

*From the Ignatian Tradition*

## **ON PREPARATION FOR PRAYER**

*Achille Gagliardi*

*In April 2003, **The Way** published an extract from one of the earliest commentaries on the Spiritual Exercises to have come down to us, by the controversial Italian Jesuit Achille Gagliardi (1537-1607).<sup>1</sup> Here we present another extract, a highly-wrought rhetorical elaboration on what Ignatius says about how an exercitant should prepare for prayer. Nicolas Standaert's article on the 'composition of place' earlier in this issue presents Jerónimo Nadal's approach to Ignatian prayer with its stress on the scriptural and pictorial elements—an approach that was subsequently set aside by mainstream Jesuit thinkers. This passage from Gagliardi vividly illustrates the shift. Gagliardi's intense evocations of reverence and of the divine majesty and transcendence are powerful. But they lead him, almost inevitably, to marginalise the Preludes, with their focus on a scriptural text and the exercitant's desires. Later commentators would argue as to whether the Exercises were a school of union with God or of decision. Even though the alternatives here should not be polarized, the differences in intuition about the nature of prayer are probably perennial.*

There were many things that Holy Father Ignatius did in order that before prayer we would prepare ourselves for it well. And regarding this preparation he prescribed many things in an ordered and considered fashion.

<sup>1</sup> Achille Gagliardi, 'Requirements for the One Giving and for the One Receiving the Exercises', *The Way*, 42/2 (April 2003), 29-40—see this text for further information about Gagliardi. The article can be downloaded from <http://www.theway.org.uk/back/422FIT.pdf>.

### **I     *A Holy Desire***

The first thing of all he requires before meditation is a desire for it, and this of the kind that is described by him in eloquent words:

The person who receives the Exercises is helped in a wonderful way if, coming to them with a great and generous spirit, they offer all their effort and their power of decision to their Creator etc. (Exx 5)<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, there is the intention of applying oneself with supreme effort, and of engaging in this activity, so that the human person is in this way cooperating with divine grace. Thirdly and finally, the person should offer this intention and the totality of their effort very generously to God; in this way the spirit will be prepared and disposed to receive those divine inflowings that enlighten and fire the spirit for praying.

### **II     *Prior Recollection of Spirit***

This preparation consists in the removal of impediments. The impediments all reduce to one: the distraction of the spirit that we take on as a result of our daily occupation with the business of the world. On this account, we cannot easily be intent on contemplation. The only remedy is an interior recollection of the spirit. And so Holy Father Ignatius hands on much about withdrawal and solitude, and counsels that each individual should repair to a place where they are apart from others and detach themselves from all business. 'The more a person has withdrawn themselves from their friends, the greater the progress they will make in the spiritual life.' (Exx 20) And this is evident for the three reasons, or fruits, adduced in that same passage, particularly for the second and third.<sup>3</sup>

Here, then is this second preparation. It is described in these words:

When all thought has been concentrated and reduced to one object, to worship of God, the person's Creator, the soul uses the

<sup>2</sup> Gagliardi uses, sometimes rather loosely, the 1548 Vulgate text, written as it is in a polished Latin. An English translation from this Latin version can be found in *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, edited and translated by Pierre Wolff (Liguour, Mo: Triumph, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Gagliardi is about to quote the second and the third; the first is the merit gained by a person who withdraws from friends and acquaintances for the sake of God's praise and service.

powers of nature much more freely and expeditiously in seeking that which it so much desires.

Then a little below:

The person makes themselves better fit to seek and to reach their Creator and Lord.

In order to induce this interior recollection, Holy Father Ignatius laid down many things that are external and corporeal, namely ... withdrawal from all dealings and business, accommodation in one's own separate room, the closing off of the light, the casting down of the eyes, and the like (Exx 79-81). These things, if they can be done, are optimal—if, however, we understand them as things to be done for the sake of our recollecting the soul interiorly. If, for just reasons, they are not observed, we should take on other things in their place—and these are corresponding interior things, namely: a withdrawal of the spirit, an interior solitude, and the accommodation of the interior person within their room, the cutting off of the senses and passions with regard to what is immoderate, and the like. And from this recollection of the spirit, peace arises, and the tranquillity of spirit which is the most suitable preparation for prayer.<sup>4</sup>

### **III Closer Preparation**

For the closer approach to the act itself of prayer, Holy Father Ignatius laid down various other things to be done beforehand. These have greater effect in preparing the spirit.

