

Book Reviews

Athanasius: A Theological Introduction by Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M. Cap. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), x + 150 pp.

OVER the past two decades, a number of important works on Athanasius in English have appeared, chief among them Khaled Anatolios's superb monograph (2004), as well as the studies of Duane Arnold (1991), T. D. Barnes (1993), David Brakke (1995; 1998) and Alvyn Pettersen (1995). Thomas Weinandy has now contributed to this body of literature a very fine theological (as its subtitle emphasizes) introduction to the Alexandrian bishop.

Weinandy, a Capuchin Franciscan and, since 2005, executive director for the Secretariat for Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, published in 2000 a thoughtful and historically informed discussion of the question of divine impassibility, *Does God Suffer?* (T&T Clark). His new book is another accessible, intelligent, and worthy volume, which offers the reader an overview of Athanasius's thought within the context of his full, if at times harried, ecclesiastical life. It is a frequent temptation for contemporary biographers and essayists to portray ancient Christians through the much later lens of post-Nietzschean will-to-power social theories, and in so doing to downplay as insignificant or simply to ignore the properly theological issues at stake. Weinandy is certainly shrewd enough to take into account the complex social and political context in which Athanasius's theological vision developed, but he rightly and more helpfully situates Athanasius and his thought within a liturgically shaped and ecclesially lived desire to communicate the mystery of the divine economy in a way faithful to the Scriptural witness and the sacramental experience of the Church.

In his introductory remarks, Weinandy considers four thematic premises that guide Athanasius's theology: the rationality of the Christian faith; the truth of the evangelical kerygma; the conviction that God, in Christ,

has acted within human history; and that the work of the Cross heals and restores creation to communion with God.

After a preliminary sketch of the details of Athanasius's life, in chapters 2 and 3 Weinandy treats the soteriological vision that informs and guides Athanasius's thought, through his analysis of the *Contra Gentes* and of the *De Incarnatione*: the former outlines fundamental Christian convictions about God and the world, in particular rational creatures, while the latter deals explicitly with the work of the Logos in restoring the created order to communion with the Creator (with emphasis on the fittingness of the Incarnation). Having established the soteriological foundations of Athanasius's thought, Weinandy turns in chapter 5 to Athanasius's Christology proper, where he discusses how Athanasius grappled with relating the genuine divinity and full humanity of the Incarnate Son. In particular, he is concerned with how Athanasius understood such an "incarnational becoming" in a way that is neither adoptionist (the Word coming to inhabit a man) nor what, for lack of a better term, might be called proto-Apollinarian, seeing the Word as the animating principle of a human body.

In the fourth chapter, Weinandy treats Athanasius's ascendancy as the principal interpreter of Nicaea and in the process its great defender. Here he discusses the various possibilities available to Arius, Athanasius, and their contemporaries for articulating the relation of Father and Son; he offers careful consideration of the central terminological minefields: *hypostasis*, *ousia*, *agēnetos*, *agēnnētos*, and *homoousios*.

The final chapters treat the Spirit (6) and the Christian life as configuration to Christ (7), the latter chapter concluding with Antony of Egypt, a "living illustration" of Athanasius's pastoral teaching in his *Festal Letters*. Weinandy, in the final chapter, discusses Athanasius's importance to and influence on the subsequent tradition. What emerges is the importance of understanding the divine Person of the Son as subject of the Incarnation as the condition of possibility for maintaining a proper understanding of Christ's full humanity: there is not, in Athanasius, an undue emphasis on the divinity at the expense of his humanity (a charge later leveled by critics against Cyril, for example). One is left to infer that Christologies constructed—to use the jargon of contemporary systematic theology—"from below" are at best problematic, in that they ultimately never ascend to become anything other than adoptionist or ebionite, as the man Jesus expresses or attains some kind of special relationship with God.

The strengths of this brief but very helpful introduction, appropriate for both undergraduates and graduate students, are its emphasis on the

comprehensive biblical vision that informs Athanasius's theology, its rightful emphasis on the guiding power of soteriology, and the useful way that Weinandy supports his analysis with ample textual evidence from Athanasius's works. His efforts further support the argument of Lewis Ayres (*Nicaea and its Legacy*, 2006) that the Christological and Trinitarian disputes were very much about the right reading and interpretation of Scripture; yet because of the way the discipline of biblical studies has not infrequently been construed in the past two centuries, modern students are apt to experience a kind of dissonance between what counts as biblical theology in their (almost exclusively academic) experience and what Athanasius and his contemporaries were about. Weinandy's analysis shows what this attention to Scripture looked like in the fourth century. The volume includes a select bibliography, as well as name and subject indices. **N V**

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The Word Has Dwelt Among Us by Guy Mansini, O.S.B. (*Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2008*), ix + 276 pp.

