

needed introduction to the tradition is often missing from contemporary constructive theologies. This book would work well in general introductory courses to theology, as well as in more specialized courses that examine feminist theology, constructive theology, and theological anthropology.

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Efficacious Engagement: Sacramental Participation in the Trinitarian Mystery.

By Kimberly Hope Belcher. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011. xi + 199 pages. \$29.95 (paper).

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Since Vatican II and the liturgical reforms that subsequently emerged, “active participation” in the liturgy has been much discussed. In this work Kimberly Hope Belcher contributes to that discussion by exploring a mode of sacramental participation that she refers to as “efficacious engagement.” At the heart of this exploration resides a tension between a “symbolic model” and an “efficacious model” of sacramental participation. The symbolic model has a linguistic emphasis while the efficacious model emphasizes an approach rooted in ritual experience, one that may be said to be “transymbolic.” According to the author, the difficulty with the symbolic model pertains to its reductionist understanding of human identity as rooted primarily in the linguistic and intellectual modes rather than a more integrated approach as embodied in the efficacious engagement model. To this end the role played by the body and embodiment finds ample illustration throughout the book. Belcher seeks to provide a balance between the manner in which sacraments are both culturally effective and theologically effective. With regard to the second she seeks to highlight the sacraments as participation in the trinitarian mystery.

One finds throughout explicit references to philosophy, cultural theory, ritual studies, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. These disciplines are brought to bear effectively in the service of her primary theological concern, namely, to emphasize that sacramental participation involves immersion in the mystery of the triune God. The book has six chapters in which the author examines the sacramental economy of salvation, the nature of efficacious engagement, the initiation of infants as involving a trinitarian dynamic, and the particular role of the Spirit. As a kind of “test case” the author uses the Roman Catholic reformed *Rite of Baptism for Children* (here read as primarily infants, that is, persons who are prelinguistic and incapable

of the symbolic mode). Belcher admirably employs the actual texts and rituals and posits how the body of the infant is the site of efficacious engagement.

The work makes useful contributions to sacramental theology and praxis, especially the theological meaning of initiating infants. It also serves nicely to highlight the retrieval of the centrality of the Trinity in contemporary theology and spirituality. Among some of the salient features of the work are its method of liturgical theology (employing the actual texts, rituals, and contexts as a locus for theology), its incisive (yet respectful) critique of Louis-Marie Chauvet's sacramental theology with its emphasis on the symbolic/linguistic mode, its creative dialogue between traditional theological concepts pertaining to sacramental theology (for instance, *ex opere operato*) and both modern and postmodern thinking, and its boldness in tackling some of the less than convincing reasons sometimes offered for infant baptism that effectively eclipse the role of the infant in the sacramental experience.

One criticism concerns the title of the book. It might have been useful to highlight the importance of the examination of infant initiation, since between a quarter and a third of the actual texts examine this rite in particular.

This work might serve nicely in an upper-level undergraduate (or graduate) course in general sacramental theology, sacraments of initiation, ritual studies, or possibly even trinitarian theology. It should find a place in any sound and up-to-date theological library.

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The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation. By Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012. xvi + 368 pages. \$39.95 (paper).
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One can confirm only enthusiastically the judgment of John Baldovin, SJ, that this book by Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, brilliantly combining as it does the knowledge and wisdom of two top scholars writing at the top of their game, "will remain a standard for scholar and student alike for years to come." The book is unique in its magisterially comprehensive presentation and liturgical-theological analysis of Christian eucharistic liturgies from their origins in the meal practices of the pre-Christian Jewish and Greco-Roman world, up to the eucharistic liturgies of our own day, and across the many and varied liturgical traditions and practices of both East and West. Scholars, who often have to spend their time examining this or