sacramental theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. The book comprises nine chapters including a short introduction. It begins with an essay by the late Avery Cardinal Dulles on the Angelic Doctor’s theology of worship; it ends with an essay by Sr. Thomas Becker, O.P., on the role of *solemnitas* in the liturgy according to St. Thomas. Seven middle chapters, each written by a different scholar, give the reader an overview of the seven sacraments in the thought of St. Thomas. The introduction states that each chapter is meant to explore how each sacrament “causes in us a particular configuration to Christ through the Holy Spirit”; the hope is that the reader will come to see how St. Thomas can still help believers today understand the indispensable role the sacraments play in the life of faith. Obviously, the chapters cannot be exhaustive about every facet of the sacraments, but they do intend to open up “avenues for further reflection.” In general, the book succeeds in this goal, as many of the chapters take up aspects of Aquinas’s sacramental theology that are often underappreciated in other introductory books on the theology of the sacraments.

In the first essay, Dulles provides a survey of St. Thomas’s theology of worship organized under the headings of religion, the sacred, and the ecclesial. This organization allows his essay to function as something of an introduction to many of the topics treated in the other essays. With his customary comprehensive and succinct style, Dulles begins by treating the basic elements of the virtue of religion: what human creatures owe in gratitude to God, adoration, veneration, devotion, and prayer. He makes the reader aware of how St. Thomas’s theology of worship also includes

a consideration of the vices contrary to right worship: misdirected reverence, irreverence, superstition, and idolatry. These vices are not unknown today, and St. Thomas helps us to understand how corruptive they can be of right worship.

Dulles shows that St. Thomas's theology of worship is fully systematic, having precise definitions and distinctions. He guides the reader to see that although the Angelic Doctor's understanding of worship is primarily objective, emphasizing the reality and initiative of God, it cannot be understood correctly without seeing how it includes the subjective element in man involving his sentiments and emotions. In order for the sacraments to be fruitful, the faith and devotion of the recipients is necessary.

Dulles observes that St. Thomas recognized three cultic realizations of the sacred: sacrifice, sacrament, and consecration. Sacrifice is the most fundamental and is the source of sacrament and consecration. After discussing the interior and exterior dimension of sacrifice and the sacrifices of the Old Law, Dulles discusses the true sacrifice of Christ. In his Passion and work on the cross, Christ superabundantly satisfied for the sins of all humanity and obtained graces that went far beyond what humanity lost through sin. What is so important in Dulles's presentation is that he points out how, in St. Thomas's sacramental theology, the sacraments utterly depend on the work of the love of Christ on the cross and his satisfaction for sin. This is particularly important today when so many postmodern sacramental theologies reduce Christ's sacrifice to a show or pantomime of God's love for the world. The efficacy of the sacraments is *ex action Christi* in the full sense of those words for St. Thomas.

Dulles argues that careful study of St. Thomas can be an important corrective to some unhealthy recent trends that give an exaggerated emphasis on the local community and self-expression. He remarks that St. Thomas's theology of worship is still for us today "a valuable resource for situating worship within a theocentric, Christological and ecclesial framework" (13).

Michael Dauphinais's essay "Christ and the Metaphysics of Baptism" demonstrates that St. Thomas's metaphysical presentation of baptism does not neglect the "experiential" in Christian life, as some postmodern sacramental theologies have alleged. On the contrary, the metaphysical analysis of St. Thomas, properly understood in view of the interior components of justification and character, provides an intrinsic relation between baptism and Christian life. The Christian life requires and depends upon the spiritual nature of the baptized together with the corresponding powers and activities. Aquinas shows how baptism permeates the entire life of the Christian. This attention to the metaphysical

does not entail individualism. The spiritual nature of the new creature has its cause only in the Passion of Christ. To be united to Him who is Head of the Body is to be united with his members. For St. Thomas the baptized individual exists only as a member of the Body of Christ. If one wants to speak of baptism and the experiential meaning of salvation, Dauphinais illustrates that St. Thomas is an important resource for showing the indispensability of metaphysical analysis.

Metaphysical distinctions are crucial for understanding how both God and a human minister can work together and how divine and human actions are not opposed to each other. Matthew Levering's essay—besides being a fine introduction to St. Thomas's theology of Orders—shows how the Angelic Doctor helps us to understand this reality.

