

in Thomistic and Barthian narrative theology' by reference to *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, the Ealing comedy in which Alec Guinness played all eight of the characters who were murdered one by one by the character played by Dennis Price (cf. page 238).

The argument may baffle readers who are not film buffs. McCabe often attacked the doctrine that God suffers with the sufferings of his creatures (e.g. *God Matters*, 1987, pages 39–51). He defends the classical doctrine of divine impassibility as in Augustine and Aquinas. He then sought to show that Chalcedonian Christology properly understood delivers as profound an account of God's suffering as any orthodox Christian needs. Finally, he suggested that 'a sacramental interpretation of Chalcedonian christology yields the whole of the doctrine of the Trinity' (page 39). The 'story' of Jesus — which he took to be the entire Bible — 'is nothing other than the triune life of God projected onto our history' — in the sense analogically that a film is 'projected' on a screen (page 48). 'Watching, so to say, the story of Jesus, we are watching the procession of the Trinity': 'The historical mission of Jesus is nothing other than the eternal mission of the Son from the Father; the historical outpouring of the Spirit in virtue of the passion, death and ascension of Jesus is nothing but the eternal outpouring of the Spirit from the Father through the Son'.

Murphy's complaint is that the cinematic metaphor 'effaces all trace of personal drama from the Triune life' (page 243). Old-fashioned Thomists would be inclined, when they hear of 'personal drama' in the Triune life, to 'beg a return to apophatic caution', to quote Matthew Levering. Admittedly, while St Thomas certainly holds that the Paschal Mystery is revelatory of the Trinity (cf. *ST* III, 46, 3), he does not project anything of that drama into the immanent Trinity in his lengthy analysis of the doctrine (*ST* I, 27–43).

Anyway, when Murphy gets back to McCabe (pages 275–80), the problem turns out to be his claim that the divine persons simply *are* their relations (e.g. *God Still Matters* pages 48–50). She cites other grammatical Thomists with the same problem: Nicholas Lash, for whom the Trinity is 'relationship without remainder', and David Burrell, who insists that 'God's own life must be thought of as a kind of relating'. Like many others, including Karl Barth, they are so worried by the modern sense of 'person' as a distinct centre of consciousness that they recoil from the spectre of tritheism into some form of modalism, to such an extent that they fail to do justice to the divine persons as defined by their 'self-constitutive or self-receptive acts' (page 277). For them, 'no person actually *is* itself; each is what it is over and against a limiting other'. Seeing being as otherness only, as they do, is to take being as 'for-ing' rather than as 'is-ing', so Murphy says, appealing to *The Metaphysics of Love* by Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, one of the most frequently cited authorities in her book. It is sad that Herbert McCabe is not around to engage with Francesca Murphy's intriguing critique of his reading of St Thomas.

FERGUS KERR OP

**MAGISTERIUM. TEACHER AND GUARDIAN OF THE FAITH by Avery Cardinal Dulles, (*Sapientia Press*: Naples, FL, 2007). Pp. x+207, £13.95 pbk.**

Cardinal Dulles' *Magisterium* is the first in a series of short, but by no means skimpy, 'introductions to Catholic doctrine' in preparation from Sapientia Press. It is limpid and assertoric, in the Scholastic style Dulles has come to favour in his more recent writings. Thus it shows little sign of the theology of revelation as 'symbolic mediation' he espoused in his middle years. But it is liberally endowed

with the historical sense he has shown ever since his first book (in 1941, on the lay Dominican thinker Pico della Mirandola). It can safely be said that, within its short compass (well over a third of the text consists of an appendix of documents), this study will answer any and all the questions Catholics or others are likely to venture on this sometimes thorny topic. It covers the nature and purpose of the magisterium, its history, the share in it which can be accorded to those who are neither popes nor bishops, its normal organs, its scope, and the response and/or 'reception' which its deliverances (with the various degrees of authoritativeness) should find. The book under review does not foreclose all issues. Thus, for instance, if I interpret aright, it inclines to the view that magisterial teaching on contraception is irreformable, while leaving open the possibility that such teaching could be regarded as authoritative but not definitive, at any rate in its present manner of expression.

Some commentators wonder why episcopate and papacy receive the accolade 'the magisterium' when most teaching in the Church is actually done by other people altogether. So Dulles is wise to open with a definition which lays this *canard* to rest. We are speaking here of the 'authoritative teaching of those who are commissioned to speak to the community in the name of Christ, clarifying the faith that the community professes'. Even Neo-Scholastic divines of reactionary hue, so Dulles shows, have accepted that the body of theologians has a teaching function, but the latter is not a function of attestation of the apostolic deposit in a way that should command the assent of the faithful. The doctrinal role of appeal to the Fathers (some of whom, like St Ephrem, did not belong to the ministerial priesthood) and to later doctors of the Church (some of whom are women), as well as reference in the making of doctrine to the 'sense of the faithful' are carefully distinguished from both the *schola theologorum* and the *magisterium attestans*. These functions in the Church are diverse and complementary yet integrated in an overall ordering.

