

## BOOK REVIEWS

**A**ndré LOSSKY, Goran SEKULOVSKI (éd.), *Jeûne et pratiques de repentance: dimension communautaires et liturgiques*, coll. *Semaines d'études liturgiques Saint-Serge* 58, Münster, Aschendorff, 2015, 332 pp.

From 27 to 30 June 2011, the 58th Liturgical Study Week of the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute was held in Paris on a redundant topic for several years. A wide variety of publications deal with fasting from the therapeutic, aesthetic, political and religious angles; think, for example, the rich book of Jean-Claude Noy, *The Great Book of Fasting*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2007, or *Science and future* whose June 2015 issue cover fasting, wellbeing, immunity, cancer, ramadan, lent, Yom Kippur (see also the review below). It is more rare to find a study that relates to the practices of repentance, especially “instituted in an organized and liturgical manner” (p.7). We can therefore welcome this multidisciplinary publication of high-quality scientific work organized in four parts.

After the presentation, two contributions are grouped under the title *Introduction*. The first, by Marcel Metzger, deals generally with dietary restrictions and religions, while emphasizing the fast practiced by Catholics and Protestants and aimed at “shaping” not physical but spiritual. The second gives the point of view of a doctor, Marc Andronikof, and discusses the physiological mechanisms, the therapeutic effects, even the pathologies of fasting.

The second part is entitled *Roots*. Two contributions start from the Bible: fasting in the Old Testament (François Orfeuil) and the New Testament (Yves-Marie Blanchard). Then are treated successively: fasting in Islam (Mohammed Taleb) with interesting pages on fasting and apophase (pp. 85-89); fasting in the traditions resulting from the Reformation, first in three Lutheran liturgies (Jean-Noël Pérès) and then in the reformed Calvinist cult (Bruno Bürki).

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Most of the book deals with *ancient Christianity and monastic traditions*. I will limit myself to mentioning the themes of these eleven contributions centered around repentance and its community dimensions: The practices of fasting in Jerusalem according to the testimony of the *Itinerarium Aegeriae* (Pablo Argárate); the monastic rules of the West (Bartomeu M. Ubach); the Great Lent in the Byzantine monasteries in the 11th-14th centuries (Michel Stavrou) and the current liturgical uses (Sophie Lossky); John the Baptist, model of fasting and figure of repentance (Nicolas Cernokrak); the Feast of the Cross and the Byzantine penitential practices of prostration and restriction of food (André Lossky); Bible and Lent in the Coptic Church (Youhanna Nessim Youssef); fasting and penance in the Roman Missals of the Council of Trent and Vatican II (Manlio Sodi); the Office of the *Bitter Lamentations* in the liturgical tradition of the Polish Church (Przemyslaw Nowakowski). Two very rich contributions with bibliographies are written in English. They deal with the many traditions of fasting as well as their canonical aspects, on the one hand, in the Ruthenian Catholic eparchy of Mukačevo (Simon Marincak) and, on the other hand, in the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition Tāwaḥdo (Habtemichael Kidane).

The fourth part consists of two contributions particularly interesting *on pastoral approaches*: "the Eucharistic fast" in the Greek Orthodox Church today (Georgios Filias) and "kneeling during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist" (Pavlos Koumarios), local, unofficial practices of individual piety, with the side effect of overshadowing the eschatological and joyous dimension. Indeed, as Yves-Marie Blanchard explains in speaking of the "paradox of Christian fasting", the gospel relativizes the importance of fasting and, "if there are good reasons to preserve the religious tradition of fasting, we must rethink its meaning completely, in the light of the paschal mystery. It will therefore be necessary to continue to fast, as a manifestation of mourning and suffering motivated by the absence of the Lord; we must also stop fasting to joyfully celebrate the victorious Christ of death, returned to life in the light of Easter, and present to the community of disciples without anything now can deprive them of this presence" (p. 75).

This rich and informative book is a welcome addition to contemporary thinking about the practices of fasting.

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