

St Teresa, St John of the Cross, have reached a high degree of union with God, whether this be accompanied by ecstasies and visions or not? A person who does not enjoy such a union, though he or she may be subject to trances and exhibit other unusual phenomena, surely ought not to be called a mystic. Hence very few of the subjects of the study under review could be so named; several, e.g. Marie Julie Jahenny, John Thom, 'Georges Marasco' and the false visionaries of Lourdes were no more than deluded neurotics. In fact true mystics are very rarely 'surprising'.

Apart from this misleading terminology, however, the book is a mine of information, containing much highly interesting and otherwise not easily accessible material. The comments of Father Thurston, sometimes tantalizingly sparing, should be pondered by all who are interested, whether professionally or otherwise, in mystical phenomena and their neurotic counterfeits.

HILDA C. GRAEF

A NEW WAY OF THE CROSS. Contemplated by Father Raymond, O.C.S.O., illustrated by John Andrews. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 10s. 6d.)

This is certainly a new approach to the Stations. Stark dark pictures of hands, vivid emotional descriptions of what the hands suggest to the mind and heart of a holy Cistercian with a flair for phrases that register. The hands are the hands of our Lord, bound with cord, receiving the cross, pressed to the ground when he falls, pierced with the nails. As a method of meditation it is irresistible. Our Lady's hands and Veronica's hands are also firmly depicted. The twelfth Station is just the two feet of our Lord nailed with one nail to the wood. The fourteenth is the Shroud draping his feet. On the page opposite each picture you have Father Raymond's reflections. He follows the liturgical thread, the Mass, the pervading idea of membership of the mystical body of Christ, self-immolation. The style, rather dramatic American, harmonises with the pictures. Both are very effective.

G.M.C.

WHY HAST THOU COME? By John Carr, C.S.S.R. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 10s. 6d.)

This is a humble helpful book, a useful stimulus for those who have lived the religious life for some years and have become slack. It also provides good strong meat for those, men and women, who are actively engaged in religious life in the world in Secular Institutes.

Written in an easy style, with chapters on very practical and important subjects such as habits and tepidity, on what 'trying' really means, on what constitutes 'sliding back', it should be on the bookshelf of everyone who wishes to be exclusively a servant of God and our Lady. 'Spiritual consumption' is ably offset by a description of the good health of the soul and of the reward, exceeding great, not only for those who finally reach heaven but to those to whom heaven in daily life is the swing of the pendulum that makes God present in all things.

K.J.B.

SAINT PHILOMENA. By Sister M. H. Mohr, s.c., together with a study of the Curé d'Ars by Paul Doncoeur. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 9s. 6d.)

The story of St Philomena is the story of her miracles. The rest is conjecture and private revelation which may or may not convince. There is a saint in heaven whom we have agreed to call Philemona, who seems to have died very young as a martyr, in the time of the early persecutions of the Church, and who works today so many miracles that she is as well-known as almost any of the modern saints. Around the scanty historical evidence, using the abundant modern evidence, Sr M. H. Mohr has written a successful presentation of the little saint which makes her yet more unreal to the imagination but more real to the soul. Fanciful, cleverly stylized in modern journalese, prettily sentimental (incongruously so in parts), it is nevertheless readable and arresting. The 'revelations' are persuasively, but I thought inadequately, presented. How poor an instrument is this brisk journalese for the presentation of historical evidence!

The last fifteen pages are a most attractive sketch of the great saint with whose name St Philomena is always associated, the Curé of Ars, by Paul Doncoeur. This is a really convincing vignette. I was struck by the similarity between the spirit of the Curé and that of St Thérèse of Lisieux and by the wonderful linking, over the centuries, of the two elements of all saints' lives: the marvellous and the unspectacular heroic. The unknown girl-martyr of ancient Rome, the miracle-loving Neapolitan crowds who surged round her body sixteen hundred years later, Pauline Jaricot (whose cure is dramatically described in this book), the Curé of Ars, consistently attributing his miracles to St Philomena, hiding behind her, and St Thérèse, shunning marvels yet set in the centre of marvels by innumerable miracles. One reader at least thanks Sr Mohr most sincerely for this brave attempt to streamline some essential features of sanctity.

G.M.C.