The first of these is:

... after having gone to bed, before sleep I should think for a small space of time ... about the hour at which I am to rise, and about the exercise to be done (Exx 73).

I should pray, and, with my spirit raised towards God, ask for the grace of shaking off sleep and of waking at the appointed hour, and of

<sup>4</sup> It is not clear here whether Gagliardi is envisaging the style of Exercises indicated in Annotation 19, but it is striking that a writer who otherwise stresses recollection so strongly can envisage the concerns behind Annotation 20 being answered in a figurative as well as in a literal fashion.



remembering those things that I am to meditate on for the greater glory of God.

The second:

... once woken up from sleep, at once—with all other thoughts cast aside—I should direct my spirit towards that on which I am to contemplate (Exx 74).

In this connection, he thinks it very helpful if I reduce the matters on which I am to meditate to a certain number of points laid down in advance, so that at once, without any bother, I can think about them before the prayer.

The third is that while I am putting on my clothes, I stimulate myself by some sensory image, and prepare myself for the effect that afterwards, through the prayer, I am to stimulate in myself. Thus, if confusion or grief at sins is to be sought, I should take the images that are given by the same Holy Father Ignatius as appropriate for the exercises about sins (Exx 47), and corresponding images when the

material is different. Or at any rate I should take some commonplace images which move me to take prayer seriously, or to submission and piety. Or I should recite some psalm or verse that contains these or similar images. For anything at this point that I will be turning over in my mind will be adequate for this preparation; but it will be all the more suitable to the extent that it resembles the prayer in prospect.

#### **IV Immediate Preparation**

The immediate preparation is the preparation done just a little before the time of prayer, and consists of three things done in order.

*FIRSTLY*, briefly, but with maximum concentration and attention, I should consider carefully where I am being carried, what my aim is, or, as it says elsewhere, what I am approaching and what is to be done.<sup>5</sup> (And since it is clear that prayer is the activity to which I am being carried and at which I am aiming, it clearly follows that before we approach prayer, we should have a proper understanding of what prayer is, and of what we are seeking in it—and in each of its parts too. And consequently Holy Father Ignatius explains in the first Annotation what ‘exercises’ are, what their aim is, and other things of this kind, so that thus we understand how a person dedicating themselves to their prayer must first be instructed about it and about its individual parts, in order that they do not proceed by chance in so great an affair. Rather they should be pondering the momentousness and seriousness of the business. But this instruction will be easily gatherable from what has already been said and from what will be said below.)

What we need for the moment, by way of explanation of this preparation immediately before approaching prayer, is that the person should recall and consider within their spirit how prayer is nothing other than a *union of colloquy and consort with God*, with the aim of obtaining gifts to do with salvation and perfection, one’s own and others’. It is with great attention and reverence of spirit, therefore—as befits something of high seriousness in its own right, of great advantage to one’s own self, and of necessity involving God’s own person—that one should approach it.

*SECONDLY*, by means of those words, ‘before whom I am going to appear’—and more clearly by means of other words—I shall consider

<sup>5</sup> There seem to be allusions here to Exx 131 and 206.

as someone present and looking at what I am about to do my Lord JESUS, 'to whom I will need to show reverence with a humble gesture' (Exx 75). With these words, an act of preparation is indicated on which the significance and fruit of the prayer completely depend.

(i) It is therefore necessary that the person have the most exalted ideas possible about God and about the Divine Majesty. As they consider how they will soon have converse and consort with God, they should approach these realities appropriately: with a submissive spirit and with fear. With anything else, they would be acting inconsiderately and rashly.

(ii) They should understand and ponder how God is infinite wisdom, goodness, power—and a sea beyond measure of infinite perfections. It is He who has created the whole world out of nothing out of His sheer generosity; He sustains it so that it does not fall into nothingness, and governs it with a providence descending even to the number of leaves, of grains of sand, of raindrops and of hairs. The person should notice that, in the presence of such great Majesty, the whole arrangement of the world is as an ant. Likewise they should picture to themselves the whole ocean as ink, all the trees as pens, and the whole extent of the heavens as paper—then human beings and angels are writers who want to express the Divine Majesty's immeasurableness. And yet the individual should be quite sure that nothing these people write or say will measure up to what God is in Himself. By means of these and similar images and ways of thinking, they should be impressed with the greatest admiration for God possible, so that they draw near with due fear and reverence.

