

commemorates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of John XXIII. There is a searching assessment of John, emblematically recalling how, some months before the Council, John wrote an encyclical about keeping Latin as the language of the church, including theology—which was of course the first thing the Council would abolish! Schillebeeckx also analyses the post-Vatican situation, in which strong conservative forces have criticised the new slaveries which liberal bourgeoisie has produced, and seen these same values as underlying the Council. He declares that those of this mentality 'differ from Lefebvre only in tolerating no criticism of John-Paul II' (p. 137).

Those familiar with Schillebeeckx's work will find many of his favourite themes running through this book, encapsulated in the phrase 'The glory of God is the happiness of living humankind; but the happiness of humankind is the living God.' (p. 58). There are no substantial clues as to his most current interests and direction, although the relation between mysticism and politics is explored (but going no further from previous work). Nevertheless it is good to have short pithy writings from a theologian infamous for suggesting that his 760-page *Jesus* was written for the 'ordinary Christian'.

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THE PROFESSION OF FAITH AND THE OATH OF FIDELITY. A Theological and Canonical Analysis, by Ladislav Ůrsy, Dominican Publications, Dublin 1990. Pp. 71. £3.95.

In several places round the world, work must be going on to produce official translations of the new Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity. Now, all those to be ordained clerics and some lay people come under new and extended obligations in this matter, and some people will make the Profession and take the Oath more than once in their lifetime, e.g. whenever appointed parish priest or superior in a clerical religious institute.

This booklet by Ůrsy is a timely and stimulating guide to a whole range of issues raised by these changes, although more could be, and ought to be, said at various points. He is right to raise questions about the process of promulgation but, like so many others, he overlooks the fact that the same page of *L'Osservatore Romano* that first published the Profession and Oath on 25 February 1989 also mentioned that papal approval had been given on 1 July 1988.

Simply to dwell on one proposal that he makes once again in print, Ůrsy suggests that the term '*obsequium*' (as in the Profession of Faith) cannot at present be adequately translated because of its nature and because our understanding of it is still developing. He concludes that whilst the term signifies the fundamental attitude well, for specific responses we need a wide variety of terms, such as assent, or submission, or obedience, or respect, or reverence, or even disagreement—to be applied always in religious and wise balance with the weight of authority in the teaching.

Ůrsy is making a subtle and illuminating proposal. If found acceptable, it is another reason why Episcopal Conferences should seriously consider issuing at least a very brief commentary with their translation of the Profession of Faith and Oath. And perhaps for some years to come the word *obsequium* should be left in Latin.

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