

Reviews

WATCHMEN RAISE THEIR VOICES: A TALLAGHT BOOK OF THEOLOGY edited by Vivian Boland OP, *Dominican Publications*, 2006, pp. 224. €14.99 pbk.

For some 150 years, St Mary's Priory in Tallaght, the Dominican studium outside Dublin, has served as a prodigious center of theological scholarship. Tallaght, which began with a coming home of Irish Dominican formation from Lisbon following the penal period, now faces new challenges to its theological mission in the face of the precipitous drop of Irish seminarians. The Irish studium has now relocated to St Saviour's in Dublin, its seminarians studying abroad. As with the Vincentians at All Hallows in Dublin, the Dominicans at St Mary's are reorienting their Tallaght ministry—now known as The Priory Institute—to provide theological formation for an emerging cadre of Irish lay ecclesial ministers.

This beautifully printed, eclectic *festschrift* in which fourteen Dominicans with present or past connection to Tallaght celebrate their school's tradition of theological excellence begins with four essays in biblical studies. Gerald Norton (director of the Tallaght retreat house) begins with an essay which nicely reviews 150 years of bible translations as used at Tallaght, and Wilfrid Harrington (lecturer at the Priory and Milltown Institutes) offers a brief comparative review of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I was particularly taken by the venturesome essay of Thomas Brodie (director of the Dominican Biblical Center, Limerick). Instead of the commonly accepted Q-source theory for the non-Markan material shared by Matthew and Luke, Brodie proposes a proto-Lukan source structured along the lines of the Elijah-Elisha narrative of 1 and 2 Kings and later found in its entirety in several passages of Luke-Acts. According to this alternative theory, Proto-Luke was used by Mark and then adapted by Matthew, who in turn influenced John.

In another venturesome essay based on a forthcoming book, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (professor of New Testament, *Ecole Biblique*, Jerusalem) speculates on the parallel lives of Jesus and Paul as refugees under the Roman occupation—Jesus as a refugee from Bethlehem to Egypt with a final home in Nazareth, Paul as a Palestinian refugee from Gischala in Galilee whose parents were deported and taken to Tarsus in Cilicia.

As is clear from these four biblical essays, the Irish Dominican contribution to biblical studies is in itself noteworthy of celebration. This volume also includes five essays on preaching. The reflections by preacher James Donleavy, theologian Philip Gleeson, hospital chaplain and curate Benedict Hegarty, and moral theologian Archie Conleth Byrne are indicative of a post-Vatican II effort across the worldwide Dominican family to appropriate the charism of preaching in its contemplative, pastoral, and communal aspects. As a homiletician, I am delighted that Liam Walsh (Regent of Studies of the Irish Province), in his essay on Thomas Aquinas's theology of preaching in the *Summa theologiae*, has made a needed contribution to the homiletic literature—with insightful comments on the theological (as proclamation of the New Law of grace), communal (as expressed in the virtues, gifts, and charisms of a community's preachers), contemplative (in relation to the pastoral), and pastoral (in relation to healing) dimensions of Thomas's

perspective on preaching. Walsh distills from Thomas a vision of preaching modeled on Christ:

What is being announced in any sermon is the transforming power of the cosmic Christ. The word that does this has to be bold enough to take on the whole world. It is a word that conquers the powers of darkness, that makes the cosmos serve the Kingdom of God, that heals all human ills, that makes the earth and all it holds flourish and be beautiful. . . . When preaching is done in that way—as in a religious family, for example, in which the work of preaching is accompanied by all the other works of the active life—it is more fully modelled on the preaching of Christ, who went around not just speaking but doing good. It moves the whole world towards the fulfillment of resurrection that awaits it at the return of Christ in glory (p. 94).

These words serve well not only as a benediction to 150 years of theology at Tallaght, but also as a vocational call to the brothers of the Irish Dominican Province as they step into their future. This future, as Vivian Boland (Master of Students for the English Dominican Province in Oxford and senior lecturer at St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill) makes clear in his essay on study in the Dominican tradition, has to do with 'a recovery of the connection between study and contemplation, between study and a form of religious life. . . . If we do live in post-modern times, then part of what people are seeking in this crisis of modernity is wisdom and not just knowledge, understanding and not just technical expertise' (p. 121). The remaining essays in the book are in this vein.

Donagh O' Shea (St Mary's Community, Cork) writes on an obscure Eckhart sermon, and Paul Murray (Angelicum University, Rome) writes about the healing power of poetry after the 9/11 attacks. Joseph Kavanagh (moderator of the Priory Institute) has written a compelling essay, grounded in his experience of teaching canon law in Trinidad & Tobago during the turbulent seventies, calling upon the power of critical memory and a proper understanding of the reception of law to mitigate against an exclusive turn to canonical texts when what is pastorally needed is a more wholesome and praxis-oriented response: the common good must be the basis of all authentic interpretation of law.

The concluding essay by John Harris (moderator of the studium in Dublin) fittingly discusses Church-State relations in today's Ireland. Will the fate of Tallaght and the ministry of the Irish Dominican friars ultimately be determined by the disillusionment and alienation of a Catholic nation which no longer darkens the doors of its seminaries and churches? As Harris writes, 'The call to holiness is not the Church in Ireland admitting defeat in the face of secularism's onslaught. It is not a running into the sacristy because life has become too dangerous in the marketplace of public opinion. Rather it is the Church accepting her true role in the world' (pp. 221–2). The essays of this volume reflect a passionate commitment both to the Church and to the human person and a searching out of new ways for the preaching and teaching ministry that make the rest of us in the Dominican family celebrate Tallaght and the Dominican friars of Ireland.

GREGORY HEILLE OP

THE TRIUNE GOD: AN ESSAY IN POSTLIBERAL THEOLOGY by William C. Placher, *Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, Pp. x + 163, £12.53 pbk.*

Over the course of his distinguished career, William C. Placher has sought to stem the tide of Protestant liberalism's influence on theology. Far from being