To these things, the person should add that God, Christ the Lord, in His Majesty already spoken of, will be present in this prayer now, and consequently will be looking on the person as they pray, and on all their acts, even very intimate ones, and taking delight in them. Then the person should turn to their own self, and consider their worthlessness, both in itself and—in particular—in the sight of God. They should understand that they are nothing; they are moving from nothing to nothing; they depend in all things completely on God; they are laden with so many wretchedness and sins—and soon they are to appear in the presence of the Most High God! If a completely scabby and grubby yokel were to appear in the presence of the Emperor of the whole world, they would at least make some effort in the direction of supreme humility, fear and reverence, in the way that they

thought might be more pleasing to so great a Prince. How much the more will a puny human being, as they gather and prepare themselves before making their approach, fill themselves with the greatest possible sense of embarrassment, and then also with fear and due reverence towards God.

All these things, therefore, serve as immediate preparation for the person who is about to approach prayer; and without these, prayer is made rashly. But this is what happens with many people. Yet, conversely, the deeper a person immerses themselves in these things, the greater the light and fruit with which they will pray.

(iii) There follows the Preparatory Prayer with its Preludes. For, immediately following on from what we have been speaking about, with supreme submission of spirit and as if trembling in the sight of the Divine Majesty, the person, prostrate or kneeling, before they meditate on the material proposed, must direct the eyes of their mind towards the God who is present, and, before all else, adore Him. This is what these words prescribe: 'to whom I will need to show reverence with a humble gesture' (Exx 75). For the most fitting thing of all, as a human being, a sheer wretch, appears in the sight of such Majesty, is that the wretch adore the Majesty.

This act of adoration presupposes the awareness of God and of one's own wretchedness already mentioned, and also the greatest possible wonder. From this, reverential fear arises, and then a very great desire of submitting oneself to so great a God. There then follows the form of reverence which is adoration: nothing but a kind of deep submission of the will and of the whole self in recognition of the divine greatness and sublimity. Just as, when I make a bodily genuflection

# EXERCITIA

SPIRITUALIA.



M. D. XLVIII.

*The frontispiece of the 1548 Vulgate text of the Spiritual Exercises*



before the Emperor, I am saying and acknowledging by this bowing and submission that he is my lord, very much higher than I am, and that I am a trivial and unworthy servant, dependent on him in all respects.

Once this adoration has been given, there follows a humble petition to the Lord that He direct all my actions, and this present one especially, to His glory, and give during its course an intimate grace of devotion. For this the most holy Virgin Mother of God, the Guardian Angels, and the Saints to whom we have a special devotion are to be invoked. And this preparatory prayer begins already to unite the person to God; it is also the first entrance, as it were, into this palace.

#### **V     *The Preludes***

Then two or more Preludes are done. The specific function of these is to direct the spirit's attention towards the material on which it has to meditate. By the first Prelude, the understanding is helped; by the second, the will. So that the understanding, which can very easily be distracted and wander, can remain fixed in meditating, and be as it were tied to and shaped by the material on which it is to meditate, and so that distractions can gently be avoided, St Ignatius wisely—since



the human person depends on the senses and on images—prescribed that if the person will be meditating on something bodily, they should represent all this (the persons, the places, the circumstances) to the imagination, as if they had it before their eyes. If the meditation about to happen is explicitly spiritual, then the person should invent an image, such as that which sees the soul in the body as being confined in a prison, laden with chains. And similar things, in keeping with the changing nature of the material.

In the second Prelude we pray for the grace of the affection we want, as for example the grace of confusion and sadness for sins, or of rejoicing, and other similar things. This helps to hold the spirit and the will in that same material for meditation. Thus, just as the Preparatory Prayer is like an entrance into the first courtyard of the divine palace, so the two Preludes lead us, as it were, into two rooms, immediately before the bridegroom's (that is, God's) chamber. Then the meditation brings the soul, the bride, into the chamber itself.

This is what Holy Father Ignatius prescribes about preparation for prayer. If the things he says are reflected on, and pondered in the order in which we have set them forward, we will understand that there is no surer or more excellent method by which the soul can be disposed for praying. And indeed we state again that this is certainly of such importance that, when souls are being trained, they should be given exercises in all these things—and especially in most exalted sense possible of the Divine Majesty as present, and of our wretchedness. Further, it in no way detracts from the prayer itself that we should spend some part of the prayer time during the first days in this action of worship, submission and reverence, until the person reaches the point where they can do this in a moment. Indeed, such a practice is very useful, as a way of making swift progress in this submission. For it is appropriate for a wretched human being, who, from so great a God, is about to ask and beg what they want for their salvation, and to begin dealings with Him, to humble themselves before anything else and acknowledge so great a Majesty, so that by this they may move His Majesty to kindness and to the granting of all those things that the person is going to ask for in prayer.



