

Greek, Russian, and Ukrainian. This book provides a general view of the issues; however, the brevity of the Greek, Ukrainian, and Melkite parts remains unsatisfying, leaving the reader with a hunger for more. His balanced treatment of various liturgical topics provides a systematic and fair treatment of the complexities being discussed. His lengthy focus on the Russian Orthodox Church's vast and overwhelming proposals for liturgical reform which included the full participation of the people, and a critical self reflection at the beginning of the twentieth century provide an important historical overview challenging many preconceived notions. Many of these proposals can readily be utilized in any discussion regarding the reform of Byzantine liturgy today. This informative book provides an invaluable resource for any student of liturgy and helps to shed the prejudice that the Byzantine liturgy never changed and that the respective churches Catholic or Orthodox never had an interest in renewal.

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*Christian Symbol and Ritual: An Introduction.* By Bernard Cooke and Gary Macy. New York: Oxford University Press 2005. Pages, ix + 178. Paper, \$17.95. ISBN: 0-19-515412-6.

Drawing upon their undergraduate classroom experiences, Cooke and Macy present a textbook introducing "Christian ritual in general" to student-readers presumed to have minimal if any knowledge of Christianity (viii). Their practical goal is to impart knowledge that will enable contemporary Christians to participate consciously and effectively in their Sunday services and other rites. One does not proceed very far into the text before realizing that one of the authors' fundamental strategies for empowering liturgical participation is a thoroughgoing deconstruction of Roman Catholic terminology that "demystifies the theology" (38) of sacraments, liturgy, and ministry. Hence the title of the book opts for the language of symbol and ritual rather than sacrament and liturgy. This terminological strategy seems to serve well the authors' purpose of getting young adults to reflect upon the pervasiveness and, thus, importance of ritual symbolism — religious and otherwise — in their lives. It also governs their theological treatment of Jesus as the primordial symbol of God and Christian communities' (they largely avoid the word "church") symbolic function of making Christ present in history. The combined goals, however, of reaching a religiously illiterate generation and reforming a hierarchically sacralized church, all the while touching on the practices of other "Christian groups" (their euphemism for Anglicans and Protestants), lead these Roman Catholic professors into some awkwardness of method and content.

## Book Reviews

The theological strength of the book resides in each authors' well-deserved reputation as a historian and theologian of sacramental theology. The second chapter amounts to a lucid twenty-page condensation of the first two parts of Cooke's still widely used *Sacraments and Sacramentality* (1983, rev. 1994). A fundamental treatment of Christian belief in Jesus, his death and resurrection, the origins and mission of the church, the struggle with evil, and the power of grace leads the authors to explain how rituals "are the central means by which Christians learn to interpret their lives as Christians, grow into a selfless life, experience the presence of the risen Christ, bring that presence into existence for others through service, and come together as a community of mutual support" (53). As the subsequent chapters describe and analyze each major Christian ritual (marriage, initiation, Eucharist, reconciliation, etc.), the five "key elements" of interpreting experience, maturation, presence, service, and friendship provide the framework for explaining how these "give grace."

The methodological problem with the book is the vague category of "Christian ritual in general" that governs the authors' explanations of the various rites. Their reticence to use the word "sacrament," notwithstanding their fine historical treatment of the ambiguity of the term, leads to vague (and in a few cases, possibly inaccurate) descriptions of the rites in their current Roman Catholic forms. While the authors make an early disclaimer concerning their Roman Catholic identity, one wonders whether the rather abstract sketches of different Christian rituals might nonetheless still leave the unsophisticated student with an undifferentiated Catholic perspective on how "Christians" understand "ritual." This is not to imply that the authors do not acknowledge differences among churches' and denominations' practices, but they do this in an occasional fashion without explicitly articulating what strike this reader as the ecclesiological issues distinguishing Catholicism from other Christian bodies. No doubt, these issues can make today's young people uncomfortable or even disinterested, but they are, nevertheless, also integral to the way power is experienced in specific rituals. The impressive latter chapter on the history and theology of ministry counters the problem. The authors' combined mastery of this material results in a compelling survey and assessment of Christian order that should be of interest to advanced students and fellow scholars, as well.

Cooke and Macy have taken on an important, difficult task. Perhaps my critique here amounts to what they anticipated in their Preface by acknowledging that their "But why?" questions might not be those of the given reader. The range of human symbolism described and the variety of rituals sketched should generate plenty of class discussion.

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