Levering helps readers gain a sense of the rigorously metaphysical understanding of participation and instrumental causality that is central for Aquinas's sacramental theology. He points out that the *Supplementum* to the *Summa theologiae* begins with three objections against hierarchical authority on the grounds that such an authority is incompatible with the freedom and dignity of Christian life. Why not a hierarchy based exclusively on wisdom and love rather than a hierarchy of office? To help the reader grasp the issue, Levering puts the question in contemporary terms: should Mother Theresa have to receive the sacraments from a priest who is far less meritorious? Aquinas explains that Holy Orders in the Church, in contrast to the varying ranks of the angels in heaven, is not the expression of a higher grace or of one's merit. The sacraments, including Holy Orders, are not anthropological rites that communicate human merits. Rather, the sacrament of Holy Orders enables human beings to participate in the mysteries of the divine life, the holiness of God in Christ Jesus. In the Eucharist the instrumental purpose of Holy Orders is most clear. Priests consecrate the Eucharist not by their own power or even by the power of the Church but *in persona Christi*. The priest is able to effectively pronounce the words "This is my Body" through a distinctive, instrumental, spiritual power received from Christ. This is the character of Holy Orders that gives an ordained man a more active share in Christ's priesthood. What it enables is the sacramental action whereby the priest can give Christ's gift of the divine life to the Church. Here, of course, Levering touches on a point that not only is central to the thought of St. Thomas but is something that passed into the doctrine of the Church.

Levering makes the reader aware that failing to attend to metaphysics and to instrumental causality often leads to understandings of worship that are at odds with Catholic doctrine and practice—as we see in some postmodern sacramental theologies which present the spiritual power of

worship as subsisting primarily in the community of faith represented by a bishop or priest. Such a misunderstanding makes it hard to see what spiritual power and authority, if any, Christ passed down to the apostles and their successors.

Robert Miner shows that St. Thomas's theology of Confirmation can deepen our understanding of how this sacrament is a gift of spiritual maturity and strength. At a time when the public profession of faith in Christ is made more difficult in the face of cultures increasingly hostile to public expressions of faith, the Angelic Doctor's theology of the sacrament of the fullness of grace can instruct us in an important way. Why do we find it so difficult at times to confess Christ publicly? St. Thomas points out that because of the passions of fear and shame within us, we fear the consequences of boldly confessing Christ or we are ashamed to confess Him. Aquinas teaches that the grace of Confirmation bestows a spiritual strength by eradicating the very passions that keep us from freely confessing faith in Christ with all of its implications.

St. Thomas's explanation of the sacrament of confirmation can also help us today in another way. Students of sacramental theology are faced with the claim of some postmodern sacramental theologies which down-play or outright deny Christ's institution of the sacraments. St. Thomas helps us to see that a sacrament can be truly instituted by Christ even if we cannot detect a passage in Scripture where there is a clear explicit act of institution. He draws a distinction between two kinds of institution: "by exhibiting" it and "and by promising and sending it forth" at a later time. We can see this latter form of institution when Christ says in John 16:7: "But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Paraclete will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." Christ promises to send the fullness of grace, and Confirmation is the sacrament of the fullness of grace. We would be limiting the power of Christ if we thought that He instituted the sacrament only by the power of direct exhibition that we see, for example, in the institution of the Eucharist. This insight of St. Thomas establishes the possibility of Christ instituting not only the sacrament of Confirmation but other sacraments as well, which do not seem to have been instituted by the power of direct exhibition during the earthly life of Christ.

Bruce Marshall approaches the theology of the Eucharist from St. Thomas's statement that the Eucharist contains "the whole mystery of our salvation." This claim turns on a conception of the Eucharist as both a sacrament and a sacrifice. Marshall explores the reasons St. Thomas gives for understanding the Eucharist as a sacrifice. He shows that for St. Thomas the concept of "representation" is essential. Aquinas reasons that

because the Eucharist contains the body and blood of Christ offered for us, and because the power of the Passion of Christ is communicated to us through the Eucharist, then the sacramental representation of the sacrifice of Christ is a true sacrifice. The sacrifice of the Mass is one and the same with Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, albeit in a different mode. Marshall believes that St. Thomas can help us avoid false problems in Eucharistic theology by calling our attention to the fact that not only does our action in the Eucharist depend causally on Christ's action but our action is instrumentally included in his action as well. Therefore we are freed from thinking, as some persons did in the controversies of the Reformation, that we must somehow balance our action with that of Christ so that we do not somehow end up affirming that the Eucharist "improves" the sacrifice of Christ. Marshall argues that careful study of St. Thomas's theology of the Eucharist can help us identify a difficult problem: how the priestly act of Christ in the Eucharist can be one with Christ's priestly act on the cross. Marshall believes that this "mysterious coincidence" of past and present remains a difficult problem but that St. Thomas goes a long way toward instructing us about it.