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EDITED BY JOHN W. O'MALLEY, S.J., AND GAVIN ALEXANDER BAILEY

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## RECENT BOOKS

**Joseph Veale, *Manifold Gifts: Ignatian Essays on Spirituality* (Oxford: Way Books, 2006). 0 904717 27 5, pp. 244, £12.00.**

This book brings together the spiritual writings of Joe Veale (1921-2002), a leading Irish contributor to the Ignatian renewal following Vatican II. After an affectionate and informative memoir by Noel Barber and some editorial explanation, we have fifteen essays grouped under four headings: The Spiritual Exercises; The Ignatian *Constitutions*; Retrieving Ignatian Wisdom; St Ignatius and Contemporary Ministry. Each of these has its own excellent editorial introduction. The volume concludes with a full bibliographical list of Joe's spiritual writings from the latter part of his life.

This is a paradoxical book that almost does justice to a paradoxical man. On the one hand, Joe engaged in a highly specialised ministry: the giving of the full Ignatian Exercises individually to a clientele carefully selected for their generosity and commitment. On the other hand, he wrote encouragingly and meaningfully at a much more popular and accessible level. This is partly due to the attractiveness and lucidity of his English style: Joe taught English for 21 years before beginning his ministry of the Exercises, and did so with great distinction, communicating his enthusiasm and concern to initially reluctant schoolboys who became his lifelong friends. It is a pity that the editors chose not to include some of Joe's writings from this period, which were on education, on literature, and on popular religion.

Joe's success and Joe's writings were rooted in three convictions that he took from Ignatius himself.

- Start where the other person is, however unpromising that may be.
- Encourage the person to get in touch with their real desires.
- Recognise that Ignatius is merely suggesting means, and therefore sit light to the text, letting your reading of it be informed by a contemplative grasp of its purpose.

These three principles, deeply Ignatian though they are, enabled Joe and those who learnt from him to move beyond both the realities and the caricatures of Jesuit practice as rigid and rule-bound. They recur constantly in these eminently quotable essays. More generally, Joe was

convinced of how God speaks within unfolding human experience, through our continuing attempts to discern the authentic touch of the Spirit from illusions. As we discover our true desires, the desires which are according to Christ's mind, we also construct our own story of how God the Father, though the Holy Spirit, is leading us. For Joe, moreover, this process was corporate as well as individual, a theme which figures large in his essays on the *Constitutions*.

'Manifold Gifts', the opening essay, gives its title to the whole collection. For Joe, the phrase refers to the varieties of the Spirit's working. But Joe himself also was a man of manifold gifts. His gift for scholarly contextual study was complemented by a gift for popular expression and sometimes blistering rhetoric. He reveals much to us, for example, about the Jesuit *Constitutions*. He presents them as demonstrating how the graces of the Spiritual Exercises and of Ignatius' own life in the *Autobiography* can be lived corporately by a group. At the same time, the passionate anger of the penultimate chapter, about the Church and sexual abuse, shows how committed Joe was to giving contemporary Ignatian ministry a prophetic bite. This ten-page essay cries out to be shouted from the house-tops.

Not, of course, that Joe himself would ever have shouted it. His upbringing, as he himself admits in one of these essays, was Jansenist, and his temperament was depressive. Not for Joe charismatic alleluias, vulgar chants and risky exhibitionism; my attempts to encourage him into the mildest of circle dances never succeeded. The grainy black and white photograph at the front of the book, taken as it was shortly before Joe's death, is worth contemplating. In the course of preparing this review, I have found myself making colloquies with Joe through it. I began rather testily: 'dear Joe, why were you such a misery when you had the makings of such joy?' But as time moved on, I came to see, within that thin-lipped oblong mouth, hints of the burgeoning smile I could so happily remember. And though the writing in this book might initially appear rather bleak, patient savouring of the text reveals a subtle warmth—an uplifting interplay, so to speak, of forty shades of grey.

One of the essays published here for the first time is a historical reflection on the religion of early modern England in the context of contemporary ecumenical developments in the ministry of the Exercises. Here Joe comes up with wonderful paradoxes. Not far from the Catholic recusants in Lancashire, Edmund Bunny was adapting for use in the English Church a spiritual text bursting with Ignatian insights and imaginative contemplations shamelessly plagiarized from a Jesuit text, Robert Persons' *Christian Directory*.

