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REVIEW

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Liturgietheologie bei Pius Parsch und in der
Liturgischen Bewegung. Klosterneuburger
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Reviewer

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Reviewed Book

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Review

Andreas REDTENBACHER – Daniel SEPER (eds.), *Bibel und Liturgie. Das Wort Gottes in der Liturgietheologie bei Pius Parsch und in der Liturgischen Bewegung. Klosterneuburger Symposion 2024 (Pius-Parsch-Studien 22)*, Freiburg i. Br. et al. 2025.

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For many years, the Pius Parsch Institute has been working to keep the work and legacy of Augustinian Canon Pius Parsch (1884–1954) before the eyes of the world of Liturgical Studies. Over the last ten years, the Institute has published several of Parsch's own works in newly edited and introduced versions and sponsored a series of symposia on various topics relevant to Parsch's contributions. The present volume offers the papers given during the 2024 symposium at Klosterneuburg.

The volume begins with introductory material, including the welcome from Auxiliary Bishop Anton Leichtfried (St. Pölten, Lower Austria) representing the Austrian Bishops Conference (9) and a greeting from the Provost of Klosterneuburg, Anton Höslinger (10–12). Andreas Redtenbacher (professor of Liturgical Studies at the university in Vallendar and the director of the Pius Parsch Institute), introduces the symposium, contextualizing it within the work of the Institute and offering a sense of shape of the arguments to be presented (13–20).

This initial section of the volume concludes with a paper by Stephan Winter (professor of Liturgical Studies in the Catholic theological faculty at the university in Tübingen). The paper is a dense, challenging presentation: *"The Religion of post-Christian Judaism"*. – *"A puzzling non-reality" (Romano Guardini): The Word of God, the Theology of Israel, and su-*

pernatural revelation in select opinions of the Liturgical Movement (21–47). His paper, while striving to engage current theological questions (the impact of human beings on the environment, the Hamas-Israel war, inter-religious dialogue), and while thought-provoking, seems distant from the rest of the conference.

There are several themes under which the remaining papers are grouped. The first is perspectives of contextualization, including three contributions. Michael Meyer-Blanck (from the evangelical faculty in Bonn) enters into a dialogue with Parsch on his understanding of the liturgy, the Word and the Word of God and offers some counterpoint from his Protestant perspective (51–65). Rupert Klieber (retired professor of historical theology in the Catholic theological faculty in Vienna) explores the Biblical Movement in Austria from World War I up to Vatican II, focusing on the engagement of the faithful in bible reading (66–74). Looming in the background of this paper and several others is the context of National Socialism and its use of the word “movement”, which colors the word “movement” its own ideology. Alexander Zerfaß (professor of Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology in Salzburg) offers a detailed and rich examination of the several articles in which Odo Casel develops his understanding of the word of God in the liturgy: that the “story of Christ is fulfilled in the preached word”. In a short conclusion, he finds reflections of Casel’s theology in Romano Guardini and (less directly) in Pius Parsch (75–90).

The second section of the symposium is on the Bible and the word of God in the works of Pius Parsch. Four authors offer perspectives. Cornelius Roth (professor of Liturgical Studies and Spirituality in the theological faculty of Fulda and Marburg) offers the first in-depth modern study of Parsch’s 1912 doctoral dissertation, where he explores the Pauline teaching of the Cross of Christ (93–115). Parsch’s analysis is both of its own moment and also prescient of the later notion of Christ’s Paschal Mystery (developed with that language by Casel, though not expressed that way by Parsch). Janosch Dörfel (research assistant for Liturgical Studies in the theological faculty in Trier) presents Parsch’s understanding of the Word of God in a well-researched review of his articles in the journal *Bibel und Liturgie* including his growing insight that the Word of God is sacramental (116–131). Stefan Geiger (then instructor in liturgy

and anthropology [and now Dean] at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute in Rome) turns his attention to Parsch's multi-volume work on the liturgical year (English title, *The Church's Year of Grace*) (132–143). He explores Parsch's image of Christ and his use of Scripture and offers some judicious comments on Parsch's developing understanding in various subsequent editions of the work. This paper gives an excellent overview of the current state of Parsch studies. Johann Pock (professor of Pastoral Theology and Homiletics in the Catholic theological faculty in Vienna) studies Parsch's collections of liturgical preaching and highlights Parsch's growing sense that the preached word is sacramental (144–156)). He situates Parsch's work within the history of homiletics and chronicles the transition from Parsch's language of "liturgical preaching" to Vatican II's use of the word "homily". These four papers give the reader a good grounding in Parsch's own writings and how contemporary liturgical scholarship in the German-speaking world evaluates them.

The third section offers three systematic perspectives. Marco Benini (professor of Liturgical Studies at the Catholic theological faculty in Trier) offers a consideration of Parsch's use of the concept of anamnesis as a basic category that binds together the Bible and the Liturgy (159–173). The author carefully points out the continued development of Parsch's thought in the various editions of his works from the 1920s into the early 1950s. Benini continues to build on his earlier work on Parsch, adding depth to his account of the continuously developing character of Parsch's thought. Peter Ebenbauer (lead professor of the Liturgical Studies area at the Institute for Systematic Theology and Liturgical Studies at Catholic theological faculty in Graz) adds to the dossier of Parsch studies a consideration of inspiration and epiclesis in Parsch's writing and how he sees the proclaimed word as actualized within the liturgy by the presence and action of the Holy Spirit (174–190). Again, Parsch grows in his articulation of the role of the Spirit over the years of his writing. Johannes Paul Chavanne (professor of Liturgical Studies at the Philosophical-Theological School of Higher Studies at Heiligenkreuz near Vienna) explores Parsch's ecclesiology and the role of Bible in explicating his understanding (going back to his doctoral dissertation on Christ's Cross) (191–201). In all these papers, it becomes clear that Parsch himself is not a systematic but rather a pastoral theologian, continually growing in his theological

insights as he celebrates the liturgy and explains it to the faithful in his various publications.

A fourth section gives two practical perspectives. Gertrud Moser (a certified teacher and the president of the Theological Forum of St. Hippolyt, an adult education institution in St. Pölten, Austria) offers some perspectives on Parsch's statement that in the liturgy one can "grasp the Word of God with one's heart" (205–214). Ingrid Fischer (research and teaching assistant of the Theological Course and program director of *Akademie am Dom* in Vienna) reflects pastorally on the Parsch's conviction that "the Word becoming flesh in those who do it" (234–240). Both papers share pastoral strategies for developing an appreciation of the Word of God among the faithful.

Finally, a section of the proceedings documents the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Parsch's death and offers a brief word from the Provost of the Augustinian community (Anton Höslinger; 237–240) and the public lecture by Jan-Heiner Tück (professor of Dogmatics in the Institute for systematic theology and ethics in the Catholic theological faculty in Vienna) (241–255). This lecture brings together several themes from the symposium, beginning with the image of the beams of the Cross of Christ, touching on Parsch's doctoral dissertation. Paul's sense that the Cross of Christ is a point of contradiction and of choice is illustrated with an exploration of several poems and writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe that wrestle with Christianity and the contradiction of the Cross. The lecture ends with brief systematic reflections on the Cross as an image of suffering, of guilt, and of reconciliation.

The final section of the volume includes the whole program of the symposium (260–262), the background of each presenter, and the recent work of the Pius Parsch Institute. This volume will be helpful for scholars not in the German-speaking world to become acquainted (again) with a key figure of the liturgical movement from the 1920s–1950s, and a (sometimes) forgotten contributor to the themes and concerns of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council.