

It is heartening to learn from Abp Nowak that during the pontificate of John Paul II, up to November 2001, his Congregation has worked on no less than 1735 beatifications and canonisations. In part, this achievement is due to the more rapid examination of causes made possible by the changes in canon law and procedure now so thoroughly presented in English.

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CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGIONS. FROM CONFRONTATION TO DIALOGUE by Jacques Dupuis SJ ,translated by Phillip Berryman [Italian original pub. 2001], *Orbis Books, Mayknoll/ DLT, London, 2002, PP. xii + 275, £20 pbk.*

Six years ago Fr. Jacques Dupuis's major book, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (1997)—simultaneously published in Italian, French, and English - 'provoked' a three year investigation by the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith. Even without this publicity, the book's impact was already assured as Dupuis is a major figure in the debate on the theology of religions. The outcome of the CDF investigation led to the publication of a 'Notification' in 2001, signed by Dupuis. It did not require him to change the text but publicly indicated his 'assent' to eight doctrinal theses, which were allegedly obscured in the book. (The topics of the eight theses concern the sole and universal salvific mediation of Jesus Christ, the unicity and completeness of revelation of Jesus Christ, the universal salvific action of the Holy Spirit, the orientation of all human beings to the church, and the value and salvific function of religious traditions. In short, trinity and ecclesiology.) The CDF required the Notification be included in any reprints or new editions. I wrote a long review of the book and had found a number of issues slightly unclear, regarding Christology, but mainly ecclesiology. This would be expected with any good academic book. Reader's interested in the debate sparked off by Dupuis' book should consult a very long and detailed reply by Dupuis to his critics in the journal, 'Louvain Studies' (1999, pp. 211-63). This response (and personal correspondence) convinced me that most of my concerns were misplaced, apart from one. More of this below.

The present book here reviewed, is in part a revised, more popular version of the earlier book, as well as being quite different in containing new chapters and different angles on old materials. The basic argument of the book, for those not familiar with Dupuis, is as follows. He is dissatisfied with exclusivism (expressed as 'no salvation outside the church') and its opposite, pluralism (all religions are more or less equal paths to salvation). He is also critical of early forms of inclusivism (implicit faith, or natural religion), and wants to move to what he calls an 'inclusive pluralism'. This is a new development of Karl Rahner's approach, emphasising more the

anonymous *Christ*, rather than (as Rahner did) the anonymous *Christian*. Dupuis argues on a *posteriori* grounds that God must will the different religions in a positive manner, as 'paths' of salvation. This salvation is always from Christ, mediated by the Holy Spirit, and helps inhistoricise the reign of God in history. There is always one mediator, Jesus Christ, but many participated mediations. For Dupuis, this also means that religions are therefore salvific in themselves, not despite their structures, scriptures and practices. It is also the case that these 'diverse faces of the divine' (other religions) must find their fulfilment and crown in Jesus Christ, but it should be noted that this fulfilment is mutual, for Christianity gains and grows in its engagement with the other. Dupuis' trinitarian approach is rich and complex, and he is massively well read. He threads his argument through the tradition: starting from scripture, trawling through history, and in a third chapter offers a survey of the contemporary debate. The latter sadly omits any contribution from feminist or postmodern sources, which is a shame, for Dupuis fails to engage with an emerging position that calls all three approaches (pluralism, inclusivism, exclusivism) into question. Six subsequent chapters develop his position, briefly stated above, and the final chapter (entirely new) concludes on the importance of interfaith prayer. This is a very stimulating and helpful book which makes Dupuis' important contributions accessible to non-specialists.

To return to my one slight misgiving. Dupuis has certainly clarified his position on Christology and the Holy Spirit in a very helpful manner. However, on the church as universal sign and instrument of salvation (*Lumen Gentium* s. 9, and elsewhere), he fully embraces the notion of universal sign (in terms of finality), but refuses instrumentality in terms of instrumental efficient causality. Dupuis argues that instrumentality should instead be understood 'in the case of nonmembers, as expectation and hope, based on their orientation to' the church (212). In my view this position has the effect of making the church very special indeed, the best and fullest 'sign', but finally on a *logical* par with other mediated participations, other 'ways of salvation'. In this sense, Dupuis' approach suffers the same problem as Rahner's (and enjoys, simultaneously, Rahner's powerful argumentation). There is no straightforward answer to the question: how is the church to be understood as 'instrument of salvation' for nonmembers, and indeed Yves Congar held a similar position to Dupuis on this matter in 1965. However, in answering the question thus, Dupuis marks a new and important avenue in Catholic theology of religions, which will no doubt receive the scholarly attention it deserves.

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