

lead if they hoped to attain their final reward. This volume makes it possible for the reader to follow these wayfarers down their path to the heavenly Jerusalem.

*Ian Christopher Levy*  
Providence College, RI

*Sacrifice as Gift: Eucharist, Grace, and Contemplative Prayer in Maurice de la Taille.* By Michon M. Matthiesen. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2013. Pp. xiii + 320. \$69.95.

The most important merit of this book is that it thoroughly familiarizes the reader with the fascinating thought-world of an interesting but undeservedly forgotten theologian, the French Jesuit Maurice de la Taille (1872–1933). Matthiesen brilliantly succeeds in presenting and interpreting the work of this profound thinker by showing in which discussions he was involved, and by suggesting what his contemporary relevance might be.

The book consists of three parts of almost equal length; each part contains three chapters. Part I is a reconstruction of de la Taille's theology of the Eucharist. This is particularly interesting because, unlike many contemporary (Catholic) theologians, de la Taille operated with an understanding of sacrifice in line with the tradition. Sacrifice is and remains an embarrassing notion, but if tradition and the loyalty toward it have any role to play in contemporary discussions, one cannot do away with it or let the hard core of the concept evaporate in the dew of a fashionable spiritualization. In recent years Robert Daly and Edward Kilmartin have posed problems with the way sacrifice has functioned in many post-Tridentine theological accounts of the Eucharist. Interestingly, and maybe paradoxically, one could make a case that de la Taille might rather be on their side than be a victim of their criticism.

Part II provides an extensive discussion of de la Taille's theology of grace. The strength of M.'s presentation is that she shows the intrinsic connection of grace with the Eucharist. Both grace and the Eucharist find their origin and meaning in the Christ event as it culminated in the Last Supper, Jesus' death on the cross, and the resurrection. However, the resurrection is not much thematized by M.—something that is probably due to de la Taille himself. On the one hand, de la Taille obviously inhaled the typically Christocentric atmosphere that had dominated the theological tradition of the West for ages, even if he personally was very open to the patristics and Eastern Church Fathers in particular. Apparently, however, the Church Fathers had not led him to think more in pneumatological terms. On the other hand, much of his attention was understandably focused on the unity of supper and cross, and this both for context- and content-related reasons. The way M. explains the rationale for this original theological intuition and at the same time argues that its persistent pertinence belongs to the best pieces of her monograph.

In part III M. deals with two related issues: contemplative prayer and the sacrament of baptism. Again, as was the case with grace in part II, she makes it amply clear that a strong coherence exists in de la Taille's thought between these issues and the Eucharist.

They are not just interesting parallels but are necessary additions to his understanding of the “sacrament of sacraments.” What he says about baptism and the Eucharist and, more specifically, about the participation of humankind in the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection, is definitely worth reconsidering today. M. ably reactualizes what de la Taille says about this participation, but she faces, as does anyone else involved, the very limits of the plausibility granted to Christianity in many Western contexts.

The book, however, does not entirely accomplish what it intends and promises, namely, to demonstrate how de la Taille can be a (major) player on the contemporary theological scene, where questions pertaining to the Eucharist, prayer, grace, the sacraments at large, incarnation, salvation, and fulfillment are discussed. What would this study have looked like if M. had started with these issues and then shown that de la Taille provides meaningful answers to the questions with which contemporary (sacramental and liturgical) theologians are struggling? As it stands, de la Taille’s relevance for these discussions is taken for granted but not sufficiently demonstrated.

To be sure, scholars do not doubt that de la Taille is an important voice to be heard, for we can learn much from him. His work does deserve much more attention from theologians and church officials today than it is receiving. The content of M.’s study is timely and interesting, and both her syntheses and analyses reach heights difficult to rival. In sum, in spite of some minor shortcomings, this volume is a must-read for anyone involved today in sacramental theology or interested in the future of the notion of sacrifice for the life of the church.

*Joris Geldhof*  
*Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*

*The Liturgical Vision of Pope Benedict XVI: A Theological Inquiry.* By Mariusz Biliniewicz. New York: Peter Lang, 2013. Pp. x + 341. \$71.95.

It is often said that one cannot tell a book by its cover. Biliniewicz’s book may be an exception. The cover photo shows Pope Benedict XVI celebrating Mass at the high altar of St. Peter’s Basilica. The photo is taken from the rear, showing Benedict facing the wall and wearing an elaborate red chasuble. He is flanked by masters of ceremonies, and a deacon vested in an equally elaborate dalmatic stands below and off to the side. The altar features the so-called Benedictine arrangement with a large cross in the middle flanked by six equally tall candles. From the outset one has the impression that Biliniewicz will be arguing on behalf of the liturgical positions favored by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI.

This study originated as a doctoral dissertation at the Jesuit Milltown Institute in Dublin. The first three chapters are an able summary of Ratzinger’s theology of the liturgy, evaluation of the post-Vatican II liturgical reform, and proposal for a “reform of the reform.” B. then turns to changes and continuity that one can discern after Ratzinger became pope. A fifth chapter reviews Ratzinger/Benedict’s critics with regard to the liturgy. In all this B. shows a steady hand, carefully and fairly evaluating