

the exact point at which Eucharistic change ‘happens’. In sum, Kereszty upholds a balance/tension of real presence and real sign: his appendix on ecumenical implications of the study could be a very useful resource for ecumenists.

There is some real spiritual food in Kereszty too: for example, he says for the Mass truly to work from the perspective of the Resurrection, we must renounce the dream of infinite earthly happiness, allowing the Resurrection to be our peaceful centre even when suffering eclipses Resurrection joy. Dizdar tends to neglect such darker realities, and I suspect that many English-speaking readers will prefer Kereszty’s sober prose to Dizdar’s boundless enthusiasm, language of chaos and cosmos rivalry, violence and scandals, abundant dramatic quotations (e.g. Heinrich Zimmer’s ‘the most important things cannot be talked about’). And there are philosophical reasons for objecting to his heavy use of post-modern/psychoanalytic puns (‘From the Mist of Abel to the (s)Myth of Cain’, p. 62) or Mother – Me-As-Other and Father as Far-Other. Surely, all these show is that one word is coincidentally similar to another. A literary conceit, but it proves nothing. On the other hand, what about the parables of Jesus: riddles, challenges, literally, things ‘thrown in the way’? We do not have to agree with Dizdar’s reading of these words to accept his invitation to enter into the realm of the imaginary and unconscious, which has more influence on our passive intellect and thus on our ability to philosophize rationally than we would sometimes care to admit.

The greatest strength of the book is its imaginative and symbolic power and appeal to bodily experience (even though some of his diagrams, e.g. that of the Eucharist on p. 85, are not so easy to follow). I can personally witness to its pastoral usefulness. I have been teaching a small group of people seeking Christian initiation in our parish; most of them have had relatively little educational opportunity. So when explaining the Mass, the challenge was to keep it attractive and simple, without ‘dumbing down’. Dizdar notes how, beginning Mass with the Sign of the Cross, we touch head, belly/womb and then lungs, with all the emotional and psychological significance these have. Making it so ‘real’ quickly engaged the group, and made it easy then to communicate the healing power of the Rite of Penance. Without agreeing with all of his conclusions, I would strongly recommend *Sheer Grace* as a catechetical text.

Both books, I suggest, have a lot to offer in the urgent task of re-evangelising Western Christians: Kereszty’s, for its balance, solidity and ecumenical potential, and Dizdar’s not only for its imaginatively (if sometimes wacky) liturgical catechesis, but for what it could do for the liturgy. Clear, ‘rational’ theology alone is insufficient for making interesting and attractive a liturgy which is often, in practice, very boring, especially for the young. If some of Dizdar’s ideas were applied to liturgical practice, there might be a real possibility of recovering liturgical ‘mystery’ in a way wholly free of social and political conservatism.

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THE THEOLOGY OF FOOD: EATING AND THE EUCHARIST by Angel F. Méndez Montoya, *Wiley Blackwell, Oxford, 2009, pp. 184, £45 hbk*

An Indian Jesuit of my acquaintance introduces the eucharist to his peasant congregations by taking a wafer in one hand, and a chapatti in the other. ‘What’s this?’, he enquires, holding up the wafer. Smiling confusedly they mumble, ‘We don’t know ayah’. ‘What’s this?’ he responds, holding up the chapatti. ‘Bread!’, they shout triumphantly. He celebrates with the chapatti, making strong and obvious connections between labour, the fruit of the earth, and the eucharist. The author of this essay notes how far the visions he outlines are from Catholic liturgies and the actual life of Catholics. There is a profound irony here in a book

which insists on non dualism, the material as the spiritual and vice versa, and reality as we almost everywhere experience it.

The book is rich and imaginative, drawing on some obvious texts – Isaaq Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*, Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* – as well as from unusual aspects of the author's own Mexican tradition. The first chapter describes the making of the Mexican dish Molli, and indeed includes the recipe for doing so. The recipe is ancient, but one source for it is Sister Juana Inéz de la Cruz, who was forbidden to read and write and told that she was the worst of sinners for doing so. Banished to the kitchen, where women belong, she apparently managed to commit recipes to writing. In combining wildly different ingredients and drawing on multiple cultures Montoya suggests that Molli is a metaphor for both the doing of theology and for the eucharist. In the eucharist, the author tells us, difference of gender and sexual orientation is celebrated within the one body. At the Eucharistic table all are interdependent. He frequently cites Benedict XVI. One would enjoy the conversation between the two of them as regards the nature of this celebration and this unity, and of the meaning of interdependence.

This reviewer, at least, would have welcomed a fuller account of the author's sacramental theology. He tells us that the fact that God is ultimately excess means that signification falls short of its signified signs. However, we are not left with perpetual deferral because 'God's signs are nourished by God's plenitude and superabundant gifts'. So the eucharist is a sign. At the same time the language of transubstantiation is routinely used and we are told that God becomes food and drink in and through materiality. Perhaps nobody reads Schillebeeckx now but I continue to find his account of transignification an illuminating way of making sense of such language. As it is I was left constantly wondering what the author meant by 'sign'.

Montoya takes from *Like Water for Chocolate* a close relationship between knowing and savouring (in Spanish *saber* and *sabor*). In the light of the eucharist to know is to participate through intimate savouring of the known. Here food is the body of Christ. 'The Eucharist is a banquet of the senses. More intimately, it is a feasting of the sense of touch because tasting, eating, and drinking are forms of proximity, a form of touching.' One wonders how on earth this can properly be said of our celebration of the eucharist – something my Jesuit friend felt strongly.

In the third chapter the author draws on two orthodox theologians, Alexander Schmemmann and Bulgakov. The former helps us to see gratitude and adoration as way of seeing, tasting and knowing God. All eating and drinking is sacramental communion with God and the Fall is not primarily disobedience to God's command but failure to see God as the ultimate source of divine food. For Bulgakov food discloses our essential metaphysical unity with the world. The eucharist is the sacramental focus of that unity.

Babette's feast is an obvious metaphor for the eucharist as grace. Following John's gospel Montoya reflects on the gift of manna, a figure, he says, that evokes a certain *polis* crafted in and through historical pilgrimage: a collective identity based on God's gift given as nourishment to sustain and provide a collective *telos*. This is well said, and it links up with his proper emphasis on the relation between the eucharist and the stark facts of world hunger and the imbalance of power this represents. At the same time more attention could have been paid to the processes of food production. Readers of the book may like to look out for Norman Wirzba's forthcoming book of more or less the same title, which has much more to say about farming in all its aspects. Put side-by-side the two books will make a fascinating study of Protestant and Catholic accounts not simply of the eucharist, but of grace and therefore justice.

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