

Freedom and Possibility: God Reconsidered. By Bernard P. Prusak. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2023. xiv + 185 pages. \$24.95 (paper).

doi:10.1017/hor.2024.39

If you were to take up this book after reading its title and jacket blurb, you would expect a work of philosophical and doctrinal theology on the nature of God, creation, and created freedom. And that is what you would get—for the first forty pages. The remaining hundred pages of the main text deal with women in the church, especially the ban on their ordination, and the relationship of clergy and laity. The chapter on clergy and laity, the longest in the book, contains no theological reflection on the nature of God, creation, or freedom. Do we have two books inside one cover? A broader look at Prusak's theology reveals their connection.

The first four chapters offer a lucid summary of contemporary evolutionary theology. Prusak draws on the theology of the Vatican II period, especially Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, Gabriel Daly, and the early Joseph Ratzinger, as well as more recent theologies of evolution, especially that of Denis Edwards. God, a triune communion of love, brings other freedoms into being for the sake of “a self-giving offer of relationship” (11). Although much of the created order proceeds by causal necessity, it includes an indeterminism that enables genuine freedom. “God has chosen vulnerably to depend on our responsible initiatives” (21). In Jesus, God enters the evolutionary process, “freely opening self to sharing in and being affected by the goodness and the brokenness of the world” (26). His death represents not something God required or desired but God's “choice to share the horror of innocent suffering” (29). Sin, the refusal to love, shapes each individual's freedom, which develops in a culture embedding the results of the sins of others, past and present.

The second part of the book returns to Prusak's home field of ecclesiology. Prusak studied theology and canon law in Rome from 1959 to 1967, straddling the years of the Second Vatican Council. Subsequently, his distinguished career at Villanova has included many publications on the church and the sacraments (as well as a stint as one of *Horizons's* founding editors). His major work *The Church Unfinished* (2004) focuses on the possibility of change in the Catholic Church.

The fifth chapter, after a glance at the church's acceptance and eventual rejection of slavery as an example of change in Catholic teaching and practice, looks at negative attitudes toward women from intertestamental literature through the 1918 Code of Canon Law, with Jesus a noteworthy exception. Chapter 6 traces the role of women in the church from the relative equality of the New Testament through the increasing restrictions in medieval and modern times. Prusak examines and rebuts the arguments of the 1976 Vatican

document *Inter Insigniores* against the ordination of women. He argues that the strict ban expressed in John Paul II's *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994) and subsequent canon law should not be considered God's will (*de jure divino*) and hence unchangeable but that God's Spirit is calling the church to greater freedom in this regard as in others.

The last full chapter examines the development of the distinction between the ordained and the laity, especially in the eucharistic celebration, up through Vatican II. Prusak argues that Vatican II's statement that the ministerial priesthood differs "in essence" from the common priesthood of the faithful (*Lumen Gentium* 10) conflicts with the council's call for "full, conscious, and active participation" of all the faithful in the liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14). He takes "in essence" to mean an ontological distinction of persons, quoting Pius XII's statement that the priest is "inferior to Christ but superior to the people," though perhaps it could refer to an essential distinction of gifts rather than persons. "As a foundational, symbolic first step" (107), he argues that once again, as in the early church, the faithful should "stand around the altar table, along with the ordained presiders" (107). This could be done literally, as often in small liturgies in the post-Vatican II period, or represented by a restoration of the practice of standing during the eucharistic prayer.

Although this book lacks the external form of a unified monograph, it manifests an internal coherence at a deeper level. The key question is what kind of church the God revealed in Jesus is calling us to be. As Prusak says in *The Church Unfinished*, "We must ask which dimensions of the ever-young Church are not predetermined and unchangeable but have arisen from past decisions that God is patiently waiting for us to reconsider."

WILLIAM J. COLLINGE

Mount St. Mary's University, MD, USA

collinge@msmary.edu

Markan Typology: Miracle, Scripture and Christology in Mark 4:35–6:45. By Jonathan Rivett Robinson. Library of New Testament Studies. London: T&T Clark, 2023. xiii + 239 pages. \$120.00.

doi:10.1017/hor.2024.52

This book—which appears to be (a version of) Robinson's 2020 PhD thesis at the University of Otago—argues for a typological reading of four Markan miracle accounts: the calming of the storm (4:35–41); exorcism of Legion (5:1–20); healing of Jairus's daughter (5:21–43); and feeding of the five thousand (6:30–45). Robinson employs three modes of typology (and contends that