

JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY AWARD—1996

CITATION

Our honoree this evening hails from the island of saints and scholars and adds his own fair bit to that heritage. Educated in Rome, he earned licentiate degrees in philosophy and theology at the Gregorian University and the STD in theology with liturgical specialization at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, San Anselmo. Perhaps it was his missionary heart that drove him—he is, after all, a member of a missionary religious order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate—for after teaching theology at Piltown, Milltown, and Maynooth in Ireland and at the Gregorian, he migrated to these American shores in 1977. Here he has settled, teaching ever since in the Department of Theology at Catholic University of America in Washington DC, being currently the Shakespeare Caldwell Duval Distinguished Professor of Theology.

There is an original quality to this scholar's thinking that recommends him to our attention, for he works at that juncture where systematic theology and liturgy intersect, where thought and worship meet, where the life of the Church is intensely expressed, and where there are no easy answers. In book after book and in journal articles and book chapters that number in the dozens, he probes the "unsearchable riches" of the liturgy, brings to light the "gifts that differ" in lay ministries established and unestablished, reinterprets the Tridentine meaning of sacrifice, and seeks to revitalize the tradition of eucharistic mystery "amid the ruins." With the touch of the poet he writes of doxology, of blessing, of memorial, and of the hermeneutics of ritual praxis. No stranger to suffering, he also dares to probe the Christian need to lament, prayer and the Holocaust, and the work of memory amid the cultural experience of the absence of God. Fascinated by the impact of culture upon worship and theology, he has lectured throughout this country as well as in Ireland, South Africa, the Philippines, and most recently Zaire, seeking ecumenical foundations for theology in changing circumstances, truly "mapping the mapless." In a word, his work in sacramental and liturgical theology has made a distinctive contribution toward a new Catholic approach in these areas.

Our honoree has an international reputation of the first rank, having served on the Editorial Board of *Concilium* for over twenty years and coedited seventeen of its volumes. His fellow liturgists elected him President of the North American Academy of Liturgy and honored him with their highest accolade, the Berakah Award. A whole generation of younger scholars is afoot in the land having passed through his "empowering" mentorship; their gift of a *Festschrift* signals

appreciation for his distinguished teaching. He has consistently promoted the integrity of the charism of theology in the Church, defending his own work and standing in active solidarity with theologians under attack, at no little personal cost. Currently serving on the editorial board of *Theological Studies*, this witty, salty, prophetic, courageous, and wise scholar stands for what is best in our profession.

For distinguished service and achievement in theology, the Catholic Theological Society of America is pleased to present the 1996 John Courtney Murray Award to David Noel Power.