

- Job (15–16).
- 19 Brenner, 'Answer,' 132.
 - 20 Seitz 15.
 - 21 Stephen Mitchell, *The Book of Job* (San Francisco: North Point, 1987). The translation is made on p. 88, with the accompanying note on p. 129: The crucial word, *nhm*, occurs nine other times in Job, always meaning 'comfort,' though it can in other contexts bear the notion of 'repentance' as well. Mitchell reminds readers that a similar combination of compassion and dust occurs in Ps. 103: 13–14, where God is said to have compassion on man, who is but dust.
 - 22 A private communication to the writer by Dani Newhouse.
 - 23 Long 19.
 - 24 MacKenzie and Murphy 467.
 - 25 Commentators seem too quick to assume that inevitably God is rewarding Job for piety. E.g., Polzin 185.
 - 28 Hauerwas 82.
 - 29 Hauerwas xiii, 34, 44.

Reviews

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: A THEOLOGICAL AND CANONICAL TREATISE, by Andrew Cuschieri, *University Press of America*, London, 1992, pp.353. \$27.50.

This is an unexpected kind of book. It is made up of two parts not usually combined on such a scale these days : the first deals with the redemption of human beings, the second with the canon law of the sacrament of reconciliation.

It is surprising that the canons of both the Latin and the Eastern Churches are examined, and baffling that the author gives abundant references to early sources and yet virtually excludes recent writers. The work is also unusual in being a return to the method of casuistry, yet it can range biblically and metaphysically. An example of this jump occurs when the author suggests that two hours drive constitutes a valid reason for the use of *epikeia* (reduced to 20 miles if ordinary transportation is lacking), whilst a few pages earlier he writes that in the sacrament of reconciliation human consciousness reveals itself by exposing its inner pathos in trying to overcome its self-alienation and be absorbed in Christ.

Before the part on the sacrament of reconciliation, there is a theological treatment of divine grace operative outside the reality of that sacrament. The two parts will, of course, connect in various ways and it seems fair to say that the theological approach chosen is designed to make sense of the canon law. The first part deals with three topics: the human act, sin, and the virtue of justice. The human act is analysed into various components, familiar enough in the tradition and still needed. There follows an account of sin, both scriptural and theological. Cuschieri seems overemphatic in wanting sin to be the hinge of the whole study on

penance; much could be said for taking grace or virtue as hinges. There is a striking statement, worth pursuing, that post-Tridentine theology down to our times has completely dismissed the ecclesial dimension of sin. Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* n. 11 was the turning point. The treatment of the virtue of justice, covering such topics as contrition, confession and satisfaction, will dovetail into the canonical use of those terms.

The second part of the book deals with the sacrament. One wonders why the sacrament is described as that of reconciliation, given that both the Latin and the Eastern Codes call it the sacrament of penance. Moreover the author, unlike the Codes, persists in talking about mortal sin: the reader will need some explanation for the divergence from the term grave sin. There are chapters on the sacrament itself, on the minister, and on the penitent; reminiscent of the three corresponding chapters in the 1983 Code. But there are also separate chapters on the power of the keys and on the sacramental seal.

The canons we have today still contain many technicalities, some of them affecting the validity of the sacrament and others exposing the confessor to severe penalties. In these matters, Cuschieri is a good guide, combining canonical exegesis with wider theological concerns. The frequent comparisons with the 1990 Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches are instructive. Some particularly fascinating questions raised by Cuschieri concern the validity of the deprecatory form of absolution, the reservation of sins by a bishop, and whether the word *licite* in canon 967 § 3 of the 1983 Code should really be *valide*.

All those training to be priests (and some already ordained?) should read the chapter on the power of the keys, which situates the intricate rules on faculties for confession in their ecclesiological context. Experience shows, alas, that priests who are religious have not all grasped that when they are transferred from one house to another in different dioceses they are deprived of their faculties for confession (p.238). Incidentally, are all priests as clear as Cuschieri that a confessor could be soliciting, in the canonical sense, if he advises the penitent contrary to Catholic teaching on sexuality (p. 276)?

Both in terms of theological reflection and of practical casuistry, there is much to be gained from reading this unexpected book on what could well be the most delicate and fragile of the sacraments.

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PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS AND THE METAPHYSICS OF AQUINAS by Fran O'Rourke. **STUDIEN UND TEXTE ZUR GEISTESGESCHICHTE DES MITTELALTERS, XXXII.** E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1992. Pp.xvi + 300. £53.00.

Pseudo-Dionysius (or Denys/Dionysius the Areopagite) was once commonly thought to be the Athenian convert of St Paul mentioned in Acts 17:34. Current scholarly opinion reckons that he was a fifth or sixth century Christian, probably writing in Syria. Whatever the truth of the