

Book Review: Serving Liturgical Renewal

Serving Liturgical Renewal: Pastoral and Theological Questions: Essays in Honour of Patrick Jones. Ed. Thomas R. Whelan and Liam M. Tracey. Dublin: Veritas 2015. ISBN 978 1 84730 562 6.

Patrick Jones served as the Director for the National Centre for Liturgy and as National Secretary for Liturgy for the Irish Conference of Catholic Bishops, positions he held from 1992 to 2013. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, according to this book's dedication, and of his retirement, according to the foreword written by Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, editors Thomas R. Whelan and Liam M. Tracey have recruited a collection of fine scholars, each contributing an excellent essay to honor a man who has inspired both specialists in liturgy as well as generalists in the faith, inside and outside Ireland, a man affectionately known to friends and colleagues as "Paddy."

***Serving Liturgical Renewal* shines like a beacon from the Emerald Isle. Nearly all the writers hail from Ireland, and they seize this privileged opportunity to contribute their wisdom, faith and admiration for their mentor and friend.**

The book's three main divisions concern "Exploring the Liturgical Event: Prayer, Rite and Music;" "Implications for Belief;" and "Implications for Life." Moira Bergin's concluding essay, "The Work of Liturgical Renewal in Ireland - and Patrick Jones," offers a concise yet thorough overview of the development of the liturgical renewal after the Second Vatican Council, shepherded by giants, crowned with Paddy's tireless work as teacher, author and consultant. Those unfamiliar with the thoughtful postconciliar liturgical activity in Ireland will find this alone worth the price of the book.

Paul Bradshaw opens the series with another excellent essay, sharing insights from his recent studies on ordination rites, as well as pastoral reflections that challenge trends to democratize liturgical participation.

Brendan McConvery's loving treatment of commentary by Honorius of Autun on the historical usage of excerpts from The Song of Songs as Marian liturgical texts strikes just the right tone to invite the reader into an allegorical spirit without shame or sentimentality.

More controversial topics receive a balanced examination: John Baldovin's musings on the future of those present Catholics who prefer the liturgical past; Neil Xavier O'Donoghue's survey on the development of the vernacular in contemporary Catholic liturgy; and Patrick Hannon's "The Eucharist as Weapon," a brave foray into the question of eligibility for communion when a politician supports a pro-abortion platform.

Broadening the vision of the collection are "Proclaiming and Rehearsing Justice in the Eucharist" by Julie Kavanagh, a refreshing and challenging sermon on the moral demands that follow liturgical participation; and "Reading John 6:1-14 from an Ecological Perspective" by Margaret Daly-Denton, who finds new and sensitive interpretations to the familiar passage on Jesus' miracle of the loaves.

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Musicians will love Gerard Gillen's praise of the pipe organ and friendly lecturing of fellow organists. They will also enjoy John O'Keeffe's definitive treatment of Mass Compositions in Ireland since the Second Vatican Council.

The book includes a posthumous essay on continuing liturgical formation, authored by Séan Swayne, Paddy's predecessor in the National Centre for Liturgy, as well as a study on the theology of nuptial blessings, authored by Daniel Murphy, Paddy's successor. Concerning the latter, the Irish wedding rite includes two nuptial blessings not available to the rest of the English-speaking world, one in English, and the other in Irish. Murphy puts both in an appendix to his essay, the second translated into English for easy comparison.

These and other marvelous monographs will fill the reader with much delight and insight. They will offer a glimpse into the good scholarly soul of Catholic Ireland. They will also make the work of Patrick Jones even more impressive by the quality of friends who have toasted his achievements with such strong writing. *Serving Liturgical Renewal* is a fitting tribute to a great man.

Paul Turner is pastor of St. Anthony Catholic Church in Kansas City, Missouri.

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