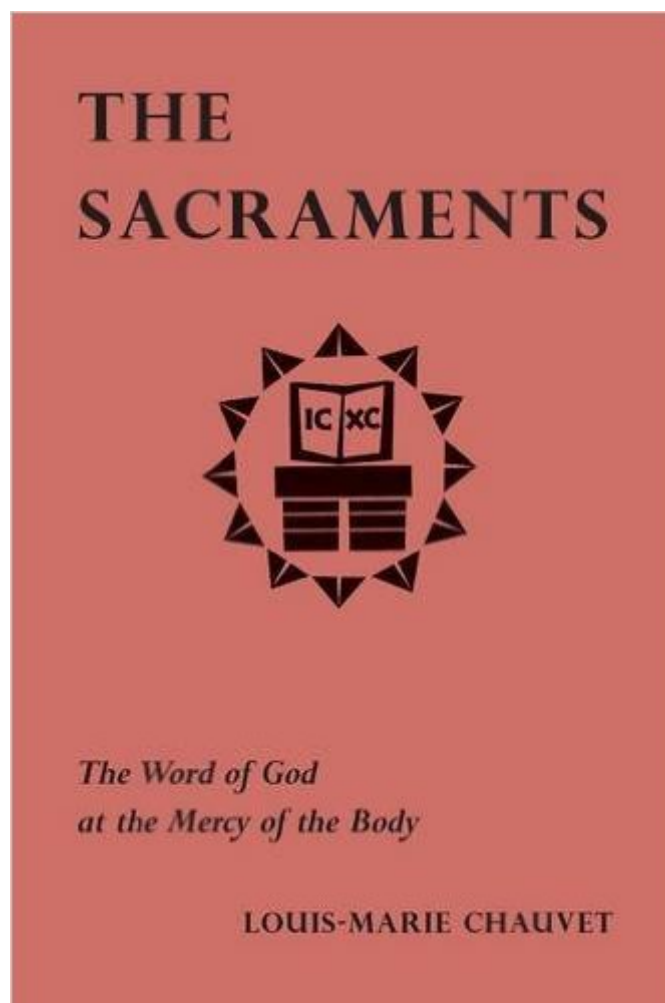


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The Sacraments - The Word Of God At The Mercy Of The Body



Synopsis

Why, from its very beginnings, has the Church celebrated the sacraments, in particular baptism and Eucharist? Why, from its origin, has faith in Christ, which is expressed in a human, free, just, loving way of living, ruled by the gospel, also been expressed in the language of rites? *The Sacraments* by Louis-Marie Chauvet offers reflections on the theology, celebration, and pastoral usage of the sacraments. It is a textbook version of Chauvet's, *Symbol and Sacrament* published by The Liturgical Press in 1995 that was acclaimed by theologians as offering a fresh theology of the sacraments from a perspective other than scholastic theology. Fr. Louis-Marie Chauvet is a professor of sacramental theology at the Institut Catholique, Paris. He has published numerous works and is the author of *Symbol and Sacrament* also published by The Liturgical Press.

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Customer Reviews

Louis-Marie Chauvet, in his book, *The Sacraments The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, offers a broad, postmodern theological position on the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. He attempts a systematic approach to understanding a general theology of sacraments, rooted in the concept of "sacramentality." Chauvet's utilizes a comprehensive "symbolic order" to achieve his theological goals, which includes the multifaceted use of language, culture, scripture and tradition, as well as the actual elements used within the sacramental rites: bread, wine, water, oil, candles, garments, etc. Chauvet is interested in explaining how sacraments "mediate" God's presence, allowing humanity to come into communion with God. Yet he is insistent that one can never hold,

control or own God. Therefore, for Chauvet, all knowledge, revelation and experience of God must be mediated by the multiple interactions of the symbolic order. Paradoxically, the mediated reception of God must always be balanced with a certain kind of "absence." This absence includes both non-ownership and incompleteness; persons must allow themselves to be transparent vessels of God's grace, sharing the life of God which he or she receives. There must be a constant relational element, the passing from one hand to the next, giving what has been given. Absence, nakedness, transparency, a position of non-ownership, an ego-free abandonment to God allows persons to move in this direction. This entails assuming a stance of liberating openness to God, accepting a "dependency-contingency" on God's providence. Only in a state of absence can one truly remain receptive and dependent on God. In fact, according to Chauvet, one can only truly receive from God when one is receptive in this manner.

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