

religious event of this century, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) concentrated on the church and revitalized ecclesiology. As a result, a vast amount of ecclesiological literature (books, monographs, articles, videos) has emerged in recent decades. All these combined factors indicate the eminent usefulness of this Dulles-Granfield volume.

Only minor defects appear in this compact book (e.g. incomplete entries: cf. Surgirtharajah on page 174); the section on "Asian Ecclesiology" is somewhat dated and incomplete. However, on balance, the volume is a most valuable handbook; it is a veritable treasure trove of great utility for theologizing on the church.

Teachers, students, catechists, evangelizers and church leaders (especially Roman Catholics) have here an indispensable compendium of the best of ecclesiological literature, enabling them "to understand the various facets of the mystery of the church of Christ" (4).

*Reviewed by James H. Kroeger, M.M.*



*A GUIDE TO THE SACRAMENTS* by John Macquarrie, New York, N.Y.: Continuum Publishing Company, 1998, viii, 245 pp., paper, ISBN 0-8264-1100-2.

Despite the availability of a number of useful books on the sacraments, both scholarly and popular, John Macquarrie's *A Guide to the Sacraments* is a welcome and superb treatment of the subject. The author is a distinguished and highly respected Anglican theologian whose numerous books and articles have enlightened countless Christians of various churches over the past decades. He brings to this work the breadth of knowledge, theological acumen, pastoral concern and attractive style characteristic of his writings.

The book is not meant to be an exhaustive study of the sacraments, but rather a helpful guide for clergy, students and laypeople

who seek to understand their nature and role in Christian life. "My aim," writes the author, "is to maintain the genuine mystery as means by which divine grace is mediated to us in this world of space and time and matter, but at the same time to get away from all magical and superstitious ideas about them."

Both general sacramental theology and the individual sacraments are discussed in this work. Of the twenty chapters, the first five are devoted to a general discussion of the sacramental principle. Beginning with an appreciation of the sacramental universe (Chapter One), the author then explores for his reader the symbolic dimension of language (Chapter Two) and of symbolism in general (Chapter Three). His knowledge of contemporary philosophy and his ability to clarify and illustrate complex ideas enhance his explanation of these themes.

In Chapter Four, Macquarrie espouses the contemporary designation of "Christ as Primordial Sacrament," explaining it in the sense that Jesus Christ is the source, minister and content of every sacrament. Citing the work of the theologian Kenan Osborne in this regard, Macquarrie seeks to clarify more precisely the relation of each sacrament to the life and ministry of Jesus. Chapter Five gives an overview of traditional Christian doctrine on sacraments.

The remaining fifteen chapters are devoted to the individual sacraments: two on baptism; five on the eucharist; four on orders/ordination; and one each on Confirmation, Penance/Reconciliation, Unc-tion and Marriage. For each sacrament the author acquaints readers with its origin and history, but is especially concerned "to commend them for the Christian living today."

An important feature of this treatment of sacraments is its ecumenical tone. Writing as an Anglican theologian, Macquarrie rightly draws from his own tradition and often illustrates his point from the sacramental practice of his church. But he is well acquainted with the doctrine and practice of Roman Catholics, from which he likewise draws. Firmly committed to the ecumenical enterprise, his book will enlighten Christians of all churches on the meaning and practice of the sacra-

ments.

*A Guide to the Sacraments* is a refreshing and insightful study of Christian sacramental life. Even if the reader might not fully agree with every statement therein, he/she will be stimulated to appreciate anew the nature and role of Christian sacraments in today's church.

*Reviewed by James T. Meehan, S.J.*



*THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS* by Servais Pinckaers, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995, xxi, 489 pp. (cloth) ISBN 0-8132-0834-3 or (paper) 0-8132-0818-1

*Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul II's encyclical on fundamental moral theology published in 1993, has tried to resolve the difficult and complex efforts in the current search for truth and clarity in moral theology. Moral theologians have reacted to this magisterial teaching in both positive and negative responses. In *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, Servais Pinckaers, O.P., professor of moral theology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, has contributed an important study that is certainly a positive response. Originally published in French in 1985, with a second edition in 1990, *Sources* preceded *Veritatis Splendor*. The English translation by Sister Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. and based on the third edition (1993) was published in 1995 after *Veritatis Splendor*. A study of both *Sources* and *Veritatis Splendor* reveals a striking harmony in the two works. *Sources* presents the basic vision and foundations of the papal encyclical, especially its central teaching: "the 'heart' converted to the Lord and to the love of what is good... a 'connaturality' between man and the true good" (VS 64). Pinckaers shows this harmony by his brilliant and creative exposition of what he terms "the freedom of excellence."

Pinckaers returns Christian ethics to its sources: Scripture, the Holy