Romanus Cessario's chapter on penance and reconciliation is different from the other chapters in two ways. First, it is a previously published essay, and second, it draws upon the theology of St. Thomas in the light of a document from the magisterium of Pope John Paul II, *Penance and Reconciliation*. Following this document, which teaches that the sacrament of penance is a "principle locus" where the baptized, through the working of the Holy Spirit, meet the reconciliation effected by the salvific death of Christ, Cessario stresses the joining together of the penitent's sorrow for sin and sacramental efficacy by way of unity with the redemptive suffering of Christ. He observes that St. Thomas's view of the sacramentality of penance "remains the most difficult feature of his entire sacramental theology" (70). St. Thomas understood the *sacramentum et res* as the sorrow of the penitent based on faith in the saving power of the mysteries of Christ. Therefore the penitent's renewed love for God, joined with the priest's action of absolution, brings the penitent to a renewed relationship with God.

Cessario recalls that the tradition understands contrition of heart, confession of the lips, and satisfaction of works as the three principle elements that compose the sacrament of penance. Satisfaction, in *Penance and Reconciliation*, and in the thought of St. Thomas for that matter, is the crown of the sacrament of penance. Satisfaction, or penance, completes the necessary elements of the sacrament and directs the penitent, now a forgiven sinner, to a renewed life of love and virtue. The

newly reconciled person is now ready to participate in everything that Christ achieved by his satisfaction. Cessario maintains that this explains why St. Thomas contended that penance restores not only justice but also friendship with God.

John F. Boyle traces the development of the theology of Extreme Unction, the anointing of the sick, in the thought of Aquinas. Boyle observes that St. Thomas has little to say about Extreme Unction in comparison with the other sacraments. What emerges from Boyle's penetrating essay is that what St. Thomas did have to say is very profound and precise.

St. Thomas agreed with his contemporary scholastics that extreme unction has to do with healing. He wanted to distinguish this sacrament from baptism and reconciliation; all three of these sacraments heal from sin. However, the key to St. Thomas's analysis is the analogical frame he used to analyze anointing of the sick. In the commentary on the *Sentences* the analogical frame for the sacraments is the movement of life (entrance, progression, departure). This allowed St. Thomas to distinguish Extreme Unction as the sacrament of departure and healing. The sacrament is special medicine for departing this life. It is spiritual medicine, signified by bodily anointing, because it is ordered to overcoming the weakness of mind that remains after sin has been forgiven and that leaves a person without the vigor for the life of grace and glory. In the *Summa contra Gentiles* the analogical frame for analyzing the sacrament changes from the movement of life to the spiritual life conforming to the corporeal life. Just as in the corporeal life there is not only growth and sustenance but illness for which we need medicine, so too in the spiritual life. However, in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, penance is also a medicine. St. Thomas made a neat distinction: penance is a spiritual medicine and extreme unction is both a spiritual and a corporeal medicine. Extreme unction is ordered to overcoming the weakness of the body that comes about because of sin, though it does not always lead to the healing of the body. It is also ordered, however, to the other remains of sin, such as the inclination to evil and the difficulty in pursuing the good. Anointing of the sick completes the healing that begins in penance. Where there is danger of death, there is an immediate need for the completion of the healing effects of penance and a need to be freed from the temporal punishments due to sin. A progressive clarification of the primary analogs of the reality of corporeal health in the thought of St. Thomas leads to a more profound understanding of the sacrament of extreme unction, which then further helps to distinguish it from the sacrament of penance.

Boyle points out that although St. Thomas did not write about extreme unction in the *Summa theologiae*, he did write there about the

seven sacraments in general in way that affects his theology of extreme unction. He reconsiders the relationship between the medicines of penance and extreme unction and introduces a new distinction between them: health and robustness of health. St. Thomas applies the whole range of bodily health above and beyond not being sick to the spiritual life. So, penance is ordered to spiritual health because it is medicine for the illness of sin and therefore restores spiritual health. Extreme unction is ordered to the robustness of spiritual life and is medicine against the remnants of sin that weaken spiritual health and impede a vigorous spiritual life.

