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BOOK REVIEW

Lonappan Arangassery, *The Sacraments of Healing in the East and the West: A Study on the Historical, Biblical, Liturgical, Canonical and Pastoral Dimensions of the Sacraments of Divine Mercy in the East and the West*, Kottayam: OIRSI Publications, 2021, Pages: xiv+265. ISBN: 978-93-82762-88-1

The book under review, *The Sacraments of Healing in the East and the West* by Lonappan Arangassery, a Professor of Liturgical Theology, Sacraments and Patrology, is an excellent work focusing on the Sacraments of Divine Mercy in the Church. Professor Arangassery, who has made significant contributions to the field of liturgy and patrology, is an accomplished teacher and a prolific writer. The present volume is his twelfth number and is undoubtedly a praiseworthy attempt and significant contribution to the study of Sacraments of healing both in the East and the West. The author guides and leads us to the Sacred mysteries in the light of the teachings of the Fathers and Church documents that stress the right of the faithful to the sacraments properly celebrated while remaining faithful to the approved liturgical texts and the traditions of each Church *sui iuris*.

Let me now whet the reader's appetite by selecting a few notable features of the volume. Besides the General Introduction and General Conclusion, the author divides the book into two parts and furnishes them with a running introduction to the development of the work. The first part deals with the Sacrament of Reconciliation in twelve chapters. There are discussions on the notions of sin, repentance and forgiveness in world religions and in the Bible, as well as the penitential disciplines of the early Church as found in *Didache*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, Justine the Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus of Rome, Origen, Cyprian of Carthage, Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil the Great, Ambrose of Milan, Pacian, Cyril of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Pope Leo I the Great and Caesarius of Arles. The *Ordo Paenitentium* in the early Church and the western penitential discipline

till the present times are dealt with in detail. Based on the early Syriac documents, the Fathers, the synods and the liturgical commentators of the Church of the East expounded the penance and reconciliation in the Syriac East, and besides the rite of Pardon, the Eucharist as the pledge of forgiveness of sins and eternal life is underscored (p. 96). The chapter on Reconciliation among Thomas Christians deals with the latinized liturgy of Thomas Christians, the rite of pardon, the rite of pardon in the Syro-Malabar Qurbana, Pentecostal Genuflection, and some of the typical customs and practices of Thomas Christians for reconciliation. The differences among the notions of sin, delicts and censures are well explained based on the magisterial teachings. Delineating the theological, pastoral, and canonical dimensions of reconciliation, the author highlights “the duty and responsibility of the pastors and ministers of the Church to be always available and assist the people in their spiritual needs” (p. 153). An analysis of the three rites of reconciliation given in the *Ordo Paenitentiae* of the Roman Church and the present much improvised liturgy of reconciliation of the Syro-Malabar Church is made, and some relevant and serious observations on the Syro-Malabar rite are brought to light (p. 160-162). The first part concludes with a discussion on reconciliation in the Orthodox Churches.

The second part of the volume discusses the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in five chapters. It discusses sickness, suffering and healing in the Bible and in the Church based on the early documents, the Fathers, and the Magisterial documents. The ministry of healing the sick in the East Syriac Church and among the Thomas Christians is explained based on the early documents, Fathers, and traditional practices. The liturgical rites of Anointing the sick both in the Roman rite and the Syro-Malabar rite are analysed and the main elements in both rites are given in summary form (p. 230-232). The pastoral and canonical dimensions of the Anointing of the Sick are well expounded in the final chapter.

This work is a very relevant one and is worth engaging, for it provides the readers with a better and deeper understanding of the theology of the sacraments of the Church in general and the sacraments of healing in particular. I confidently recommend the book to both the teachers and the students of Liturgy and Sacramentology who wish to have a clear understanding of the subjects taught and learned. The author has an inclusive approach as he elaborately discusses the various phases of the historical, biblical, liturgical,

canonical and pastoral dimensions of the sacraments of healing. He has succeeded in bringing out both the Eastern and Western perspectives on the sacraments of healing excellently, but with a special prominence on the Syro-Malabar tradition to which he belongs and the Roman liturgical tradition. The author has sufficiently emphasised God's mercy and healing power of these sacraments while developing the themes. The volume would be a great help to the ministers in the Church to understand the challenges and build up the Church of the future by walking with the people with due responsibility and pastoral commitment, leading them to these Sacraments of Divine Mercy. In a nutshell, this book will guide readers towards Divine Mercy.

The long list of abbreviations (p. xi-xiv) and the bibliography (p. 252-265) at the end testify to the fact that the book is well grounded in Church documents and other important sources and works. However, an index at the end would have helped to make better sense of the appendix. This scholarly and scientific work deserves the special attention of the priests and religious as they are the leaders of the people of God. May many people benefit from this edifying work.

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