

## Reviews

**DER GEIST DER LITURGIE. EINE EINFUEHRUNG** by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger Herder, Freiburg, 2000. Pp. 208, 36.00 DEM hbk.

During the last ten or more years, Cardinal Ratzinger has frequently referred to the need for a second 'Liturgical Movement' and the desirability of a 'reform of the reform': another bash at the revision of the liturgical books of the Roman rite which followed on the Second Vatican Council. It was expected, accordingly, that the introduction to liturgical theology on which he was known to be working would take the form of a manifesto of his 'programme' in these two respects. In the event, supporters of a 'reform of the reform' will be disappointed. There is nothing here about further liturgical revisionism of a kind designed to reduce the disparity between 'old' and 'new' rites. *En passant*, it is true, the cardinal raps Pope Paul VI on the knuckles for failing to act as the steward of the liturgical traditions of the Western Church. A pope does not own the Liturgy, to do with it what he will: that is precisely the misunderstanding of his plenary jurisdiction in such matters which Pius IX's spokesmen at Vatican I sought to scotch. Ratzinger's remarks on eastward celebration of the Liturgy *versus apsidem* make it plain that, in his view, the time is not ripe for yet more change — even change in a direction that is altogether desirable.

What remains, then, is the question of a new 'Liturgical Movement' to recover the best theological and spiritual impulses of its early twentieth-century predecessor, but in the chastened fashion which knowledge of the mistakes of the post-conciliar period dictates. The book's title, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, is a deliberate echo of Romano Guardini's classic of 1918, *On the Spirit of the Liturgy*, and the aim is the same: to provoke a liturgical sense that is less subjective and more cosmic, with a sharper awareness of distinctively liturgical time and space, making use of art and music that are fully adapted to the service of worship and finding expression in a repertoire of physical gesture within the unity of an inherited rite. While critics of the Mass of Paul VI will regret Ratzinger's caution, the ethos of any Liturgy celebrated in the spirit commended by this book would certainly be very different from that staid or saccharine affair now to be found in the general run of British Catholic parishes.

For Ratzinger, Liturgy is divinely given play in which we practise for the life everlasting, just as children in their games pretend to be

housewives, soldiers, or whatever the politically correct infant now prefers. In a wide-ranging survey of Old and New Testament texts, he presents the liturgical action as the 'soul' of the Covenant between God and Israel (old and new). Through the Paschal mystery of the Incarnate Logos — the new and everlasting Covenant — the cosmos comes in history to its anticipated goal. To animate the Christian life, then, the Church's worship must do simultaneous justice to all these dimensions. Here are the principles that govern all else *Der Geist der Liturgie* has to say. It will readily be seen how radically opposed they are to anthropocentrism, politicism, and sentimental subjectivism: currently the besetting sins of so much Western Catholic worship.

The deeply un-Protestant nature of Ratzinger's understanding of salvation comes across in the repeated assertion that the *Einmal* — the once and once only Sacrifice of Christ — is now the *Immer* — an ever-present reality in the Church. This gives his liturgical thought a very proper affinity with Eastern Orthodox liturgiology ('There is a green hill far away', with its distant retrospective on the long past Passion, has been described as the least Orthodox hymn ever written!). Although there are specifically Latin Catholic features to this work (the apologia for a prominently placed Eucharistic tabernacle, for instance, as the sign of the Church's metahistorical goal and the encomium on plainchant as the 'abiding measuring rod for *musica sacra*'), the overall sensibility can not unfairly be described as neo-Byzantine. It comes as no surprise that Ratzinger wishes to take Byzantine-Slav iconography as the normative reference-point for liturgical art. In circles hostile to traditional Latin liturgy, Byzantinisation is the only remedy for the ills of the *Novus Ordo* one can see.

Allusions to Hebrew philology and Schopenhauer's metaphysics remind the reader that the author is not only a Roman cardinal looking wistfully East. He is a German professor as well.

AIDAN NICHOLS OP

**NATURAL AND DIVINE LAW: RECLAIMING THE TRADITION FOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS** by Jean Porter *Wm. B Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1999. Pp. 340, £18.99 pbk.*

In this study of natural law theory, Professor Porter examines the emergence of ideas amongst the Scholastics between the years 1140 and 1274, giving attention to the conception of human nature and the framework for practical legal judgment, as these came to be formulated prior to their expression in Aquinas. As the very warm appreciation by Professor Nicholas Wolterstorff in the *Foreword* suggests, this 'at heart, is an essay in intellectual history' (p. 12), and