

Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce T. Morrill, eds. *Sacraments: Revelation of the Humanity of God: Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008. 242 pages. \$29.95

Fr. Louis-Marie Chauvet's magnum opus, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* (trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont; Liturgical Press, 1995), followed by *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Liturgical Press, 2001) displayed for the world Chauvet's penetrating and stimulating thoughts on sacramental theology and its implications for pastoral and liturgical work and scholarship. Bordeyne and Morrill provide an easy entry point into Chauvet's two primary works, while offering proposals on ways Chauvet's thoughts hold immense possibilities for the ecclesial, ecumenical, ethical, anthropological, and ritual dimensions of study, to name but a few. While written primarily for liturgical scholars, homileticians, preachers, and pastors will find in Chauvet a needed interlocutor in our pastoral and preaching craft, particularly as he explicates the significance of Scripture and church life as spheres in which divine-human and human-human relations are established and cultivated; this present volume introduces this conversation partner.

Bordeyne and Morrill assemble twelve thought-provoking essays from renowned sacramental theologians as David Power, Gordon Lathrop, Judith Kubicki, and Nathan Mitchell, as they assess areas in which Chauvet's work intersects with or challenges the 21<sup>st</sup> century milieu in the church and world, through his emphasis on symbolic mediation appropriated by Scripture, sacraments and ethics. Two essays constitute each of six parts, with summary introductions for each section.

Part One features essays by Lieven Boueve on the postmodern context and Patrick Prétot on theology of celebration. Where Chauvet sees the sacraments as paradigms of the divine-human communication because of the sacraments' corporeal and institutional character grounded in the faith's tradition, Boueve and Prétot join Chauvet in critiquing historic attempts to pin down sacraments as tools for causation or instrumentalism; instead sacraments are means through which God and humanity encounter one another through concrete means in concrete bodies.

In Part Two, David Power discusses enculturation of the Gospel and André Birmelé examines the relationship of Scripture and sacrament in the Lutheran tradition. Chauvet speaks of the particular expression of the Word through the Spirit to specific communities. Power advances this by showing that through prayer hymns, such as those found in Philippians 2:6-11 and Colossians 1:15-20, particular communities address a specific issue within that context while lifting up the vision of God's salvation for all of humanity. Birmelé complements Power in the former's appropriation of his Lutheran tradition's emphasis on Scripture and sacraments as marks of the unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the Church and its intersection with Chauvet's point that the sacraments find their place and meaning within ecclesial practice.

Part Three looks at sacraments at work in ecclesial life. Philippe Barras takes the pastoral perspective and essentially asks the question, "so what?" His answer: when the church engages in "sacramental pastoral care" the church is opening up for people the paschal mystery of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and introducing them to the newness of life; thus sacraments become "pastoral care of the paschal mystery" (100). Gordon Lathrop cites the report of Yves Congar from the Second Vatican Council where he journaled *inter alia* a question Oscar Cullman asked after a Mass, "So is this your liturgical movement?" Lathrop takes that

query and calls for an ecumenical ecclesiology, with the parallel liturgical and ecumenical movements as catalysts for such an ecclesiology. Lathrop's proposal is not in the abstract, but in keeping with Chauvet's theology of the concretization of God's otherness in the particularity of Jesus Christ, in the particularity of ecclesial communities, Lathrop offers specific proposals for an ecumenical ecclesiology such as joint celebration of baptisms in a local context or joint building projects for a village baptistery, wherein Word and sacrament testify again and again of God's mercy for the body.

Part Four features Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce T. Morrill. Bordeyne examines Chauvet's view of the relationship of liturgy and ethics, seeing in Christian worship the means by which the memory of the paschal mystery of Christ's life, death, and resurrection instantiate in a particular body – the church – in specific bodies – people as “acting” and “enacted” subjects, and that as that Christ memory becomes enfleshed in humanity, the Spirit of Christ transforms individuals and “reconfigures the subjects for ethics” (131). Morrill looks at the “remembrance-structure” of the Christian faith and how the celebration of the divine liturgy not only enables the church to celebrate the faith, but lifts up a transformative vision of the world through the eyes of faith – a vision that propels the church to work with those silenced and marginalized in the world (152).

Elbatriña Clouteaux and Judith Kubicki contribute essays in Part Five. Clouteaux uses Amazon symbol-life from Venezuela to speak of the rich texture of the anthropological perspective upon religious discourse, and how “[t]he most spiritual takes place in the most corporal,” highlighting one of Chauvet's chief aims. Kubicki uses the Exsultet as the paradigm of feasts in which the Church hears and experiences the eschatological vision that God has for the world, and in that living encounter with God and encounter with a broken world, the Church finds transformation as God transforms the Church. Thus, “[s]acramental symbols, therefore, signal Christian identity and constitute the church.” (184)

Part Six consists of essays by Jean-Louis Souletie and Nathan Mitchell. Souletie finds complementary aims in theology and social sciences, specifically when the clinical character of the latter are applied to the former, the result being a “clinical” theology akin to Chauvet's project that elements of the divine-human relationship can be found in ecclesial practices. Mitchell lifts up Chauvet's emphasis on the inability of humanity, specifically the Church, to box God in linguistic games, holding in tension the apophatic (mystery, wholly holy other) character of the Church's worship and its apocalyptic (revelatory) elements.

In sum, Bordeyne and Morrill's volume engages preachers and scholars in reminding and re-thinking the *raison d'être* for what we do in classrooms and churches everyday and every week: divine-human and human-human relations for the life of the world.

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