Saving Karl Barth

Hans Urs Von Balthasar and Protestantism

The Theology of Henri De Lubac

Priesthood and crisis are two words that appear to be very closely related. Or so it has seemed for the past thirty years and more. The crisis in the priestly ministry is constantly showing new sides, however-the issue of the priests' own self-understanding, for example, the interplay of the various different vocations within the Church, and the struggle, in the face of a plethora of different sources and ministries, to discern what constitutes the specific priestly dimension and identity. Again and again, in his theological writings, Hans Urs von Balthasar has addressed the fundamental issues of source and ministry, of priesthood and discipleship. He has uncovered the foundations from a biblical and theological historical perspective and has offered answers to the current problems of priestly existence. This book presents the confrontation with relevant trends, and at the same time the opposing current generated by von Balthasar, since he does not follow popular positions but instead gives us the very core of the Gospel and of revelation, like rye bread. In order to illuminate the spirituality and meaning of the life of the priest of today, von Balthasar goes back to the origins, to the apostles, to their calling, and above all to that moment from which their apostolic mission and their entire Christian existence originates, the Paschal mystery of Jesus. On the eve of his death, Jesus establishes the Eucharist and the priesthood; immediately after his Resurrection he bestows on the disciples the power to forgive sins, entrusts his sheep to Peter, and sends them out into the whole world. Thus von Balthasar considers the life and mission of today's priests in continuity not only with the first apostles, but above all, with J esus himself. The person and mission of Jesus Christ stand at the center of priestly spirituality. Hence all the reflections in this work revolve unsparingly around Jesus Christ and his mission. Jesus is the source and norm of priestly existence. Only when God, made manifest in the figure of the Savior Jesus Christ, is understood as the center from which this priestly existence springs, and only when this enduring center is proclaimed, can the bold presumption of the Lord in entrusting his mission to weak men be understood in confident trust and attract new followers, even in lean times.

Hans Urs Von Balthasar on the Spiritual Exercises

Originally published in 1967 (the German title of the original volume translates to The Whole in the Fragment), A Theological Anthropology is described by the author as "an essay." Indeed, it is man's history of theology, without firm conclusions, but brilliantly written by one of the foremost theologians of his time.

Light in Darkness

This book examines Balthasar's engagement with Protestantism, primarily in the persons of Martin Luther and Karl Barth, a topic which has not yet been given the attention it deserves. Furthermore, instead of focusing on particular theological issues, such as soteriology or ecclesiology, the book examines the implications of this engagement for Fundamental Theology. At the very root of Luther's confrontation with the Catholic Church of the Late Middle Ages, lies his antipathy for Aristotle and for "natural theology." In other words, the Protestant difference has as much to do with its suspicion of the treatment of faith and reason in Catholic thought as it does of the Catholic treatment of faith and works. This is a suspicion that is only exacerbated in Barth's identification of the "analogy of being" with the Antichrist. Balthasar takes these criticisms very seriously, and, in addressing them, not only has much of relevance to say to the Catholic-Protestant differences, but also has much to say to the Yale-Chicago differences. In short, this study treats primarily Balthasar's dialogue with Luther and Barth, with the hope that this dialogue will shed light on the impasse that seems to have arisen between the so-called "correlation" and "revelocentric" schools of contemporary theology. If, indeed, Christ is the "concrete universal," then we shouldn't have to decide between the two. Part of this proposal, then, is to emphasize the fact that Balthasar refuses to separate Fundamental and Dogmatic theology.