AN Associate Professor of Theology at Saint Meinrad School of Theology, Indiana, Father Guy Mansini presents here a remarkable collection of previously published essays in Christology/soteriology and ecclesiology/sacramental theology. Displayed in each essay is a methodological *via media* characterized by groundedness in the tradition, appreciation of doctrinal and theological development, and, indebted to theological wisdom, a properly critical appraisal of key twentieth-century theological proposals. These characteristics accomplish a discernible aim in the collection, namely, the modeling of a theology that keeps its eye trained on the divine mysteries, while employing "whatever is true" from things old and things new, so as to set its compass neither progressively nor conservatively but faithfully, waiting for the coming of the Lord.

The book falls into two parts. Part I addresses Christology and Soteriology. Although the essays are parts of a collection and so are not written as chapters of a single book, there is an intelligible order among them. The first two essays are both compact and profound. They bear rereading. The second essay explicitly calls for a Christology with a compass that is metaphysical-eschatological: "If there is but one history, moreover, a history of the whole, and if being does not so encompass history as to provide for an infinity of eternal recurrences, then history must be commensurate with being. Eschatological thought has to become metaphysical thought" (13).

This is to say that theology can settle neither for a purely historical, positive narration of facts nor for a simply philosophical articulation. Theology must be a *science* but of a *person* who is divine: a science of the Logos made flesh. This Logos made flesh displays the intelligibility of the Hebrew narratives, for he is the eschatological prophet; at the same time, this Logos displays the intelligibility of the world, raising the mind above Greek wisdom. Greek wisdom could fathom only entities within being, but the Logos is the author of being and Son of the Father, and the Father and Son, in their embrace, breathe out the Holy Spirit. The only thing to be regretted in this essay, as in a number of the essays of Part I, is its compactness. On the other hand, one could consider this trait evidence of a monastic austerity that would rather the reader follow the vector of Wisdom than mince words.

The three essays explicitly treating either Rahner or von Balthasar or both (chapters 3, 4, and 7) are exemplary deployments of sapiential theology in assessment of recent theological proposals. Chapter 3 aims to uncover the root of two key Rahnerian claims—that only the Logos can become incarnate and that only human nature can be that which the Logos assumes—in the theory that God exercises “quasi-formal causality” in his self-communication to the creature. Mansini lets Lonergan criticize this root by way of Lonergan’s (yet to be published) critique of Maurice de la Taille’s distinction between act and actuation. Since Rahner’s hypothesis relies on this distinction, if the distinction cannot hold, there is no substance to Rahner’s subtle “quasi.” Even if one does not agree that all of Rahner’s arguments for the two exclusive claims are rooted in the theory of “quasi-formal causality,” one can appreciate Mansini’s criticism that whereas Rahner argues for “necessary reasons” in the manner of Anselm (as Anselm was read for many centuries), Thomas and others argue using the humble category, the *conveniens*. Paradoxically, it is precisely theologians utilizing the category *conveniens* who, while appreciating the divine power for sundry (infinite) arrangements of wisdom, attend to salvation *history* as it has unfolded.

According to Mansini, Rahner displays a similar inattentiveness to history in his reading of the efficacy of the Cross (chapter 7). For Rahner, the satisfaction tradition begun (so Rahner claims) with Anselm portrays, wittingly or no, the change of an angry God into a benevolent God. Since, however, God cannot change, this tradition must be faulty. Mansini’s diagnosis targets the faulty logic: “It is a mistake to suppose that if the Cross does not change God, it changes nothing” (109). What changes involves the economic order, the availability of grace. Mansini lets von Balthasar, who is entirely rooted in the dramatic events of salva-

tion history, criticize Rahner on this count. However, von Balthasar seems to have left behind what was wise in Greek wisdom, namely, the immutability of the divine persons *qua* divine (chapter 4). For von Balthasar, the divine persons are engaged in an everlasting (eternal?) enrichment by way of exchanges of Trinitarian freedom. Because of this, von Balthasar proposes, it is no threat to the divinity if the Incarnation works a change in those immanent relationships (chapters 4 and 7), because that change actualizes one of the infinite possibilities of the divine persons that could have been actualized without the Incarnation but that in fact has been actualized in the economy. Mansini lets Rahner (in his essay “The One Christ,” which is, Mansini astutely notes, in some tension with Rahner’s essay “The Theology of the Symbol” and its notion of “change in the other”) criticize von Balthasar on this count.

