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# The future of Eucharist: how a new self-awareness among Catholics is changing the way they believe and worship

Donald C. Nevile

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getting into heaven. Yancey states: "A lot of us talk like Augustine on Sundays and live like Pelagius the rest of the week."

In 1975, William Horden, then President of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, wrote *Living By Grace*. The thesis of Horden's book was: "my observation of the churches in action leads me to believe that a major aspect of the problem is that Protestant churches *practice* a works-righteousness that speaks more loudly than the words with which they teach justification" (14). Yancey wholeheartedly agrees. Some twenty plus years later, through this book, he brings together powerful testimonies to help us reflect on and practice graceful living in a world yearning for grace in "thought, word and deed".

In reading Yancey's *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, especially through its many personal anecdotes of grace and ungrace, as well as stories from literature, from movies and from a variety of church contexts, I find myself reflecting much on the question: How do I live God's grace within the contexts that I experience within a given day? As I wrestle with this question, I name it and my struggles with it in my teaching and in my leading of seminars. When I do so there is a strong identification on the part of others with both the question and the struggles.

Yancey notes that he usually writes about a concept, puzzle or experience, not to find answers, but to become empowered to grow in understanding and in practice. In *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, Yancey does indeed explore rather than define grace. He invites us to engage again and again God's extravagant love and grace in our lives, in the world, and as the heart of the church's gospel ministry. This book has tremendous value for personal reflection, small group study, and congregational ministries.

Arnold D. Weigel  
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

## **The Future of Eucharist**

Bernard Cooke

Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1997

61 pages, \$5.95 US Paperback

Bernard Cooke is a Roman Catholic practical theologian who, early in his career, taught at the University of Calgary's faculty of Religious Studies, and presently teaches in San Antonio, Texas. The subtitle of this slim monograph is, "How a new self-awareness among Catholics is changing the

way they believe and worship.”

Cooke is dealing here with the changing patterns of the celebration of the Mass by Roman Catholics since Vatican II. The title is a response to the declining number of ordained priests available in the Roman Church to preside at the Eucharist. But the discussion also has to do with the changing awareness and attitudes of Romans toward the Eucharist, especially their participation in and understanding of it. This, he says, goes beyond the Vatican II reforms and their original intention. He identifies six aspects of this new awareness among Roman laypersons, clerics, and religious.

First, there is a new understanding of sin, in which the faithful have lost the former sense of constant sinfulness, and are able to understand the Eucharist as a place where sin is truly forgiven. In addition, there is today a new awareness of the social aspects of sin, and a realization that there is more to our relationship with God than sin forgiven. This means that many Catholics come to the altar not out of fear but out of desire.

Second, there is a new awareness of Jesus, with more focus on his humanity. Cooke sees this as creating a sense of *anamnesis* in eucharistic celebration which was never present. There is also an important recognition of Jesus' social ministry among the poor.

Third, there is a new awareness of the nature of the risen Christ. Recent developments in thinking about Jesus' resurrection have influenced Roman attitudes toward the Eucharist. Formerly the faithful believed that Jesus was present only in the consecrated and reserved host. Now they are more able to see Christ present in the gathered community itself. As they realize this, they become the “celebrant”, and the priest is seen simply as the “presider”.

Fourth, there is a new sense that the church is not frozen in time but evolving. There is more awareness among Catholics that they are the church. Hence, there is more “ownership” of the Mass. Participation becomes more a deliberate choice than custom or obligation. They are more inclined to see church as a community to which they belong.

Fifth, there is a growing desire to celebrate the Christian life through the Eucharist. People are more inclined today to bring their experiences, joys, sorrows, and problems to the Eucharist. This affects its celebration. People sense that we know God and God knows us in the ordinary. This enhances a sense of the sacramentality of all life.

Sixth, there is a recognition of the benign power of eucharistic ritual. People are changed through the Eucharist. The liturgy works as rituals work, by making the faithful aware of their Christian identity and increasing their commitment to the community of faith and God's will.

In the long haul, Cooke anticipates fewer but more vital celebrations of

Eucharist among Romans, largely because of the shortage of priests. Like most Roman Catholic scholars, he does not recognize that there is a solution to this, which lies very simply in the ordination of married men and, heaven forbid, women! But that is another issue altogether.

Is this book necessary? For Roman Catholics, perhaps so. For Protestants, it provides an interesting window upon recent developments and attitudes among our Roman brothers and sisters. It is a call to leave behind routine and obligation in Eucharist and seek the depth and grace which is there. In this sense, we may all benefit.

Don Nevile  
Highwood Lutheran Church  
Calgary, Alberta

### **Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations Under Attack**

G. Lloyd Rediger

Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997

200 pages, \$17.50 Paperback

With the title of this book, Rediger names a demon which afflicts most pastors at some time in their professional careers: the person who, consciously or unconsciously, makes it their goal to undermine and destroy the pastor's ministry in that place. Clergy killers are "...persons who intentionally target pastors for serious injury or destruction" (9). They come in all shapes and forms, but invariably are characterized by the four D's: destructive, determined, deceitful, and demonic.

Every pastor must deal with conflict at some time in his or her ministry. Do all these involve clergy killers? No, says Rediger. Conflict is a normal and often constructive part of everyday ministry. In contrast, the Clergy Killer is a discrete pathological syndrome, which goes beyond normal ministerial conflict or the "attitudinally challenged" person.

Rediger carefully distinguishes between normal conflict and "killer" conflict, and provides helpful information to help the clergy professional tell which is which. He uses a "case study" method similar to that pioneered by Lyle Schaller in his many books. Hypothetical situations are presented, in which clergy are depicted in conflict with various types of "killers". The balance of his book is enhanced by the inclusion of a chapter about the other side of the coin—"killer clergy". Rediger recognizes that the shoe can also be