

Roland Millare, *A Living Sacrifice: Liturgy and Eschatology in Joseph Ratzinger*

(Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2022), pp. 335. \$34.95

Steffen Lösel

Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, USA (steffen.loesel@emory.edu)

This book focuses on liturgy and eschatology in Joseph Ratzinger's theology, but it also touches on Christology, ecclesiology, ethics and the celebration of the liturgy. According to Millare, Ratzinger follows Romano Guardini's insistence on giving primacy to *logos* over *ethos* and sets the *logos* of *communio* against the modern overshadowing of truth by a concern for praxis and a preoccupation with the individual.

Millare's argument stretches over five chapters. First, he traces Guardini's influence on Ratzinger to explain the latter's rejection of contemporary theology's preoccupation with the concerns of this world, immanentised conceptions of salvation, the subjection of the liturgy to individual whim or collective discretion, neo-Nestorian Christologies and worldly conceptions of hope. Second, Millare turns to Ratzinger's eucharistic ecclesiology. Central here are the significance of the Exodus for comprehending Jesus, the role of sacrifice in salvation history, the conception of Jesus as new Temple/new Lamb, and the understanding of Jesus' mission as vicarious representation for others – a 'pro-existence', in which the faithful must participate through the *ethos* of self-giving love.

In the third chapter, Millare discusses Ratzinger's *communio* ecclesiology and its implications for theological hope. While the church grows from its participation in Christ's sacrifice through the eucharist, *communio* ecclesiology suggests that hope cannot merely be 'natural and imminent' (p. 137) but is a supernatural virtue and sacramental reality. In this context, Millare discusses Ratzinger's disagreements with leading political theologians Jürgen Moltmann and Johann Baptist Metz. In both figures, Millare criticises a misguided focus on political and social transformation: hope for them is said to be entirely immanentised and realised through 'the efforts of the faithful ... working towards justice and liberation of the poor and the oppressed' – an idea which Millare judges to be 'a caricature of hope that does not come close to its supernatural end' (p. 140). In contrast, Millare contends that Ratzinger conceptualises hope as a theological virtue directed towards a transcendent kingdom which transforms believers. For Ratzinger, the eschaton becomes present in history not through political action, but rather in the liturgy, the moral life of believers and the saints who continuously renew the church.

In the fourth chapter, Millare analyses Ratzinger's Pauline understanding of the liturgy as 'rational worship' and the resulting ecclesial *ethos* of charity. While the eucharist here appears as *sacramentum caritatis* which gives rise to an ethic of self-giving love, the question of suffering falls under moral theology rather than eschatology, as it does for Moltmann.

In the final chapter, Millare discusses the practical implications of Ratzinger's eschatological theology of liturgy, including the celebrant's orientation *ad orientem*, the believer's task to become *homo adorans* and the role of beauty in the liturgy (the

via pulchritudinis). Ratzinger's concern is for the symbolic clarity of the eschatological and cosmological character of the liturgy. For this reason, Ratzinger argues, the liturgy must not primarily be guided by practical decisions, but rather by an interest in bringing beauty to bear in the *ars celebrandi*.

The book offers a helpful overview of the relationship between eschatology and liturgy in Ratzinger's thought. That said, it suffers from a lack of critical distance from its subject matter. Millare either dismisses Ratzinger's critics or overlooks them altogether (as is the case, for example, with Walter Kasper and Miroslav Volf). There also is no critical discussion of the supersessionist implications of the characterisation of the church as the 'new' Israel. Even more troublesome is Millare's tendency to oversimplify other thinkers' positions and Ratzinger's criticisms of them. For instance, Moltmann hardly argues that 'The mission of the kingdom of God is placed solely in the hands of the human person' (p. 140; indeed, Millare himself quotes Moltmann on p. 145 insisting that the world can only be changed by God). Protestant theology since Johannes Weiss has overwhelmingly emphasised that God's kingdom does not come through human efforts, but rather by itself. Millare might have missed that because he often conflates 'imminent' and 'immanent', as if an imminent inbreaking of God's kingdom necessarily implies its immanent realisation. Just as bewildering is Millare's critique of Moltmann when the latter affirms with Ernst Käsemann that 'the baptized participate in Christ's death and not yet in the resurrection' (p. 146). After all, this simply is a Pauline assertion (see Rom 6:3–8). Ratzinger certainly disagrees with Moltmann and Metz, but he acknowledges the rich complexity of Moltmann's theology and admits that 'it would be inappropriate to ... dismiss it hook, line and sinker/ on account of the problematic consequences that others might draw from it.¹ Unfortunately, Millare seems to do just that with regard to both Moltmann's and Metz's theology.

In my view, Millare also falsely assumes that Ratzinger endorses a privatised notion of faith. Ratzinger may well contend that God's kingdom becomes present in history only through the eucharist, individual neighbourly love and the saints. But he also insists that his disagreement with Metz and Moltmann 'by no means signifies that the proclamation of the Kingdom of God can be ... transformed into a surreptitious justification of the *status quo*'.² Even if God's kingdom is a moral rather than political norm, moral norms apply not just to individuals, but also to communities' achievement of the common good and thus to political activity. As Ratzinger puts it, 'Political activity stands under moral norms, even if morality as such is not politics nor politics as such morality'.³

All in all, the author presents himself as Ratzinger's acolyte rather than as a critical conversation partner. Millare celebrates a solemn mass in honour of the Pope Emeritus. Such masses certainly can be beautiful, but Ratzinger deserves more.

doi:10.1017/S0036930623000133

¹Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein, ed. Aidan Nichols, O.P., 2nd edn (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), p. 58.

²Ibid., p. 59.

³Ibid.