

**ROLAND MILLARE, *A Living Sacrifice.*
Liturgy and Eschatology in Joseph Ratzinger,
Emaus Academic, Steubenville 2022, pp. 309**

Matters concerning celebration of Sacred Liturgy belong to the most discussed in recent decades in Church circles, particularly from the pastoral point of view. It should not surprise, as according to the ancient principle mentioned in this book, faith and its expression in worship are inseparable. In the book *A Living Sacrifice*, Roland Millare, an American Dogmatic theologian specialising in Joseph Ratzinger's theology, presents the latter's conception of the liturgy in the context of its relation to the objective reality of *logos* and practical *ethos*, unceasingly directing the worship towards the eschatological reality to come. The book's title has been taken from Romans 12:1-2 where St Paul presents the idea of *logiké latreía* - a 'worship according to *logos*.' This passage occupies a distinct place in Ratzinger's understanding of Christ's sacrifice at Mass in the context of its power to transform the lives of the faithful. The book is divided into five chapters. In Millare's defence of Ratzinger's theology, he takes the reader from the foundational thesis of the primacy of *logos* over *ethos* (ontology over action), through the meaning of the Eucharistic mystery, to the practice of *ethos* most perfectly exemplified in the self-giving love, the fulfilment of which shall be achieved in the eschaton. In this way, the liturgy is eschatological by nature, and the eschaton begins its realisation and fulfilment through liturgy.

In chapter one (pp. 15-56), Millare presents in detail how Ratzinger sees the primacy of *logos*. Ratzinger follows in this regard the thesis of Romano Guardini, who analysed the danger of the modern secular social practice of subordination of *logos* to *ethos*. For Guardini, the modern practical *ethos* of domination and power (materialism) causes an abuse of *logos* (culture) commonly considered as *techné* - technology. He proposed a solution - a reorientation of Christians to the transcendent reality in the liturgy to restore its proper place as man's ultimate end. In other words, a change that needs to take place is from mechanistic *logos* and utilitarian *ethos* to a Eucharistic *logos* resulting in an *ethos* of self-giving love. Ratzinger adopts this argumentation, particularising that the *logos* is the Incarnate Jesus Christ. The *logos* is truth and love, meaning and reason, inseparably connected to faith and necessarily

experienced by Christians by the very nature of Christian connection between faith and reason. Liturgy, in this context, is essential because it transforms one into "a living sacrifice" in expectation of the eschaton to come. It allows reason to be illuminated by faith to experience Truth more fully and allows one to practice the ethos of charity.

Chapter two (pp. 57-108) focuses on Ratzinger's emphasis on the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, which is highly connected to his spiritual Christology. The primacy of *logos* and the eschatological perspective in which liturgy takes place establishes the principles, that, although the aspect of the meal is present as a dimension of the Eucharistic celebration, the major feature is Christ's sacrificial Passover - the new Exodus, through which communion with God is achieved. Jesus is the new Lamb and the new Temple, and thanks to His Incarnation and sacrifice of the Cross, self-giving love becomes the foundation of *ethos* for all Christians.

In chapter three (pp. 109-161), Millare passes to the first fruit of the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the ecclesial *communio*. Originating in the Trinitarian communion of persons, communion (*κοινωνία*) becomes real in the unity of the members of the Church forming the Body of Christ. This unity is principally God's gift, not an achievement of human effort. In Ratzinger's view, the vertical aspect of *communio* (of the Church with God) takes priority over any temporal, horizontal attempts to build the kingdom of God on earth, so much characteristic for various theologies of liberation. Millare contrasts Ratzinger's emphasis on *communio* as a fruit of grace with other concepts proposed by two German theologians - Moltmann and Metz. In their view, Christianity should be marked by an active seeking to establish, in different ways, a new political reality of justice. Ratzinger, instead, refers to the supernatural and eschatological hope, recognising a danger in their endeavours to build an ideological political reality and claim it a result of religious activity.

Pauline concept of *logiké latreía* in Romans 12:1-2 accompanies Ratzinger's idea of the *ethos* of charity taking its origin in the Eucharist. In chapter four (pp. 163-197), Millare elaborates how the communal experience of the liturgy, understood as sacrifice, transforms individual members of the Body of Christ into the eschatological reality of life characterised by the missionary exercise of the virtue of charity. In Ratzinger's teaching, charity is the greatest fruit of participation in the sacrament of charity (*sacramentum caritatis*)

– the Eucharist. This sacrament enables one to receive the supernatural gift of charity, which is foundational for the *ethos* of self-giving love.

Lastly, chapter five (pp. 199-249) is an elaboration of *ars celebrandi* as originating from Ratzinger's theology. Liturgy makes one partake in the heavenly worship through the earthly symbolism directing one to cosmological, Christological, and eschatological realities. An important dimension clearly linked with *ars celebrandi* is the beauty of the liturgy in art, music, and any other performative elements. Nevertheless, the first step to achieving the symbolically correct meaning of the liturgy is its orientation. Ratzinger expresses it in his call for the orientation in celebration *ad orientem* where all the faithful together with the celebrant symbolically direct themselves to the Lord. Pope Benedict's liturgical proposal of placing the cross in the centre of the Altar as a sign of a symbolic *oriens* has become a common practice in many places of the world. In such a way, the whole congregation visibly joins the cosmic and eschatological worship of God.

Millare presents a rich and well-elaborated study of Ratzinger's liturgical eschatology in his book. He applied masterfully a hermeneutical key of Guardini's theology and a broader spectrum of German theological thought of the twentieth century in order to present Ratzinger's argumentation for the primacy of the *logos* over the *ethos* of charity and an unbreakable relationship between liturgy and eschatology. The centrality of liturgy in Christian life and the perspective of the heavenly reality to come, as Millare highlights, should never limit the effort of worship to merely natural, material order or an act of human self-expression. This fact makes the necessity of the orthodox Catholic Christology, Ecclesiology, anthropology, and social doctrine ever more apparent. As seen in Millare's work, all theology and faith have their experiential source and the most proper expression in the liturgical celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

An element that perhaps could be improved in Millare's book is an additional discussion of theological views contrary to Ratzinger's within the contemporary context. One should rightly acknowledge that *A Living Sacrifice* is not primarily a work polemical to Ratzinger's ideas. As mentioned above, the author presents Ratzinger's ideas within a broader context of the German tradition of theology of the past. Yet, some of Ratzinger's statements would not be agreed upon more currently by some prominent theologians, like Walter Kasper. The only contemporary criticism explicitly mentioned in

the book is a generic highlight about too vertical and not enough horizontal conception of *communio* (p. 135). It would be beneficial to elaborate more on these critical aspects.

Because of its broad theological context and meaningful expression of the theological principles guiding liturgy, particularly in the last chapter, this book may serve as an excellent theological and pastoral resource for those who wish to better understand Ratzinger's theology of liturgy and become more immersed in the mystery of the Eucharist through a more profound comprehension of its meaning.

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