This discovery adds weight to Joe's bold statement that from 1600 to 1965, over-rigid Jesuit tradition obscured an openness to the freedom of God that one could find even when the Reformation conflicts were at their bitterest. Perhaps there is something of Joe's melancholy in this bold generalisation; perhaps, too, he is protesting against the rigid religious regimes under which he so patently suffered for much of his life, the suffering not lost in the remembering. And yet, too, there is a greyish gratitude, in particular for the Christian Brothers who were among his earliest educators. In the end, much did come through Joe's very desolation; the greyness deepened into the 'blue-bleak' of Hopkins' embers, and sometimes the fire of the Spirit's breath burst out from within it.

My only regret about this book is the absence of any sort of index; perhaps a subsequent edition might rectify this lack. Joe used key words such as 'consolation', 'desolation', 'experience', 'desire' and 'contemplation' in rich, radical and thoughtful ways, and it would be good to be able to trace the variety more easily. Indeed this very variety is itself a sign of how Joe's gifts were themselves manifold, displayed here in writing that ranges from the severely scholarly to the passionately rhetorical. In authentically Ignatian fashion, Joe was a man who learnt from his experience, who sought and found God in all things, and who gave generously of himself in all he said and did and wrote.

**Billy Hewett SJ**

*Manifold Gifts is available from The Way's Ignatian Book Service, as are The Jesuits and the Arts and Retreats in Everyday Life, reviewed below—contact the editorial office, or visit [www.theway.org.uk](http://www.theway.org.uk).*

***The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, edited by Arthur Holder (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005). 1 4051 0247 0, pp. xiv + 568, £85.00.**

This is the third major textbook on the study of Christian spirituality to have been published in 2005, following *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality* (edited by Elizabeth Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows), and *The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (edited by Philip Sheldrake). The aim of all three has been to provide material mainly for

students, teachers and researchers studying Christian spirituality as an academic subject in universities and colleges. This book contains thirty essays covering 550 pages, all specially commissioned. It amounts to the single most thorough treatment of the field to date.

There are six parts. Unlike *Minding the Spirit*, Holder's collection gives little attention to issues of definition of the field; Part I, dedicated to this topic, has only one essay, by Sandra M. Schneiders. Part II contains two essays on Scripture, a lack in previous collections. The essay by Barbara Green on the Old Testament provides a survey of interpretations of the story of Jonah through history, from Origen to Rosemary Radford Ruether, showing the variety of meanings found and methods of interpretation used, and the spiritualities that the various interpretations both produced and reflected. This essay is typical of many in the collection, in that scholars have been given the space to develop ideas from their own areas of research, lending the book considerable interest and depth.

Part III has six essays on the history of Christian spirituality, divided into four periods. It is a fair overview, but this part is the least satisfactory: it attempts a task that has already been done in other, larger historical studies of Christian spirituality, and has too little space to offer anything new. The two essays on the modern period, in particular, covering the years from 1700 onwards, have an impossibly large remit.

Part IV has seven essays on the relationship between theological themes and Christian spirituality: taken together, they amount to the best treatment of this topic that I have read. A common theme which emerges in these essays is the need for the discipline of Christian spirituality to be underpinned by a trinitarian understanding of the human relationship with God, one which lays the discipline open to mystery and regulates the kind of knowledge that it claims to possess. Spirituality is not concerned with analyzing and grasping something, or a particular collection of things, but with pursuing questions which arise in different religious traditions as people come before the mystery of God.

Part V contains seven essays on different kinds of reflection that are now informing the interdisciplinary study of Christian spirituality: the social sciences, personality sciences, natural sciences, aesthetics, feminist studies, ritual studies, and the theology of religions. This is the first sustained attempt to work out in what ways the study of spirituality ought to be or can be multidisciplinary. The essays show that significant research is being done on spirituality from within these other disciplines. John A. Coleman, for instance, notes that the category of spirituality has become widespread in sociological research in the USA since the 1990s, and that it is being used to put forward new and controversial claims: one recent

study, for instance, suggests that the commonly stated separation between 'spirituality' and 'religion' may be misconceived, since those who become interested in spirituality in fact gravitate towards the organized religions, rather than away from them (p. 297). But it remains rather unclear where the common ground lies between the approaches to spirituality within each of these disciplines, let alone between any one of them and Christian theological traditions. Until progress is made in resolving this unclarity, the use of interdisciplinary methods in the study of spirituality will remain problematic.