One wishes the keen analysis in chapter 4 were pressed further: If *qua* divine each divine person is “in every way” identical with the divine nature (*ST* I, q. 28, a. 2), how could the divine essence remain unchanged (von Balthasar’s claim) while the persons *qua* divine *grow* by way of mutual exchanges of love? At the same time, one wishes that the praise uniquely given to von Balthasar in chapter 7 had been elaborated. Mansini rightly claims that von Balthasar’s theologically fruitful *novum* is his appreciation of the cry of abandonment: “This contribution is a lot, and cannot be adequately appreciated here” (112). A development of this claim could prepare a sapiential way forward in the ongoing discussion between Thomists and Balthasarians. Still, close attention to Mansini’s fine (though slightly choppy) essay on monastic satisfaction theory in Benedict and Anselm allows one to discern Balthasarian harmonics therein, for it was von Balthasar who stressed the theology of the saints, especially reflection on the dark nights.

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Part II of the book explores issues in Ecclesiology and Sacramental Theology. Chapter 8, the first essay in this part, exposes the difficulties in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s teaching that the universal Church is “ontologically and temporally” prior to the particular church (not simply to be identified with the local church). After exposing these difficulties, the essay displays the intelligibility of the claim. The universal Church was certainly prior in both ways in its initial constitution at Pentecost, for although the one Church was local (in Jerusalem) it was simply universal and not particular. More relevant for a contemporary ecclesiology, the universal Church, although composed of particular churches, can be identified, in its ecclesiological plenitude, in a

way other than a simple pointing to the set of particular churches. How? In the person of the successor of Peter, who, enjoying the supreme power, can speak for the universal Church and can bind it.

The remaining essays treat holy orders, both episcopal and priestly. Chapter 9 is a discussion of the roots of the male-only priesthood in the (implicit) intention of our Lord. This essay is also quite compact, and its argument could be drawn out in more detail. However, as the author suggests at the end, the merit of the essay is “in the reminder of the relevance of the theorem of the Lord’s immediate knowledge of the divine essence, and perhaps, also, of the nature of doctrinal development” (141). Both of these are indeed among its merits, and each of them constitutes part of the author’s acknowledged debt to his mentor, Bernard Lonergan. The claim of an *implicit* intention of our Lord—as opposed either to a total dismissal of any intention or to a merely *virtual* intention—may seem farfetched to those who rest the theological endeavor simply in historical-critical “data.” It seems to me that Mansini would wish to rest the endeavor, rather, in a properly *theological* exegesis of Scripture, which, as Pope Benedict has indicated (October 14, 2008), simply following *Dei Verbum* (§12) and *Divino afflante Spiritu* (§§23–25), must utilize both the historical-critical method and also the rule of faith, the canonical unity of the Bible, and the analogy of faith. As do other essays, this essay bears the marks, albeit in adumbrated form, of a theology that strives for systematic understanding (what Lonergan calls the “in itself prior”), not content simply with the data of positive theology, whether historical theology or historical-critical biblical studies. Although the latter are fundamentally necessary for the overall theological project, of themselves they yield only insights into relative points of view and thus constitute the materials for systematic reflection. Yet again, systematic reflection is hardly constituted by an “essentialist” or “abstract” consideration; it is constituted by a gaze, in the light of faith, into the Divine Mysteries. Thus again, while the argument in favor of a Dominical intention of an all-male priesthood could be further developed, the adumbrated theological modeling is impressive.

