

by Raimundo Panikkar, Tissa Balasurya, Paul Knitter, etc. and how Ratzinger countered their arguments.

The sixth chapter entitled "Responding to the Challenge of Truth in *Truth and Tolerance* and *Without Roots*" analyses in detail the two works of Ratzinger mentioned in the title. In the seventh chapter, the author gives the response of the intellectual world to Ratzinger's homily in which he spoke about the dictatorship of relativism. The eighth chapter, "Ratzinger's Proposals to Overcome Relativism" summarizes this great theologian's response to relativists which includes the tip to "Relativize the Relativizers." In the ninth (and final) chapter (pp. 232-260), the author summarizes the whole discussion under the title "Benedict XVI and Relativism." This is followed by a short general 'Conclusion' (pp. 261-267) and an essential Bibliography of two pages.

To conclude, one can affirm without any doubt that this book is an excellent resource book in understanding one of the greatest theologians of all times, namely Ratzinger, and at the same time to know the various ramifications of the relativistic positions and the official teaching of the Catholic Church against such tendencies. This work is well written, logically presented and excellently documented with 961 end notes. It deserves a place in the libraries of theological and philosophical studies and it constitutes an essential reading for every catholic theologian.

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**Georges Ruysen, ed., *La disciplina della penitenza nelle Chiese orientali, Acts of the Symposium held at Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, 3-5 June 2011, Kanonika 19, Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 2013. Pages 399, ISBN 978-88- 7210-385-2***

This book, entitled *The Penitential Discipline in the Oriental Churches*, and edited by Professor Georges-Henri Ruysen SJ, contains the Acts of the Symposium held at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome. It is the second in the series of Symposia on sacramental discipline, the previous being *The Holy Eucharist in Eastern Canon Law* (Kanonika 16) by the same editor and published in the year 2010. Unlike Kanonika 16, the present volume does not have the title in English together with the Italian one, though this book contains two of the entries in the English language.

The book contains fourteen articles in addition to the preface by the editor, the inaugural address by Prof. Michael Kuchera, the dean of the Faculty of Oriental Canon Law, and a list of abbreviations. Faithful to the title of the book, all the articles deal with various aspects of the Sacrament of Penance. Danilo Ceccarelli Morolli, in his presentation "The Sacrament of Penance in the *Sacri Canones* of the First Millennium: A Review of the Sources with Some Brief Notes on the Margin" (pp. 15-27), analyses the historico-juridical and theological evolution of this sacrament by looking into the first millennium sources like Didache, Apostolic Constitutions, Apostolic Canons and various councils, synods and commentators. It can be stated without doubt that this article gives the right historical introduction to the study of the sacrament in question from an Eastern as well as Western perspective.

Orazio Condorelli, in his study "From the Public Penance to the Private Penance, between the Latin West and the Byzantine Orient: A Comparison of the Journeys and Concepts" (pp. 29-87), goes deep into the historical evolution of the sacrament of penance in the East as well as in the West, with special focus on the theological understanding, patristic sources as well as Eastern commentators like Balsamon and Zonaras. This scholarly work has 168 footnotes in addition to commented bibliography of eight pages which makes it an essential reading to anyone who would like to make an in-depth research on this subject matter.

Paolo La Terra, in his short presentation "Cenni sulla disciplina penitenziale delle Chiese orientali cattoliche alla vigilia della codificazione moderna" (pp. 89-97), basing himself very much on Felice M. Cappello's *Tractatus canonico-moralis de sacramentis*, argues that the present sacramental discipline of CCEO is neither the result of the arbitrary decision of the Legislator, nor is it in discontinuity with the ancient discipline (p. 89). This article deals with the following themes: 1. the minister of the sacrament of penance, 2. the form and language of the absolution, 3. the penitent, 4. the obligation to confess, 4. the place of confession, 5. the time of confession, 6. the vestments, and 7. the reserved cases.

In her article, "The Sacrament of Penance in the Rumenian Synods, *Fontes Iuris* for the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*" (pp. 99-112), Maria-Ionela Cristescu analyses all the canonical sources of the Rumenian Church, with special reference to the Provincial Synod of Alba-Julia of 1872. Federico Marti, in his study, "Inter-ritual

Questions in the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance in the Previous Legislation" (pp. 113-141), has highlighted various problems that existed before the promulgation of CIC 1983 and CCEO 1990, especially in the context of the United States of America. This scholarly work gives a very interesting reading to see how in the Diaspora context of North America, the previous canonical legislation had to be harmonized taking into account the comparatively new reality of multi-ecclesial existence of the Catholic Church. This very valuable study is followed by Andreàs Dobos' short article entitled "Penitenza e confessione nella storia e nella prassi delle Chiese antico-orientali" (pp. 143-152). This paper tries to explore in particular the sacramental discipline in the Assyrian, West Syrian, Armenian, Coptic and Ethiopian Churches. However, it is to be observed that the author has only the following material to offer regarding private confession and absolution in the Syro-Malabar Church: "According to some, the Malabarians have conserved it, others affirm that the Malabar Church has taken it from the Portuguese" (p. 144). In fact, there are various studies to prove with moral certainty that there was the practice of private confession among the St Thomas Christians of India before the arrival of the Portuguese. In this regard, F. Raulin, in *Historia ecclesiae Malabaricae cum synodo Diamperitana* (Rome: 1745), cites Joseph the Indian, who travelled to Portugal in 1501.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Jobe Abbass, in his scholarly paper "A Legislative History of CCEO Canons 718-736 on Penance" (pp. 153-186), presents the history of codification of the canons on the Sacrament of Penance by analyzing various volumes of *Nuntia*. In fact, this work can be considered as a commentary on the canons of the Eastern Code on the Sacrament of Penance. Michael J. Kuchera, in his paper entitled "Two Different Systems in Confessional Reservations *Reservatio Ratio Censurae* and *Reservatio Ratio Sui*" (pp. 187-202), highlights the fact that whereas there are reserved sins in the Eastern Code in three particular cases, in CIC 1983, in their place, there is also the reservation on account of censure. However, it is to be noted that

