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David Ranson *The Paschal Paradox: A Meditation on the Contemporary Challenge of Priestly Life*. Strathfield: St Pauls, 2009. ISBN 987-1-921472-23-7. 112 pages.

This book is an engaging and lively read. David Ranson puts before bishops and priests, and by extension deacons, an approach to understanding priestly ministry constructed around 'paradox'. In this he is thoroughly biblical, and the text is replete with references to the mysterious ways in which God works and involves us in the divine workings of grace. For this reason it would be a pity if the intended audience did not include ministers from other denominations, and laity of all stripes. This book allows both these groups to understand something of the current dilemmas facing the catholic clergy while reminding them of the complex ways grace is at work in all our lives.

The primary inspiration is the Easter story and the light of the paschal candle: in the flickering light there is a potent sense that God does not use the strong to reveal the divine presence, alive and active in the world. The paradox is that to carry out priestly ministry in the contemporary world requires a break from much of the support systems and structures that have serviced this ministry in the past: the risen Lord will be best served in the midst of much dying. This is taken up across seven chapters covering 'paschal death' and 'letting go' through to 'rising anew', 'priestly ministry as leader' and 'following again'.

Paschal Paradox is highly readable and moves at a good pace. It is filled with anecdotes and snippets from a great variety of sources which helpfully elucidate the point being made, and open the reader to wider wisdoms. It is a challenging meditation.

Review by Gerard Moore

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