

## Reconfiguring Thomistic Christology

In this book, Matthew Levering unites eschatologically charged biblical Christology with metaphysical and dogmatic Thomistic Christology, by highlighting the typological Christologies shared by Scripture, the Church Fathers, and Aquinas. Like the Church Fathers, Aquinas often reflected upon Jesus in typological terms (especially in his biblical commentaries), just as the New Testament does. Showing the connections between New Testament, Patristic, and Aquinas's own typological portraits of Jesus, Levering reveals how the eschatological Jesus of biblical scholarship can be integrated with Thomistic Christology. His study produces a fully contemporary Thomistic Christology that unites *Ressourcement* and Thomistic modes of theological inquiry, thereby bridging two schools of contemporary theology that too often are imagined as rivals. Levering's book reflects and augments the current resurgence of Thomistic Christology as an ecumenical project of relevance to all Christians.

MATTHEW LEVERING holds the James N. and Mary D. Perry Jr. Chair of Theology at Mundelein Seminary. He is the author of over thirty books, including *Aquinas's Eschatological Ethics and the Virtue of Temperance* (2019) and *Paul in the "Summa Theologiae"* (2014).



## CURRENT ISSUES IN THEOLOGY

## General Editors:

Iain Torrance
Pro-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen

David Fergusson
University of Edinburgh

## **Editorial Advisory Board:**

David Ford University of Cambridge Bryan Spinks Yale University Kathryn Tanner Yale Divinity School

There is a need among upper-undergraduate and graduate students of theology, as well as among Christian teachers and church professionals, for a series of short, focussed studies of particular key topics in theology written by prominent theologians. Current Issues in Theology meets this need.

The books in the series are designed to provide a 'state-of-the-art' statement on the topic in question, engaging with contemporary thinking as well as providing original insights. The aim is to publish books which stand between the static monograph genre and the more immediate statement of a journal article, by authors who are questioning existing paradigms or rethinking perspectives.

## Other titles in the series:

Holy Scripture John Webster
The Just War Revisited Oliver O'Donovan
Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies? Nancey Murphy
Christ and Horrors Marilyn McCord Adams
Divinity and Humanity Oliver D. Crisp
The Eucharist and Ecumenism George Hunsinger
Christ the Key Kathryn Tanner
Theology without Metaphysics Kevin W. Hector



> Randall C. Zachman Reconsidering John Calvin God's Presence Frances Youngman An Incarnational Model of the Eucharist James M. Arcadi The Providence of God David Fergusson Reading the Bible Theologically Darren Sarisky Divine Action and the Human Mind Sarah Ritchie Lane Law and the Rule of God: A Christian Engagement with Shari'a Joshua Human Anguish and God's Power David H. Kelsey Rethinking Paul: Protestant Theology and Pauline Exegesis Edwin Chr. van Driel Humility of the Eternal Son: "Reformed" Kenoticism and Repair of Chalcedon Bruce Lindley McCormack Why the Cross? Divine Friendship and the Power of Justice Ligita Ryliškytė Reconfiguring Thomistic Christology Matthew Levering



> "In this book, Levering not only documents the contemporary reemergence of Thomistic Christology. He also contributes to it significantly by underscoring the biblical and typological framework of St. Thomas' Christology. He does so while illustrating manifold connections between Aquinas' scriptural exegesis and that of many contemporary biblical interpreters, in a contribution that is both original and sorely needed, restoring unity to regions of theology that are often separated artificially. This is a bold work of theological faith and historical reason, contemporary biblical exegesis and classical scriptural theology, yet another illustration of the judicious insight and tangible charity of Matthew Levering as a central protagonist of theology in our era."

> > Thomas Joseph White, OP, Rector, Angelicum, Rome

"The very conception of this book a reading of Thomistic Christology through the lens of Thomas' use of biblical typologies is a brilliant and inspired breakthrough that promises to break down entrenched boundaries between systematic Christology, modern biblical exegesis, and Thomistic studies. The realization of this conception throughout this book brings this daring promise to a compelling and richly rewarding fulfillment. This is ressourcement theology at its finest, as deeply recuperative of the riches of the Christian tradition as it is creatively and impactfully responsive to the present moment."

