

recognising the valid questions and challenges posed by newer entrants to religious life. The book becomes somewhat unconvincing, however, when the author, presumably unintentionally, implies from time to time that small communities are better than larger ones. Nowhere is this clearer than on p.26 where a table shows the movement from pre-Vatican II large communities to post-Vatican II small ones. Apart from the crudeness of such a comparison, small communities are not an invention of Vatican II, on each row of the table the terminology used is favourable towards the small community and rather disparaging towards the large one. The author did not need to do this; her book is about 'small' communities. It is an unfortunate blot on an otherwise excellent book. Can the size of a community be its real problem? Is it really the case that a fixed horarium for prayer and meals is a hindrance to ministry and mission, if it is drawn up by the active participation of all the members and with the various ministries of the community taken into account? In my experience as a long-standing member of the Dominican Order, guidelines concerning the Divine Office, meals together and regular community meetings are part of a mosaic which *together* prescribe a way of life which is both apostolic and God-centred, enriching both our community lives and our ministries. One can find the presence or absence of coresponsibility, collegiality, subsidiarity and collaboration in either small or large communities. Having lived in both kinds myself, I can certainly attest to that. They each have their own strengths and limitations. There ought to be room for both. The Church needs both. Furthermore, as the author herself admits, some people function better in large communities while others do so in small. So, while this book could help small communities, it could also be of value in helping those in large ones, thus giving it a wider application than the title would suggest.

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SACRAMENTAL ORDERS by Susan K. Wood (*Lex Orandi Series*) The Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN, 2000. Pp. xvii + 197, \$19.95 pbk.

The familiar adage *lex orandi lex credendi* has a more complex history than is commonly supposed. For Cyprian the 'law of prayer' had been simply the Our Father, and Prosper followed him in using the phrase without reference to the liturgy. In the nineteenth century, Guéranger used it in his campaign of liturgical homogenisation, which led to its incorporation in a series of encyclicals until Pius XII found himself able to convert its terms, writing in *Mediator Dei* 'let the law of belief determine the law of prayer'. In fact, liturgy and theology seldom relate so simply.

The *Lex Orandi* series to which this volume belongs aims to develop sacramental theology from the Church's current rites, a welcome corrective to the western scholastic tendency to isolate sacramental form and matter from the total liturgical event. But the plural in Wood's title at once indicates the problem this method raises: there is a single sacrament of Order, but three rites of ordination, episcopal, presbyteral and diaconal: how can a

theologian find a common theme among them? Vatican II has added difficulties by defining the sacramentality of episcopal ordination, so that bishops can no longer be considered as super-priests but need a description of their own. Wood sees bishops as imitating Christ the Shepherd, presbyters Christ the Priest and deacons Christ the Servant. Because these rôles are so different, she argues, those called to a higher order need not be ordained to a lower one first: ordination *per saltum* should be revived.

The most valuable part of her book is its analysis of the three rites, especially of the prayers of ordination. In the *editio typica altera* of the ordination rites (1990), the prayer of presbyteral ordination underwent major changes. The English translation prepared by ICEL was rejected by the Congregation for Divine Worship, so that Anglophone countries still use the 1968 prayer. Wood prints a new translation of the 1990 text prepared for ICEL but not yet authorised. This makes her book required reading at present for any English speaker approaching presbyteral ordination, since this material cannot be found in print elsewhere, and the 1990 rite is highly instructive.

But her book should not be the only required reading for such candidates because she raises so many questions and offers so few solutions to balance them. The questions arise from the character of her material: the liturgical texts produced after Vatican II are only partly successful as an embodiment of the Council's theology. The rite disappoints her by presenting the presbyterate more in terms of sanctification, of the minister's relationship to Christ, than of service, of his relationship to the Church, whereas diaconate and episcopate are given a more ecclesial colouring. She can make little sense of non-residential bishops or transitional deacons, and has problems with the automatic presbyteral ordination of so many male religious.

These are genuine questions, illuminatingly raised and well situated in an analysis of the rites. But so aporetic a treatment of Order, though fashionable today, easily erodes commitment among those who receive it. This book could usefully be read alongside *Holy Order* by Fr Aidan Nichols O.P.

Liturgy is never tidy, and the more efforts are made to impose uniformity on it, the more it becomes a battleground between conflicting interests, as the post-conciliar period has demonstrated so amply. So, for a unified treatment of a theological topic we need to draw material from outside as well as within the liturgy. Saint Thomas' idea of sacramental character (whatever the sacrament) as giving us our place in the Church's sacrificial worship is perhaps capable of further development, and could offer a unified picture of all the sacraments that confer character, from baptism to episcopal ordination.

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