

SEMINAR ON SACRAMENTAL/LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

The participants in the continuing seminar on Sacramental/Liturgical Theology in Toronto (1988) determined that the most effective agenda for future meetings of the Society would be group discussion on already published works by liturgical and sacramental theologians (as opposed to "works in progress") especially from the point of view of method employed in these works. Therefore the group spent the two meetings of the seminar in St. Louis discussing Edward Kilmartin's *Christian Liturgy* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1988) under the able leadership of Regis Duffy of the University of Notre Dame and Mary Schaefer of the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.

After acknowledging the extremely important contribution which Kilmartin continues to make to contemporary sacramental theology, Duffy then made three fundamental observations about *Christian Liturgy*. (1) He observed that this work is "post-Rahnerian" in the sense that some of the authors on whom Kilmartin relies to develop his own thought (e.g., L. Lies and D. Coffey) and Kilmartin himself have been influenced by Rahner. (2) Methodologically the book is phenomenological in the German sense that it gives detailed analysis of what actually occurs in the liturgical act. (3) Kilmartin's approach is an integral one in the sense that he is in dialogue with the human sciences while at the same time displaying a mastery of patristic literature and scripture. Duffy cited Kilmartin's own contention about what the book is meant to supply: a new systematic theology of sacraments based on the bestowal model of Trinitarian theology.

Duffy invited the participants to reflect on how they use the *lex orandi* as a theological source in their teaching and writing in the light of how Kilmartin describes how this fits into the method evidenced in this work. Duffy asserts that Kilmartin uses the *lex orandi* in at least two ways: that all systematic theology should be a theology of the liturgy (in the sense that all aspects of systematic theology are linked and are experienced in the act of liturgy) and what ought be termed a systematic theology of the act of liturgy (in the sense of explaining theologically what happens through the liturgy). Duffy argued that Kilmartin's other writings help one to interpret this volume and to trace the evolution of his thought. These other works include "Theology of the Sacraments: Toward a New Understanding of the Chief Rites of the Church of Jesus Christ," in *Alternative Futures For Worship*, vol. 1 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987) 123-75 and "A Modern Approach to the Word of God and Sacraments of Christ: Perspectives and Principles," in F. Eigo, ed., *The Sacraments: God's Love and Mercy Actualized* (Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1979) 59-109. In these essays and in *Christian Liturgy* Kilmartin shows how his understanding of the *lex orandi* is not limited to an historical investigation of what the liturgical rites say about sacraments. Rather he offers a systematic theology of sacraments influenced by the liturgical act, seen as a phenomenon of many parts and modes of communication.

Mary Schaefer raised four issues in presenting her reflections on the book and in leading the spirited discussion which followed. She asked (1) Why is the book subdivided into four parts, given the repetition of the author's central insight about deriving sacramental theology based on a bestowal model of how the Trinity operates in the liturgical act? (2) How does this book differ from Kilmartin's other writings on sacraments? (3) Is Mary Collins correct in her review of *Christian Liturgy* (in *Worship* 63 [March 1989] 170-72) in terms of ecclesiology and the authors on whom Kilmartin relies? Collins states: "The most critical lacuna is a sustained ecclesiology which understands each liturgical celebration to be a particular event in the life of a local church gathered in assembly" (171), and Kilmartin's "dialogue with European systematians has shaped this work" to the extent that he "has skipped important theological conversations with colleagues on this side of the Atlantic" (ibid.). (4) How can we appropriate and utilize Kilmartin's insights about the relationship between the earthly and heavenly liturgy?

In attempting to explain the book's thesis, Schaefer (like Duffy) pointed to some of Kilmartin's other writings, specifically the short monograph (first published in India and about to be published by the Canadian Bishops' Conference in the "Canadian Studies of Liturgy" series) entitled *Particular Liturgy of the Individual Church* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publishers, 1987) and his essay "Lay Participation in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy," in James Provost, ed., *Official Ministry in a New Age* (Washington: Canon Law Society, 1981) 89-116. Schaefer argued that these works are especially helpful in understanding *Christian Liturgy* and in dealing with the Collins critique. While Kilmartin's theology of the liturgy does include a consideration of the shift from the assembly being passive to their active engagement in the liturgical act, it is true that this receives limited attention in *Christian Liturgy*. In addition many in the group observed that one contribution which Kilmartin has made through his writings is to open to a wider audience the thought of German authors whose works have not been translated into English.

In determining the agenda for the 1990 convention in San Francisco the seminar group decided to parallel the convention theme of "Inculturation and Catholicity" for its deliberations. Kevin Irwin (Catholic University) and Thomas Krosnicki (Washington Theological Union) will determine the preparatory readings for next year's seminar, which readings will deal with liturgical/sacramental inculturation in North America. The group also decided to meet only on one afternoon of the convention, rather than two, in order to allow participants to attend other seminars.

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