

Book Reviews and Notices

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE LITURGY. By Jean Lebon. Translated by Margaret Lydamore and John Bowden. London: SCM Press, 1987. Pp. ix + 148.

More than twenty-five years after the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, a foremost need in our Catholic liturgical life remains the education of clergy and laity alike. It is a question of grasping the basic principles that gave birth to external changes in our worship and appreciating how they are to be applied in actual celebrations. This book accomplishes the task well.

One of a series published originally in French and dealing with fundamental areas of Christian life (for example, "How to Read the New Testament," "How to Understand the Creed"), the book combines both a theoretical and practical understanding of our Catholic liturgy. In the spirit of its French title, *Pour vivre la liturgie*, the author never lets us forget that *liturgy is action*: the doctrinal truths that underlie it must find expression in the actual celebration.

Lebon, a priest of the diocese of Lille, France, and director of the Institute of Liturgical Music there, divides his treatment of liturgy into three parts, each of which consists of a series of relatively brief chapters developing the topic. The first part, entitled "Celebrating", deals mostly with symbol and ritual as the human antecedents of Christian celebration. In the second part, "The Christian Liturgy," the author discusses such fundamental realities of worship as the assembly, participation, ministries, word and action, environment, music and the liturgical year. The last section is on "The Eucharistic Liturgy." It leads us through the entire action of the Mass, explaining the significance of each part and making practical suggestions for a more meaningful celebration. A concluding chapter focuses on the role of a "liturgical team" in the planning and preparation of celebrations.

The author has the ability to explain important truths in clear, direct language. He frequently uses examples or makes practical applications. His treat-

ment remains enthusiastically faithful to the postconciliar liturgical guidelines but does not hesitate to suggest creative approaches. One might not agree with every recommendation but will appreciate the concern and openness behind them. The book has an attractive format. Its pages abound with charts, illustration, photos and boxed supplementary material. The translation is smooth and readable. Occasional errors appear, as when Luke 24:13f is cited as a reference for the Day of Pentecost (p. 26) or "patten" is given for "paten" (p. 83).

This book will be especially helpful to religious educators in schools and parishes and to all who serve on worship committees. One or other chapter could be the starting point for reflection and sharing in groups. The interested reader will surely be led to a deeper knowledge and love of the Church's liturgical worship.

James T. Meehan, S.J.

COLLECTION. By Bernard Lonergan, S.J. Revised edition by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988. Pp. xviii + 349.

In 1967, Lonergan published a book entitled "Collection." It contained sixteen essays, of which the last one, entitled "Dimensions of Meaning," ended with a description of a crisis of culture, the problems it entailed, and a call for complete solutions. Its last four sentences are worth repeating here, for they throw light on the need for the present revision:

Classical culture cannot be jettisoned without being replaced; and what replaces it cannot but run counter to classical expectations. There is bound to be formed a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. There is bound to be formed a scattered left, captivated by now this, now that new development, exploring now this and now that new possibility. But what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half-measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.

The formation of the solid right and the scattered left, as then expressed by Lonergan and now observed by nearly everyone, has now grown in momentum in the past two decades, and solutions are not yet clear. Insistence on complete solutions has to be an on-going dynamism, for these are for problems that go on and on.

The problem of understanding the 1967 edition evoked in the minds of