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. also: Varghese Pathikulangara, "The Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Thomas Christians," *Ostkirchliche Studien* (1975) 176-183; Placid J. Podipara, "I cristiani di San Tommaso," *Studi e Recerche sull'Oriente Cristiano* 3 (1980) 127-324; J.S. Assemanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Rome: 1721-1728, vol. III, pars II, 288, 391-406, 435-450. For further details, see the recent study of Dominic Vechoor, *The Sacrament of Reconciliation: Learning from the East and the West*, Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 2014, 76-86.

Kuchera does not enter into the discussion of legal questions that arise because of the presence of different systems of reservations that are found in CIC and CCEO.

Natale Loda, professor of Canon Law at Pontifical Lateran University, in his detailed study entitled “Le ‘Reservationes Absolutionis’ versus (contro) le censure: Reflessioni comparative intorno all’efficacia dei due sistemi del diritto penale canonico e sacramentale del nuovo ‘Corpus Iuris Canonici’” (pp. 203-283), in fact, continues elaborately on the theme discussed by Professor Kuchera. As the length of this study indicates (eighty pages), Loda delves deeply into the subject matter and brings out many pertinent pastoral situations like an Oriental Catholic going to a Latin priest for absolution of the reserved sin and a Latin Catholic faithful going to an oriental catholic priest to confess his delict of having procured a completed abortion. It is amazing to see that this study has got 254 footnotes and references to many scores of canonists of various ages.

Pablo Gefaell from the Faculty of Canon Law at Holy Cross University in Rome, in his paper “Introduzione della ‘Reservatio Absolutionis’ e cessazione automatica di essa (cc. 727, 729/CCEO)” (pp. 284-296), continues the discussion initiated by Michael Kuchera and Natale Loda on reserved sins. In this short study, the focal point is the automatic cessation of the reservation foreseen in the Eastern Code.

Janusz Kowal, in his article, “The Cessation of the Reservation through ‘Grave Paenitentis Incommodum’ (Can. 729, 2°/ CCEO)” (pp. 297-321), focuses on the cessation of the reservation due to the grave inconvenience that may cause to the penitent (CCEO c. 729, 2°). This is a well focused in-depth study having much use for canonists and confessors. In this context, an observation seems to be needed: Whether ‘the grave inconvenience’ is to be interpreted “strictly” or “broadly” is the crux of the issue. The author analyses both the Eastern as well as the Western sources in this regard and highlights the opinion that it should be left to the prudent judgment of the confessor. However, it seems that more clarity is needed regarding this subject especially because the system of reservation is something that the legislator willed and introduced with a purpose<sup>2</sup> and hence

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<sup>2</sup>“Even if in the codes there are many “merely ecclesiastical norms” as is said in a canon in both the codes (c. 1490; CIC c. 11), and, therefore, replaceable with others by the lawful legislator, their *raison d’être* is entirely “sacred”; and even if they belong to human “ordinatio rationis,” they have been formulated not only after much thought

"the grave inconvenience" is to be understood as an exception from the law (CCEO c. 1500; CIC c. 18), and therefore it should be subject to strict interpretation. If the confessors tend to interpret this "grave inconvenience" in a more benign manner, then the very system of reservation may become obsolete.

Luigi Sabbarese, in his study "The Procedure to be Followed in the Case of Sins and Censures Reserved to the Apostolic See with Special Reference to the Latin-Oriental Confessions" (pp. 323-337), surveys the historical origin and development of the system of reservation to the Apostolic Penitentiary and thereafter presents the *praxis curiae* and the way this remission or censure or absolution of sin can be done through the confessor. The inter-ecclesial situations where care should be taken are also well illustrated in this very useful and well researched study. Lorenzo Lorusso, in his presentation "Delicts Committed in the Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance: An Exegetical Commentary" (pp. 339-355), analyses the delicts of simulation (CCEO c. 1443), absolution of an accomplice (CCEO c. 1457), solicitation (CCEO c. 1458), violation of the sacramental seal (CCEO c. 1456 § 1), false denunciation of the confessor (CCEO c. 1454) and simony (CCEO c. 1461). Péter Szabó, in the article "Inter-Ecclesial Co-ordination in the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance: Intra-Catholic Questions Arising from the Possible Deferring of Sacramental Absolution in the Oriental Law" (pp. 357-399), highlights the points to be borne in mind in the pastoral field because of the differences in the legislation in CCEO and CIC.

To conclude, it can be said without any hesitation that this book is a very useful one and contains excellent studies. It would have been useful, if the editor could include an index to this book. I wish wider readership for the book and further study on this very relevant theme.

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but also with incessant prayer by the entire Church. Great wisdom must be presumed to be contained in each of the norms of the Code." John Paul II, "Discourse of Presentation of CCEO to the Eight Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops," 25 October 1990, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27 October 1990, 4-5; AAS 83 (1991) 488-489, *Nuntia* 31 (1990) 10-16. English translation is taken from George Nedungatt, ed., *A Guide to the Eastern Code, Kanonika* 10, Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2002, 23-30, at 28.