Khaled Anatolios, John A. O'Brien Professor of Theology, University of Notre Dame



MATTHEW LEVERING

Mundelein Seminary, Illinois

# Reconfiguring Thomistic Christology





# **CAMBRIDGE**UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009221450
DOI: 10.1017/9781009221504

© Cambridge University Press 2023

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-009-22145-0 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.



## Contents

	Acknowledgments	page viii
	Introduction	1
1	Contemporary Thomistic Christology	26
2	Christ the New Adam: The New Creation	61
3	Christ the New Isaac: The Eschatological Temple	104
4	Christ the New Moses: The Eschatological Exodus	139
5	Christ the New Joshua: The Eschatological	
	Promised Land	179
6	Christ the New David: The Eschatological Kingdom	227
	Conclusion	285
	Bibliography	295
	Index	327

vii



# Acknowledgments

The idea for this book came about through an invitation from Dominic Legge, O.P. and the Thomistic Institute in Washington, DC to deliver the annual Aquinas Lecture at the Dominican House of Studies in January 2021. I chose the topic of Thomas Aquinas on Christ the New Adam. I was able to deliver this lecture in person and to receive the encouragement of many Dominican friends along with laypeople who attended the event. Particular thanks go to Reginald Lynch, O.P., Nicholas Lombardo, O.P., and Br. Charles Marie Rooney, O.P., and to the many other wonderful Dominicans who raised valuable questions at the talk and during conversations afterward.

Via Zoom, I participated in Ave Maria University's February 2021 "Hope and Death" conference, and delivered a paper on the topic Christ the New Isaac; I thank Scott Hahn, Michael Dauphinais, and Roger Nutt for the invitation. For the Eighth Day Institute's June 2021 Florovsky–Newman week – focused in 2021 on baptism – I spoke on Christ the New Joshua. I thank Matthew Umbarger, Erin Doom, Joshua Papsdorf, Chad Raith, Marcus Plested, and all who participated in this in-person ecumenical event. In June 2021, I gave three in-person lectures drawn from my book manuscript to the Religious Sisters of Mercy in Alma, Michigan. I thank Mary Christa Nutt, R. S. M., Prudence Allen, R. S. M., and the other Sisters whose intellectual gifts and deep Catholic piety were so inspiring and helpful.

Many friends helped me with correcting and improving this manuscript. David Moser, now Assistant Professor of Theology at

viii



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dordt College, read an early draft and saved me from embarrassing Christological errors. Andrew Hofer, O.P., offered crucial corrections. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., rector of the Angelicum, was a reader of the manuscript for Cambridge. He made a number of invaluable contributions to the manuscript, assisting in balancing the typological with the ontological. Michael Barber of the Augustine Institute read a late draft of the manuscript and, in addition to correcting the biblical material, showed me that Aquinas understood Christ to be the New Moses. Jörgen Vijgen, Belgium's preeminent Thomist, gave me important materials for my work on Christ the New Joshua. With Jörgen and Piotr Roszak, I coedited a special issue of Studium on "Biblical Thomism," and a portion of Chapter 5 has appeared as "Christ the New Joshua," Studium 24 (2021): 117-36. Richard Ounsworth, O.P., generously corrected my survey of his important book. Without the above friends, this book would be far poorer.

Let me also thank Beatrice Rehl and David Fergusson for their support for the publication of this book at Cambridge in David's series. It is a privilege to work with them and to have this book included in the series. I thank Marial Corona for generously doing the bibliography with her customary skill. Caitlyn Trader did the index, a time-consuming labor for which I am grateful. The editorial staff at Cambridge copy-edited the book and managed the production process with skill and professionalism.

For making possible the writing of this book, I have Mundelein Seminary to thank, and especially Jim and Molly Perry, the wonderful benefactors who endowed the chair I hold. None of my work would be possible without my wife Joy, with whom I pray the prayer of Tobias and Sarah: "Blessed are you, O God of our fathers, and blessed be your holy and glorious name for ever. Let the heavens and all your creatures bless you" (Tobit 8:5).

I dedicate this book to Dominic Legge and his colleagues at the Thomistic Institute; may they be blessed! Fr. Dominic lives in service to others, marked by serenity and humility and good humor,

ix



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

sharing the wisdom of Christ with all and sundry. Of Fr. Dominic and his colleagues, it can truly be said that they live by the psalmist's words: "As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him" (Ps 103:15–17).