

representative of English Catholics, if for no other reason than to scupper accusations that continental Catholics could never understand the 'English' or anyway the 'Anglican' mentality. In February 1924, alluding to himself as an 'old Irish Catholic', McNabb wrote to Portal asking him to get Mercier to intercede with the Dominican authorities in Rome to allow him to write something in *Blackfriars* favourable to Mercier's pastoral letter justifying the Conversations. But there is much more to this murky story, of which the complexities are very well traced and assessed in this book. In the end, the author concludes, since the influence of Mercier and Halifax, twenty years after their deaths, on the future Pope John XXIII is well attested, the Malines Conversations have an important part in the development of a more eirenic and ecumenical Catholic Church.

ANGLICAN ORDERS: THE DOCUMENTS IN THE DEBATE edited by Christopher Hill and Edward Yarnold SJ, *Canterbury Press*, Norwich, 1997, 355 pages, £30.

In 1896 Pope Leo XIII declared Anglican priestly orders to be 'absolutely null and utterly void': a decision, even allowing for the bombast of Vatican language, which sounds pretty irreversible. The purpose of this collection of documents is, firstly, to show the limited context of the verdict and, secondly, by demonstrating the thoroughness, fairness and wide spectrum of opinion that characterized the debate, to dispel some of the anger still felt (sometimes, now, by English Catholics as well). The editors 'have not enjoyed access' to the archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: they dedicate the book to Fr Giuseppe Rambaldi SJ who spent many years tracking down several of the documents in various other archives. Besides *Apostolicae Curae* itself and *Saepius Officio* (the response of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York), extracts from T.A. Lacey's diary, two letters by Abbé Fernand Portal (whose chance meeting with Lord Halifax in Madeira in 1889 started the whole thing), and one by T. B. Scannell (out of a quite lengthy series in *The Tablet*), the book contains the judgments of Mgr Pietro Gasparri, Abbé Louis Duchesne, the Jesuit theologian A.M. De Augustinis and the joint opinion of the English Catholic triad, Canon James Moyes, Dom Aidan Gasquet and the Franciscan David Fleming. It takes stamina and a level head to enter the debate. The English triad was most concerned to discredit the consecration of Matthew Parker as Queen Elizabeth's first Archbishop of Canterbury in 1559 on the grounds that there is no surviving record of the episcopal consecration of William Barlow, the chief consecrator. The questions of form, intention, etc., demand even closer attention than the conjectural history. The decision of Pius XII in 1947, that the essential act in the sacrament of Order is the imposition of the bishop's hands together with the prayer, thus sidelining the handing over of chalice and paten with bread and wine, may arguably

have affected the principles on which the judgment of 1896 was based. The decisive factor in *Apostolicae Curae* was, in any case, the 'native character and spirit' of the Anglican Ordinal of 1552 (AC 31), arguably something that might change. Indeed, in 1994, when the former Anglican Bishop of London was ordained priest according to the Roman rite *sub conditione*, this was surely implied by the Vatican dispensation.

THE SERVICE OF GLORY: The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on Worship, Ethics, Spirituality by Aidan Nichols OP, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1997, 310 pages, £14.95.

In *The Splendour of Doctrine*, published in 1995, Aidan Nichols, currently the most prolific Catholic theologian in the English-speaking world, expounded what the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has to say about the doctrine of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Now, in this sequel, he follows what the *Catechism* teaches about the self-involvement of God as Trinity in the world. First and foremost, this means the *liturgy*, the ecclesial participation in the communion of the Trinity through the paschal mystery of Christ as historically given in the sacraments of faith. Nichols starts with a radically Christological account of the sacraments, substantially Thomist and neatly quoting Cornelius Ernst, and then takes us through the sacraments of initiation (baptism and eucharist, with confirmation or chrismation recognized as distinct but firmly inserted between the two), the sacraments of healing (penance and the anointing of the sick), the sacraments that serve communion (order and marriage), and finally sacramentals and the funeral rite. Throughout, never limiting himself to impartial exposition, Nichols calls on his wide reading in ancient and modern theology to back up what the *Catechism* says, but also makes acerbic asides about the ways that some current practice betrays what it surely means. *Lex orandi, lex credendi* no doubt; but 'ritually inappropriate' liturgies will only ruin people's faith (page 26). Eamon Duffy is right to protest at the 'sanitised' funeral rites sanctioned by the Latin [*sic*] bishops in England and Wales (page 104). In the second part of the book Nichols deals with what the *Catechism* has to say about *ethics*, 'moral life in Christ', introduced this time with a quotation from Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. In fact, those cited in support of *Catechism* themes include Tolkien, Chesterton, Iris Murdoch and others, and, in connection with the virtues, Peter Geach, which all shows how far beyond the *Catechism*'s own range of cultural references Nichols is pleased to go. Finally, in the third part of the book, we are invited to reflect on what the *Catechism* says about spirituality, prayer, and especially the 'Our Father'. The iconography in the Latin text of the *Catechism* is studied in an appendix. All in all, a challengingly sympathetic exposition.