The Eschatology of Hans Urs Von Balthasar

Written in 1951 (with a second edition in 1961), this book takes its place within an impressive array of attempts to wrestle with Karl Barth's theology from a Catholic point of view. The book adopts the twofold strategy of presenting an exposition of the "whole of Barth's thought," while doing so for the purpose of a confessional dialogue among theologians. Not to be construed as an "Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth" shows how a rethinking of basic issues in fundamental theology concerning the relation of nature and grace, philosophy and theology, the "analogy of being" and the "analogy of faith" might lead to a rapprochement between the two great rivers of Christianity, without compromising the center of gravity of either. In the process the book makes a major contribution to renewed understanding of Christianity in a secularized modern world. Co-published with Communion Books. "No one should think he can quickly dispose of questions posed here offhandedly. It was precisely because writers were in the habit during the time of the Reformations of theologizing with a hammer that the split in the Church became irreparable. And to work at overcoming this split means much effort. Only the patient need apply."
although Hans Urs von Balthasar's earliest publication is from 1925, and although he was a mature forty years old in 1945, there is a deficiency in the secondary literature regarding his early literature, its historical backgrounds and non-theological sources. In this study Balthasar is presented in relation to the various contexts in which he was both drawing upon and responding to from the 1920s to the 1940s. The major contexts analyzed here are the broad central European Germanophone cultural context, the Germanophone Catholic cultural context, the German studies context, the French Catholic renewal literature and theology of the early 20th-century, the popular journal Stimmen der Zeit, Neo-Scholasticism, early 20th-century French Catholic culture, Swiss fascism, National Socialist literature, the Renouveau Catholique, the George-Kreis and many others. Balthasar's early anti-Semitism and some of the problematic aspects of his early work are also addressed in this study. His understanding of the modern age, his relationships with some key intellectual figures and his later reflections on his early work are also introduced. The book offers a comprehensive study of Balthasar's early intellectual development.

Heart of the World


A helpful guide to the writings of perhaps the greatest Catholic theologian of the twentieth century. Healy shows how for Balthasar the ultimate form of 'the end' is given in Christ's eucharistic and pneumatic gift of himself - a gift that simultaneously lays bare the mystery of God's trinitarian life and enables Christ to return to the Father in communion with the whole of creation.

A Theological Anthropology

A great Catholic theologian speaks from the heart of the Christ, in a profound and lyrical meditation on Our Lord's love for his Bride the Church.

Dare We Hope

Hans Urs von Balthasar prepared this overview of the theology and spirituality of Henri de Lubac, whom he calls friend and master, on the occasion of the latter's eightieth birthday. Beginning with personal reflections drawn from the then unpublished pages of "memos" which de Lubac placed in his hands, von Balthasar offers a review of all the major works of de Lubac. Von Balthasar illustrates here the wonderful synthetic power for which he is justly known: bringing the range as well as the organic unity of de Lubac's work clearly into view. The main themes of that work remain as important now as when de Lubac first took them up—perhaps even more important. And there is no one better able to discuss these themes than von Balthasar, a master of theology in his own right and de Lubac's great friend for over fifty years. Co-published with Communio Books.

Prayer

Although scholarship has long recognized the centrality of the Trinity in the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, no sustained treatment of this theme has been published until now. In this insightful new book, The Trinitarian Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, Brendan McInerny fills this gap, situating Balthasar's trinitarian theology in conversation with both the wider Christian theological tradition and his non-Christian intellectual contemporaries. Drawing from across Balthasar's extensive body of works, McInerny argues that Balthasar's vivid description of the immanent Trinity provides a way to speak of how "God is love" in himself, beyond his relationship to creatures. He then shows how Balthasar's speculation into the immanent Trinity serves as the substructure of his theology of deification. For Balthasar, what we say about the inner life of God matters because we are called to share in that very life through Christ and the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. Finally, responding to the criticisms that Balthasar's speculations into the inner life of God are without warrant, McInerny argues that Balthasar's bold trinitarian claims are actually a vehicle for apophatic theology. Balthasar's vivid description of the triune God does not transgress the boundaries of theological discourse. Rather, it manifests God's ever-greater incomprehensibility through verbal excess, oxymoron, and paradox.

Hans Urs Von Balthasar

Epilogue

This is an account, at once rigorously theological and warmly devotional, of the death and resurrection of Christ, and their significance for the Christian life. Von Balthasar offers sharp insights into some current controversies—for example, the 'bodileness' of the Resurrection—and spiritual inspiration for the year round. This scholarly reflection of the climax of the Christian year is an established classic of contemporary Catholic theology.

Priestly Spirituality

As we near the bicentennial of Von Balthasar's birth, we welcome this brilliant study of how Von Balthasar drew from the early church for his vision of what great theology should be.