The final four essays are more tightly ordered together, one anticipating another. The overall theme is highly fruitful: According to the teachings of Vatican II, the priest and bishop enjoy, by their ordination, a consecration to sanctify, to preach, and to rule. These three *munera* are the result of that ordination; thus, the older theology that seemed content with identifying the chief gift of ordination, character, with the power of sanctifying, is further developed. Still, although all three *munera* are grounded in ordination, they are not simply on a par with one another. The one indelible power is that of sanctifying, while the powers of

preaching and ruling depend upon the faith, prudence, and spiritual gifts of the hierarch. That is, to preach and to rule rightly and constructively for the building up of the Mystical Body, both bishops and priests must be men of prayer, united with the Vicar of Christ. If they are not men of prayer united with the Vicar of Christ, they can neither teach nor rule (179). A sober reminder indeed.

More positively, Mansini demonstrates that Vatican II, in its teachings on the priest, does not simply juxtapose two “camps.” Sundry are the theologians who read not just the teachings on the priest in this way but all or most of the documents of the council this way. Mansini, appealing to the providential design of the Holy Spirit—who, let it be granted, worked with what may be described as two really different “camps”—insists that Vatican II presents a “durable synthesis” on the nature of the priesthood. The entire life of the priest is cast in terms of the sanctifying image which was once restricted simply to the service at the altar. That service is indeed the central act of the priest, but that act is integrally involved in preaching and ruling, in building up the Body. The end to which all are called is spiritual worship, the love of God above all things and the love of neighbor. To that end the sacraments are ordered, and yet without the sacraments, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice, the end is not attained (Mansini is speaking of the *ordinary* order of God’s dispensation). The people attain their end only because God has looked with favor upon his people, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, who in turn sent out apostles, who in turn (following his implicit intention, marked by his explicit intention to have a Church on earth for the ages) constituted successors (bishops) and helpers (priests). Thus, the people attain this end because grace comes down from the Father of lights through the hierarchs who, acting in the person of Christ, come with heavenly gifts to the people and thus lead them to their end, union with God. These closing essays, then, bring the discussion full circle to a robust Christology and a theo-centrally focused ecclesiology.

Notwithstanding these and other fine features of the closing essays, I would suggest that, whereas the first few essays were somewhat compact, the concluding essays challenge the reader with a wide array of data (especially from the *Acta* of Vatican II), making the reader chew before tasting the honey in the comb. Other than these twin difficulties, one would simply wish for bibliographical references to the originally published essays. The subject and biblical indices are appreciated.

This collection is a must read for those who wish to found a supple and wise theology on solid rock. The theological sketches herein exemplify, in adumbrated form, the theological vocation at its best. It might be

hoped, also, that this book furthers a recovery (and corrected reading) of Bernard Lonergan at the heart and in service of the Church. N·V

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In the Shadow of the Incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of Brian E. Daley, S.J. edited by Peter W. Martens (*Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2008*), xii + 290 pages.

FEW in today's universities elicit the esteem and respect of other academics as does Father Brian Daley, S.J., Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame University. Surely this is why his colleagues, friends, and even former *Doktoranden* have come together to produce this fine volume of thirteen essays, each dedicated to Father Daley's abiding academic love, patristic Christology. Daley began his higher studies at Fordham University and then went on to Oxford for "Greats"; upon returning to the United States in 1964, he entered the New York Province of the Society of Jesus. As part of his Jesuit theological training he was sent to the prestigious *Hochschule Sankt Georgen* in Frankfurt, Germany, where he also became Aloys Grillmeier's research assistant. There Father Daley saw first hand how his mastery of the classical world and his love of Christ could come together in the field of patristics. He returned to Oxford to write a doctoral thesis on Leontius of Byzantium and was granted the D.Phil. in 1978. Thereafter he was missioned to the Jesuit Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he taught for eighteen years before beginning his teaching at Notre Dame.

The essays collected here appear in the chronological order of their subject matter. The book opens with an excellent overview and introduction by (the volume's editor and my colleague) Peter Martens. In "The Apocalypse, Christ, and the Martyrs of Gaul," Dallas Theological Seminary's D. Jeffrey Bingham argues that the Gallic martyrial acts reveal a Christian eschatology based upon the martyrs' imitation of Christ's ultimate sacrifice; as such, these martyrs' deaths were thus presented as both an athletic as well as a liturgical event. The ever-reliable Khaled Anatolios of Boston College next uses Karl Rahner's Christological concerns in striking the proper balance between an ontological and a functional understanding of the Lord's Incarnation (the classical "fact" versus "act" tension), to show how Athanasius's *De Incarnatione* not only satisfies Rahnerian demands in this regard but provides a beautiful basis for addressing contemporary concerns as well. One of Daley's former doctoral