In the chapter on marriage, Joseph Koterski notes the challenges involved in speaking about St. Thomas's theology of marriage because of the state of texts. We do not possess a statement of the Angelic Doctor's understanding of marriage in the *Summa theologiae* as we do for some of the other sacraments. We must rely on the materials from the commentary on the *Sentences* and the relevant chapters in the *Summa contra Gentiles* that were assembled by the disciples of St. Thomas for the *Supplementum*. Koterski takes up all of the available texts and limits himself to examining the duality of St. Thomas's approach to marriage through natural law and through sacramentality. The result is a presentation that identifies the core contributions of St. Thomas to understanding marriage both as a natural institution and as a sacrament.

Koterski argues that it is necessary to keep in mind two points concerning the historical context of Aquinas's theology of marriage. The first is the important development made during medieval scholasticism that sacraments are not just signs of sacred things but are signs that bring about the grace they signify. The second is the retrieval of Aristotle's natural philosophy, and St. Thomas's "ground-breaking work" in the realm of natural law. The Dominican saint was confident that human reason could discern the ends that God implanted in human nature. Human creatures can participate in providential reasoning about how to reach the ends for which they are created, and they can discern what actions are in accordance with attaining ends and what actions are not. Koterski observes that St. Thomas's theory of natural law, not surprisingly, played a role in his understanding of marriage. As a natural institution, marriage is designed by God so as to aid human beings in achieving the social end of the propagation of the species and to facilitate the process of the maturation of individual human persons. St. Thomas sees the natural institution of marriage as perfecting the person individually, socially, bodily, and spiritually.

Some theologians before Aquinas doubted that sacramental marriage could be counted as a cause of the grace it signified. If marriage was a sign of the union between Christ and the Church, it was hard to see marriage as causing what it signified. Obviously, marriage is not the cause of the unity

between Christ and the Church. Others wondered how marriage, as the other sacraments are, could be rooted in Christ's passion. St. Thomas responded to these difficulties from a Christological perspective by arguing that "although marriage is not conformed to Christ's Passion as regards pain, it is as regards charity, whereby he suffered for the Church, who was to be united to him as his spouse." To the problem of how marriage can cause the grace it signifies, St. Thomas acknowledges that marriage is a sign of the union between Christ and the Church, but it obviously does not bring this reality about. Rather, the grace that is brought about by what marriage signifies is the grace of the indissoluble bond of husband and wife. St. Thomas says, "Since then the union of husband and wife gives a sign of Christ and the Church, that which makes the sign must correspond to that whose sign it is. Now the union of Christ and the Church is a union of one to one to be held forever. . . . Necessarily then, matrimony as sacrament of the Church is a union of one man and one woman to be held indivisibly, and this is included in the faithfulness by which man and woman are bound together." Koterski explains that, for St. Thomas, Christ elevated marriage in the new covenant "as a way to represent the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church and to bring to spouses the graces of participation in this union" (112). Koterski also observes, rightly, that St. Thomas is able to integrate the understanding of marriage as a remedy for concupiscence by bringing it forward into the sacramentality of marriage. The *remedium* for concupiscence becomes incorporated "by the way in which it represents the Christ-Church union" (112). Koterski also notices how St. Thomas distinguishes between the phenomenon of shame and of that of guilt in a way that is not dissimilar to Pope John Paul II's consideration of the subject.

The last essay, "The Role of *Solemnitas* in the Liturgy According to Saint Thomas Aquinas," by Sister Thomas Aquinas Becker, O.P., examines an aspect of St. Thomas's theology of worship that is underappreciated and not always well represented in some sacramental theologies that purport to present medieval sacramental theology. Becker points out that St. Thomas's insistence on the need for "a certain solemnity in order to arouse devotion," necessary for a fruitful celebration of the sacraments, is based on his understanding of human nature. In his theology of worship Aquinas presents a certain framework for cultivating the dispositions appropriate for sacramental worship through the external means of solemnity. Becker makes a compelling case that the return of an authentic solemnity can be the remedy of certain desacralizing tendencies and the ensuing emptiness that sometimes afflict modern liturgies.

Students beginning the study of sacramental theology today face a host of postmodern sacramental theologies that neglect the metaphysical

or reject it altogether. In not a few of these recent sacramental theologies, the thought of St. Thomas is not well represented, especially metaphysically. One of the big strengths of this book is that the essays give the reader a good sense of the rigor of the metaphysical dimension in the sacramental theology of St. Thomas and by implication the necessity of such rigor for sacramental theology today. **N V**

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