

Eucharist as Meaning: Critical Metaphysics and Contemporary Sacramental Theology.
By Joseph C. Mudd. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2014. Pp. xx + 249. \$29.95.

Bernard Lonergan never explicitly applied his system of critical metaphysics, as found predominantly in *Insight* (1957) and *Method in Theology* (1972), to sacramental theology. Nor, presumably, did he have the privilege of discussing theology with Louis-Marie Chauvet. Mudd gives Lonergan a vicarious opportunity to do both. Chauvet's innovative position on sacramental theology makes him an important dialogue partner, but his influence on contemporary sacramental theologians make it imperative to address his theology directly. *M.* presents readers with a veritable confrontation between Lonergan and Chauvet on the proper understanding of the relationship between metaphysics and sacramental theology, and, more narrowly, transubstantiation.

Chapter 1 is a reliable and gracious analysis of Chauvet's thought. While some readers of Chauvet often either accept him wholesale or dismiss him without serious consideration, *M.* exercises restraint in doing neither. After elucidating Chauvet's real merit, particularly his thought on the ineluctability of mediation and the connection between sacraments and ethics, *M.* points to Chauvet's overdependence on the Heideggerian critique of metaphysics, his misunderstanding of Thomas Aquinas's teaching on causality, and, above all, his exhibition of "the all-too-frequent failure of postmodern reflection to come adequately to terms with its own claims" (37). Chauvet, in sum, lacks a self-aware epistemology: "He is trapped in a methodological blind alley" (127).

Chapters 2 through 4 are meant to bring Chauvet's insights out from the "blind alley," as well as to familiarize non-Lonerganians with Lonergan's philosophy to fruitfully engage with *M.*'s constructive sacramental work in chapter 5. Whereas Chauvet separates metaphysics and meaning, for Lonergan metaphysics *is* meaning. The goal of these chapters, and indeed of *M.*'s whole project, is then to transpose "doctrines stated in metaphysical categories into categories of meaning," which are, for Lonergan, still ontological (159). *M.* aptly expositis the nuances of this critical metaphysics, which maintains a closer link between the objective *quid est* and human meaning than is found in a classical metaphysics, allowing for an objectivity apart from human perception.

The fifth and final chapter analyzes the Eucharist in Lonerganian categories. Ontology and meaning are so closely aligned for *M.* that he necessarily distinguishes his own position from that of transignification. Whereas transignification emphasizes a change in meaning *for the church*, *M.* notes that the change is not only in the Eucharist's meaning for the church but, because of the authority of the dominical words, a change from the perspective of Christ. Though *M.* does not mention him, this was essentially the position of F. J. Leenhardt, a Calvinist who wanted to use the term "transubstantiation," though under the premise that substance is coterminous with divine intention. The argument will be worrying to many who, like recent pontiffs, affirm that any change in "meaning" can only be understood in relation to a corresponding change in the substance itself. Even when *M.* seeks to distance himself from transignification, the anthropocentric strictures of that position remain: "When Christ, who as a divine person is the truth . . . says of some bread 'this is my body,' then the true meaning of the statement constitutes a new reality for the one who believes the

word of Christ" (150). While *sacramenta sunt propter homines* is certainly axiomatic, it does not exclude the obligation to discuss the sacraments *in se*, an enterprise M. would consider meaningless.

As is clear from beginning to end, M. assumes that modern Catholics find the doctrine of transubstantiation "embarrassing at the present time" (231). His first book intends to remedy this situation. Perhaps we should ask, in the spirit of Lonergan himself, Is it so? And if it is the case that many Catholics find eucharistic theology to be mortally deficient, is this because of a genuine deficit in theological acumen and expression or because the Eucharist necessarily transgresses the limits of reason? In either case, if the intention is to make the Eucharist more intelligible for the popular imagination, it is not clear how transposing traditional metaphysical terms into Lonergan's critical-metaphysical vocabulary will alleviate the situation.

Perhaps the key issue to ask of M. is how he perceives the relationship between philosophy and theology, for it often seems, at least methodologically, that for M. the latter is ancillary to the former (for which he criticizes Chauvet). Thus in his use of Lonergan's philosophy, M. comes to view the Eucharist primarily as Christ's "meaning." Is it so? Is "meaning" a faithful interpretation of "body and blood," or is it a sanitizing of the church's faith? Whether M. convinces his readers or not, his challenging book, with its patient and focused scholarship, deserves serious attention by Lonergan scholars and sacramental theologians alike.

Jonathan Martin Ciraulo
University of Notre Dame

Partakers of the Divine: Contemplation and the Practice of Philosophy. By Jacob Holsinger Sherman. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. Pp. xi + 283. \$39.

"Is it possible," Sherman asks, "to have not just a philosophy (or theology) *about* contemplation but to have instead a genuinely *contemplative* philosophy?" (2). S. argues for the renewal of such an approach to philosophy, that is, philosophy as grounded in the living practice of contemplative activity. His thought comes mostly out of the medieval Christian contemplative tradition, especially Nicolas of Cusa and Anselm, although he also reaches back to Plato and the ancient Greek understanding of *theoria*, as well as forward to thinkers such as Pierre Hadot, Jean-Luc Marion, William Desmond, and some contemporary philosophers of religion.

By "contemplation," S. means a species of knowledge that knows its object by acquaintance, that is, through participation in its object. More specifically, he interprets the practice of the contemplation of God as a philosophical practice. Rather than understanding mystical experience as an affective experience detached from knowledge of its object, S. argues that contemplation is a way of knowing, but one suited to an object (God) unlike other objects. God is the source of both the contemplator's possibility of knowing and being, such that even the intellectual experience of knowing into darkness is still a form of knowledge made possible through participation.