In his earlier writings, Avery Dulles sought to establish a *pax theologica* in the Church by exhibiting – notably through his use of 'model' theory – the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to doctrine. In more recent decades, he has written more sharply about the limits beyond which such pacification ceases to be plausible. In the words of Lewis Carroll, not all have won and not all can receive prizes. Now in his ninetieth year, Dulles is not unwilling to take a clear position on issues which, one supposes, were hotly debated in the Catholic Theological Society of America of which he has been president. These include the question of whether, and to what extent, the precepts of the natural law fall within the scope of infallibility, the degree of doctrinal authority, if any, to ascribe to Episcopal Conferences, and the distinction between the sense of the faithful and public opinion in the Church (only the former has a theological value, the *London Tablet* kindly note). Readers of his 1996 *Reflections on a Theological Journey* will be aware that what has precipitated the shift in his thinking is the unraveling in the coherence of Church life, worship and thinking for which the present Pope has sought an antidote in the notion of a 'hermeneutic of continuity'.

The present reviewer found especially helpful the account of the 2000 Vallombrosa Meeting between bishops and Curial officials which clarified the status of magisterial teaching on the reservation of priestly orders to men. This teaching should be regarded as a definitive exercise of the ordinary and universal magisterium in its capacity of defending truths which are necessary for *the setting forth of the apostolic deposit*. As with other examples of doctrinal development, in some future progress of the Church's mind the teaching could be re-assessed as *intrinsically belonging to that deposit*, and thus be the object of a dogmatic definition, whether by pope or council. It is, one suspects, by an exercise of

pastoral mercy that such alteration of status was not envisaged in the magisterial interventions of the 1990s on this subject.

AIDAN NICHOLS OP

**GOD AND GRACE OF BODY: SACRAMENT IN ORDINARY** by David Brown, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007). Pp. xii+446, £30 pbk.

Most academic books are books about books, and theological tomes are no exception. They draw on, refer to and criticise what has been written in previous books, and on this basis draw (hopefully new) conclusions. But because of this even the new field of theology of the body can inhabit an actually very cerebral world. You could write a really radical theology of the body constructed in fact from only mental abstractions rather than physical experience. Indeed, Balthasar, widely credited with rediscovering the beautiful for theology, and while very practically sensitive to the arts (he was an accomplished pianist), was in fact more concerned with the spiritual beauty of God's actions as recorded in the words of the Bible, than with finding God in concretely beautiful things. Of course, in reflecting on our experiences of beauty and what makes them beautiful we can apply this to salvation history: but this is a very abstracted kind of transcendence possible for only the well-educated, and one which risks leaving the physical (and most people) behind.

It is thus hard to avoid wondering if the perceived irrelevance of Christianity to the dominant West European culture is not due to the unwitting withdrawal of Christianity from artistic creation into intellectual abstraction. If so, then David Brown's book could not be more timely. The second of a trilogy on the question of religious experience through culture and the arts (the first was *God and the Enchantment of Place*), *God and Grace of Body* is a direct exploration of the body, be it "beautiful and sexy" or "ugly and wasted" in painting and sculpture, through to dance, food and drink, and a long discussion of music of every genre, which together provide a basis of revisiting Christ's bodily presence in the Eucharist and the liturgy. This last section prepares the way for the final book, *Mystery in Words: Experience through Metaphor and Drama*, due for publication this year, in which Brown will seek to recover theatre and rhetoric in liturgy and preaching.

There is of course nothing original about seeing art as incarnational. But what is really refreshing about this book is that it goes directly to the artistic creations themselves. Brown discusses, in an accessible style, everything from Bernini's sculptures, Matisse's "The Dance" (on the dust jacket, and currently on display at the Royal Academy) and Frederick Ashton's ballets, to Mahler's symphonies and Led Zeppelin. (Indeed, it is greatly to Brown's credit that he admits in the preface to previously having been prejudiced against dance as an art form.) Furthermore, Brown will not merely have Christians "accept" art as able to provide transcendent experience – I hear the symphony and it makes me think of God, and thereby I move on from it. He demands that we open ourselves to the possibility that in hearing the symphony we may actually experience God's presence. He is careful to show that this is not really a new idea: as Hugo Rahner had argued in *Man at Play* (although Brown does not seem to know this fascinating little book) the very fact that Christian theologians sometimes speak of the Trinity as a dance is itself an endorsement of the spiritual value of dance, and thus he concludes that to use the metaphor and then to be suspicious of dance itself, as many Christian churches are, is to put the cart before the horse. Indeed, he speaks of the dance which is still performed by the altar boys in Seville cathedral (p.86), and the dance/ball game played at Easter in French cathedrals until the end of the