Mysterium Paschale

The Oxford Handbook of Catholic Theology provides a one-volume introduction to all the major aspects of Catholic theology. Part One considers the nature of theological thinking, and the major topics of Catholic teaching, including the Triune God, the Creation, and the mission of the Incarnate Word. It also covers the character of the Christian sacramental life and the major themes of Catholic moral teaching. The treatments in the first part of the Handbook offer personal syntheses of Catholic teaching, but each offers an account in accord with Catholic theology as it is expressed in the Second Vatican Council and authoritative documentation. Part Two focuses on the historical development of Catholic Theology. An initial
Hans Urs von Balthasar is widely recognized as perhaps the greatest Catholic theologian of the twentieth century. No writer has better revealed the spiritual greatness of the revelation to which the art of the Church and the historic liturgies bear witness. Hans Urs von Balthasar, who mistrust von Balthasar's critics need to be more Balthasarian in their response to criticisms of the Swiss theologian. Should benefit both from the rich and wide-ranging conversations that mark his trilogy and from the critical and constructive engagement with German philosophical modernity offered by the trilogy. In addition, Levering hopes to show that those who mistrust von Balthasar's critics need to be more Balthasarian in their response to criticisms of the Swiss theologian.

In The Achievement of Hans Urs von Balthasar, Matthew Levering has written a book for theologically educated readers who mistrust Balthasar or who mistrust von Balthasar's critics. The book shows that von Balthasar's critics can and should benefit both from the rich and wide-ranging conversations that mark his trilogy and from the critical and constructive engagement with German philosophical modernity offered by the trilogy. In addition, Levering hopes to show that those who mistrust von Balthasar's critics need to be more Balthasarian in their response to criticisms of the Swiss theologian.

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witness. Yet students and non-specialist readers often find Balthasar daunting and difficult. A Key to Balthasar is the ideal introduction to his work. It unlocks the treasure of his theology by focusing on the beautiful, the good, and the true. These are the three qualities of being around which his great trilogy - The Glory of the Lord; Theo-drama and Theo-logic - revolves. Though brief, it captures the essence of what Balthasar wished to say.

The Systematic Thought of Hans Urs Von Balthasar

Theo-Logic is the third and crowning part of the great trilogy of the masterwork of theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, following his first two parts, The Glory of the Lord and Theo-Drama. This is the third volume of Theo-Logic. Theo-Logic is a variation of theology, it being about not so much what man says about God, but what God speaks about himself. Balthasar does not address the truth about God until he first reflects on the beauty of God (The Glory of the Lord). Then he follows with his reflections on the great drama of our salvation and the goodness and mercy of the God who saves us. (Theo-Drama). Now, in this work, he is ready to reflect on the truth that God reveals about himself, which is not something abstract or theoretical, but rather the concrete and mysterious richness of God's being as a personal and loving God.

The Oxford Handbook of Catholic Theology

Hans Urs Von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth

In one of the last books written before his death, the great theologian provides a moving and profound meditation on the theme of spiritual childhood. Somewhat startlingly, von Balthasar puts forth his conviction that the central mystery of Christianity is our transformation from world-wise, self-sufficient "adults" into abiding children of the Father of Jesus by the grace of their Spirit.

C. G. Jung and Hans Urs von Balthasar

"I would like one day," Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote in 1952, "to write a book on Ignatius of Loyola, the saint of whom I will always consider myself the least of sons." The Jesuit-formed theologian from Switzerland—widely considered one of the greatest thinkers and spiritual writers of modern times—never got the chance to fulfill this dream. Instead, Balthasar's whole theology, from Theo-Drama to Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved", is imbued with the influence of Saint Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus and author of the Spiritual Exercises, a multi-week retreat guide that has rejuvenated Catholic spirituality since the sixteenth century. Throughout Balthasar's priestly life, he led countless retreatants in the Ignatian Exercises, accompanying them in their discernment of God's call. This anthology is an aid for those either giving or receiving an Ignatian retreat. Full of citations and equipped with four indexes, as well as many texts never before translated into English, it sifts Balthasar's writings for insights into almost every element of Ignatius' "libretto", sometimes diving into themes scarcely explored by others. Moreover, it maps out those hidden strains of Jesuit spirituality that run unnoticed through the theologian's oeuvre. Yet the book may help anyone at all who wants to engage more deeply with Jesuits or come to grips with Church doctrine, for as Balthasar himself says, the Spiritual Exercises are both a "great school of Christocentric contemplation" and a "genuine interpretation of the deposit of the faith".