students, Michael McCarthy, S.J. (now at Santa Clara University) uses the “*Expectatio Beatitudinis*” to demonstrate how a soteriology of divinization runs through Hilary of Poitiers. Carl Beckwith (Samford University’s Beeson School of Divinity) continues with Hilary, seeking to put to rest the accusations of Doceticism originally leveled against Hilary by unfolding the Bishop of Poitiers’s provocative phrases, such as Christ’s “suffering without pain” and so on. Yale Divinity’s Chris Beeley explores “Gregory of Nazianzus on the Unity of Christ.” Kelley Spoerl (Anselm College, Manchester, New Hampshire), in her “Early Nicenes: Eustasius of Antioch and Marcellus of Ancyra,” shows how these two rather diverse thinkers shared a common pro-Nicene Christology; she raises questions about how Eusebius of Caesarea’s tirades against Marcellus should be understood and also about how that dispute influenced what has come down to us as the Apollinarian heresy.

Next come four essays treating St. Augustine. The first is from Basil Studer, O.S.B. (*beatae memoriae*), who juxtaposes Origen and Augustine on the nature of charity, stressing above all how our love of God is always a response to his. Love of God for both Origen and Augustine consists in realizing Christ as the truth (a doctrine of “Christian gnosis” is here advanced). Studer shows not only how both Origen and Augustine understand Jesus Christ as the person of “Truth,” but also their understanding how the Lord is appropriated and assimilated by the human soul. The next essay comes from the current Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who argues that the unifying factor of Augustine’s most lasting Christology is *sapientia*. If wisdom is contemplation of the eternal, “God’s delight in God” as Williams expresses it, it follows that to actualize fully humanity’s fullest capacity is to participate in this life of truth and love. To do this is to embrace the incarnate Christ, the *exemplum et sacramentum* of human salvation. Lewis Ayres, now at Durham, uses epistle 137 to the Roman senator Volusianus to show how Christology was really a “contemplative practice” for Augustine. Ayres suggests that the mystery of incarnate union served as a “reverse apologetics,” which, rather than appealing to common experience instead shows us that the incomprehensibility of the Incarnation enables us to understand the complementarity between knowledge of creation and faith in revelation. David Maxwell from Concordia Seminary (St. Louis) looks at the sixth-century Scythian monks’ reception of Augustine; he highlights how the issues involved in the Theopaschite controversies threatened to render a reading of the Bishop of Hippo Nestorian by attributing Christ’s actions to two diverse subjects within the Incarnation.

After this Augustinian interlude comes Creighton’s John O’Keefe’s excellent work on the notion of decay (*φθορά*) in the work of Cyril of

Alexandria. O'Keefe reminds us that Cyril was first and foremost a pastor proclaiming the Christian message of renovation and eternal life in the Lord Jesus. Next, in his "Mystery or Conundrum? The Apprehension of Christ in the Chalcedonian Definition," John McGuckin (Union Theological Seminary of Columbia University) discusses what is ultimately at stake in speaking correctly about the Messiah. Andrew Louth rounds off the volume with "From Doctrine of Christ to Icon of Christ: St. Maximus the Confessor on the Transfiguration of Christ," in which he elucidates Maximus' understanding of the encounters on Mount Tabor spiritually as humanity's fullest encounter with the divine, theologically as the illustration of the union of humanity and divinity, and philosophically as the need to distinguish between apophasis and kataphasis.

Together these essays provide students and scholars of all levels commanding commentaries on how the most influential of the early churchmen understood the coming of Christ and his transformation of all things human. Martens is especially to be thanked: his fine editorial guidance has helped to produce articles that are uniform in both length and structure. Each opens with an illuminating introduction, ends with a clear conclusion, and provides very helpful notes throughout. Brian Daley's life attests to Evagrius of Pontus's treasured tenet that to be a theologian you must pray truly and to pray truly is to be a theologian (*On Prayer*, §61). In some small way, this large volume is a tribute to that formula. Of course no life is content laboring under the *shadow of the Incarnation* only. Like Father Daley, who is such an example to so many of us, we study, we write, we teach, and we engage each other in spiritual conversation because we wish to move, in the words of Cardinal Newman, *ex umbris et imaginibus ad veritatem*. N V

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