

*Il Mistero di Cristo nel tempo e nello spazio:  
La celebrazione Cristiana*

By Pietro Angelo Muroi. Vatican City: Urbaniana University Press, 2014.  
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Pietro Angelo Muroi is on the faculty at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute at the Pontifical Athenaeum of S. Anselmo in Rome where he teaches the Liturgy of the Hours and is the editor of the well-known journal *Ecclesia Orans*. He is also on the faculty of the Pontifical University Urbaniana. This volume is part of a series of foundational texts published by the Urbaniana and is intended to be an introduction and starting point for further research.

Muroi offers a book in eight chapters, in which he explores liturgical celebration in time and space. Each chapter offers an introduction to key concepts of the liturgy, organized around liturgical celebration, and explored in its theological and spiritual meaning. Substantial footnotes in each chapter provide a starting point for further research. Each chapter ends with an “Excursus,” which summarizes key points: helpful in a textbook.

Chapter 1 presents liturgical “celebration.” After establishing the vocabulary of celebration, Muroi starts with the anthropological underpinnings of worship, particularly as developed by the Institute of Pastoral Liturgy in Padua. A theology of liturgical celebration reflects the approach of Odo Casel, Salvatore Marsili, and Burkhard Neunheuser (the theological tradition of S. Anselmo). He concludes with the “qualifying dimensions” of celebration: the anamnestic, epicletic, doxological, mystagogical, and eschatological.

The second chapter develops the anthropological starting point of chapter 1 and presents liturgy as a form of language, shaped by rite, sign, and symbol. French phenomenology is an important discussion partner, while English language discussion of ritual studies is absent from his presentation. The third chapter is a liturgical ecclesiology, based on an exploration of the role of the assembly in worship. Muroi begins by exploring the biblical understanding of assembly and using this as a basis for a theological-liturgical understanding of

the Christian community in liturgical worship. He concludes the chapter with a rich exploration of the varieties of ministries at the service of the community.

The word of God in worship is the topic of chapter 4. Muroi begins with the theology of the word as presented in the Order of Readings for Mass. He proceeds to a careful presentation of the structure of the lectionary and its many helps to interpretation. He considers the hermeneutic of the lectionary in relationship to the Bible, but again seems unaware of English language discussion (e.g., Fritz West's *Scripture and Memory*).

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 center on liturgy and time. Chapter 5 presents the anthropological background to time and celebration, chapter 6 on the liturgical year, and chapter 7 on the liturgy of the hours. Muroi's accounts of these liturgical celebrations are comprehensive and complete, offering both good historical background, helpful navigation of the current books, and thoughtful theological reflection.

Chapter 8 is on liturgical space. While the treatment is ample (almost 40 pages), it feels a bit skimpy in its overview of such a vast and complex topic. Once again, the author offers good grounding in the underlying liturgical documentation and apt theological reflection.

This solid, exemplary textbook is grounded in the method and theology of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute. It is western and Roman Catholic in its perspective. The bibliography, while ample, is mainly of works in Italian, Spanish, French, and a little German. There are rare titles in English. A helpful thematic index is included. This is a volume that would serve well in English translation. It would need an editor to adapt it to the ICEL liturgical texts and to replace Italian references to anglophone examples. It offers a different perspective from the recently translated *Introduction to the Study of Liturgy* by Albert Gerhards and Benedikt Kranemann (Liturgical Press/Pueblo Books, 2017). Recommended for textbook use in seminaries and liturgical studies programs.

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