The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs Von Balthasar

In Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Critical Appropriation of Russian Religious Thought, Jennifer Newsome Martin offers the first systematic treatment and evaluation of the Swiss Catholic theologian's complex relation to modern speculative Russian religious philosophy. Her constructive analysis proceeds through Balthasar's critical reception of Vladimir Solovev, Nicholas Berdyaev, and Sergei Bulgakov with respect to theological aesthetics, myth, eschatology, and Trinitarian discourse and examines how Balthasar adjudicates both the possibilities and the limits of theological appropriation, especially considering the degree to which these Russian thinkers have been influenced by German Idealism and Romanticism. Martin argues that Balthasar's creative reception and modulation of the thought of these Russian philosophers is indicative of a broad speculative tendency in his work that deserves further attention. In this respect, Martin consciously challenges the prevailing view of Balthasar as a fundamentally conservative or nostalgic thinker. In her discussion of the relation between tradition and theological speculation, Martin also draws upon the understudied relation between Balthasar and F. W. J. Schelling, especially as Schelling's form of Idealism was passed down through the Russian thinkers. In doing so, she persuasively recasts Balthasar as an ecumenical, creatively anti-nostalgic theologian hospitable to the richness of contributions from extra-magisterial and non-Catholic sources.

Elucidations

Publisher's description: Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) is one of the most prolific, creative and wide-ranging theologians of the twentieth century who is just now coming to prominence. But because of his own daring speculations about the meaning of Christ's descent into hell after the crucifixion, about the uniqueness of Christ as savior of a pluralistic world, and because he draws so many of his resources for his theology from literature, drama, and philosophy, Balthasar has never been an easily-categorized theologian. He is neither liberal nor conservative, neither Thomist nor modernist and he seems to elude all attempts to capture the exact way he creatively reinterprets the tradition of Christian thought. For that reason, this Companion is singularly welcome bringing together a wide range of theologians both to outline and to assess the work of someone whom history will surely rank someday with Origen, J. John Calvin, and Karl Barth.

Solidarity with the World

He descended into hell. Hans Urs von Balthasar, one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth-century, placed this affirmation of the Nicene Creed at the heart of his reflection on the world-altering events of Holy Week, asserting that this identification of God with the human experience is at the "absolute center" of the Christian faith. In the first comprehensive treatment of von Balthasar's theology of Holy Saturday, Alyssia Pitstick draws on the multiple yet unified resources of authoritative Catholic thinking on Christ's descent to challenge von Balthasar's influential conclusions. Light in Darkness will spur debate across the theological spectrum, as scholars and students explore the implications of this careful, contrarian book.

Christ and Analogy

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Romano Guardini

Is Christian mission even possible today? In “a secular age,” is it possible to talk about the goodness of God in a compelling way? How should the church proceed? Carolyn Chau explores the question of Catholic mission in a secular age through a constructive interpretation of the work of two celebrated Catholic thinkers, philosopher Charles Taylor and theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, arguing that Taylor and Balthasar together offer a promising path for mission today. Chau attends to Taylor's account of the conditions of belief today, and the genesis of the sociohistorical limits on contemporary “God-talk,” as well as his affirmation of certain aspects of Western modernity’s “culture.” From Balthasar, Chau sifts out the distinctive vision of the human person as defined by mission, and his encouragement of a kerygic self-understanding of the church. In the end, Chau claims that if modern persons in secular Western societies are seeking fulfillment and integrity, Christian spirituality remains a rich resource on offer.

To the Heart of the Mystery of Redemption

In the 1960s, Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar gave two conferences in Paris on the subject of redemption. One considered the perspective of Christ the Redeemer. The other gave a view of the redemption from the perspective of Mary and the Church, consenting to the sacrifice of Jesus. These two conferences are what Fr. Jacques Servais, S.J., in his foreword calls “a lantern of the Word,” shedding light amidst the advancing turmoil of the postconciliar period. These conferences were later collected by the eminent theologian Henri Cardinal de Lubac, S.J., in a single volume along with an anthology of meditations on the Passion by the mystic Adrienne von Speyr, and selected by von Balthasar. In this new edition, prepared for the centenary of the birth of Hans Urs von Balthasar, Fr. Servais, the director of Casa Balthasar in Rome, provides an extensive postscript, continuing the text along with the original preface by de Lubac.

Unless You Become Like this Child

This book brings together the work of Carl Gustav Jung and Hans Urs von Balthasar, two of the most creative thinkers in psychology and theology in the twentieth century, to critically compare their ideas on the perennial question of God's involvement with evil. In later life Jung embarked on a project relating to Christianity, with psychotherapeutic and theological intentions, forming his collection of essays, Symbolik des Geistes, in which God and evil was a major theme. Balthasar gave significant attention to Jung's psychology in his own theological trilogy, but opposed the approach to God and evil that Jung presented. In this book Les Oglesby provides a thorough examination of convergences and divergences in Jung and Balthasar's thinking, their different approaches to the origins and reality of evil, as well as their alternative theological orientations. The book culminates with a study of each man's understanding of the central event of Christianity, Christ's death on the Cross and his descent to the dead and discusses how Balthasar's 'vertical' and Jung's 'horizontal' approach to this major happening can be held together fruitfully with one another. Illustrating how analytical psychology and Christian theology can mutually enrich one another when they are held in creative tension, this book invites reflection on the meaning of the central symbol of Christianity, and God's involvement with evil as an aid to integrated psychological living and theological maturity. It will prove fascinating for students of psychology and religion as well as for Jungian analysts and practical theologians.

Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Critical Appropriation of Russian Religious Thought

"This book should go a long way in establishing Balthasar as an essential voice in contemporary conversations among philosophers and theologians, especially in light of postmodern debates about the end of metaphysics and of "overcoming onthology." "Schindler not only demonstrates the fundamental connections between Balthasar and the wider philosophical project of this century; he also demonstrates the continuing power of Balthasar's theology - as a human encounter with the glory of God - to shape culture and community."--BOOK JACKET.

A Key to Balthasar

Romano Guardini (1885-1968) was one of the greatest Catholic minds of the twentieth century. He helped shape Catholic theology between the two world wars and after, as well as the thinking of many non-Catholics of the period. His influence contributed to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and it is to be felt through Pope Benedict, who, as a theologian, a cardinal and now as Pope, has drawn extensively on Guardini for inspiration. Indeed, Guardini was a major theological mentor of Benedict XVI, influencing the Pope from his understanding of Jesus to his writings on the sacred Liturgy, from his view of faith to his perspective on the modern world. Romano Guardini: Reform from the Source, written by another great theological mind, Hans Urs von Balthasar, presents a kind of "roadmap" to Guardini's thought. As an introduction to Guardini, von Balthasar's study is intended to challenge readers to take up Guardini's own writings and to find in him the wisdom that has inspired so many others. Many of Guardini's influential works are still in print today, works that cover a wide range of important spiritual, theological, and moral issues.

Balthasar and the Option for the Poor

This volume by Angelo Scola, a longtime friend of Balthasar and a leading scholar of his work, provides the most penetrating introduction to the vast writings of the great Catholic theologian available anywhere. Scola beautifully captures Balthasar's "theological style" and offers a reading of Balthasar that passes through the most important phases of his writings: theological, philosophical, and artistic. Intended to serve as an examination of the "form" of Balthasar's philosophical and theological approach rather than as a detailed overview of his themes and theses, this study will be an invaluable aid to students and scholars seeking to understanding the complex body of Balthasar's work. FROM THE CRITICS "Balthasar's thought is complex, and Angelo Scola gives us a helpful guide." - New Oxford Review "An invaluable introduction to the theological style which permeates Balthasar's writings. A 'must' for the serious student of Balthasar, Scola's text represents an invaluable addition to college and university libraries." - Catholic Library World

Our Task

In this volume, J. Johnsson presents an analysis of von Balthasar's work in dogmatics and provides the structural linchpin for understanding the whole of this massive (and massively important) systematic theology by reconstructing the metaphysics of von Balthasar. Taking the person of Jesus Christ as the metaphysical starting point, the project highlights the fundamental connections to key doctrinal, historical, and philosophical issues. This is a critical volume for professors, scholars, and students in systematic theology, philosophical theology, and the study of twentieth-century Catholic and Protestant theology and history.

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