Part VI contains a further seven essays on special topics in contemporary Christian spirituality, such as mysticism, interpretation and nature. These suffer from some repetition of the themes already covered and from a lack of coherence as a group, but they are useful in introducing some of the main areas of research in the study of spirituality today.

Students of spirituality remain divided on the question of what they are supposed to be studying. There are two schools. Some define the study of spirituality as the study of a certain kind of experience. Others, by contrast, define it as the study of the whole of reality through a particular framework of questions and language. Sandra M. Schneiders, in her essay on the definition of the field, exemplifies the first approach, defining the study of spirituality, as she has done previously, as the study of 'the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the horizon of ultimate value one perceives' (p. 16). Philip Endean, the only essayist to express explicit dissent from this (pp. 228-231), argues that the study of spirituality is the study of an approach to the whole of reality, as opposed to the study of a *part* of reality designated as the spiritual part. *Everything* can be regarded from a spiritual point of view; the use of the word 'spiritual' implies not a particular class of descriptive claims but rather the asking of questions about reality in terms of inherited teachings about humanity's relationship with God—teachings which claim to disclose the spiritual significance of all reality. The discipline of spirituality involves a certain *kind* of questioning.

Interestingly, this collection suggests that the approach to spirituality as a kind of experience, favoured by Schneiders, is actually losing ground to various kinds of approach more like Endean's. Not all of these begin from theology, as Endean does. But they give prior attention to the context in which the spiritual is understood, not as a particular kind of experience, but as a framework for approaching the whole of reality. Amy Hollywood's essay on feminist studies, for instance, argues that the experiential language of spirituality in late medieval texts (affective, bodily

and ecstatic) hides an array of contextual and historical assumptions, especially about the feminine, which need to be explored very carefully if we are to understand how and why this experience has been regarded as spiritual. This approach makes the study of spirituality a great deal richer than in the past, because it refrains from restricting the spiritual to a certain kind of experience, beginning instead with the contexts through which the spiritual is named, and so bringing a wider range of reality within the purview of spirituality.

This book, along with the two published earlier in 2005, shows that the study of Christian spirituality has started to display the characteristics of a mature academic field: teaching, research, and an identifiable community of scholars and scholarship. Some will regard this development with suspicion, as perhaps separating the study of spirituality from the practice, but they should be assured that things are looking up: scholars are less often approaching spirituality reductively, and good work is being done.

*Edward Howells*

***The Jesuits and the Arts 1540-1773*, edited by John W. O'Malley and Gauvin Alexander Bailey (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's UP, 2005). 0 916101 52 5, pp. 477, £36.00.**

This encyclopedic volume contains an almost world-wide survey of the artistic enterprise of the Society of Jesus, from its inception in 1540 to its suppression in 1773; and it is essential reading for anyone working on the arts of this period. Although much of the book first appeared in Italian, French and Spanish in 2003, many of the chapters in this English version have been edited or updated and their bibliographies have been amplified. It is superbly illustrated, in colour, and contains 184 new images, some of which are published here for the first time.

John O'Malley and Gauvin Bailey were among the editors of the earlier *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts 1540-1773* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000). Like that pioneering work, this volume is international in subject, but it is narrower in scope: its twelve essays focus on the arts, covering architecture, painting, music, theatre and iconography. Collectively they address an intriguing paradox, made explicit by Juan Plazaola Artola in the book's prologue, which contrasts the simplicity of the Jesuit 'way of proceeding' with the often extravagant and varied nature of the artworks produced under the Society's aegis.



In the opening essay John O'Malley delineates with remarkable clarity how artistic culture came to be developed and integrated within the Society. In the gradual transformation of the Society into the first 'teaching order', O'Malley shows how Ignatius inaugurated a cultural programme derived not from biblical study but from the humanist ideals of Cicero. Although the arts were not a particular feature of the original religious mission of the Jesuits, the Society's pastoral pragmatism—particularly on the missions—necessitated an early engagement with traditions of music and dance. The growth of a musical tradition is explored in an essay by T. Frank Kennedy, while theatrical works are surveyed by Marcello Fagiolo, who investigates the Holy Theatre of the Forty Hours Devotions (*Quarant'ore*), the theatres of 'light and glory' in the frescoes of Baciccio and Pozzo, and the Jesuit stage designs of the Sopron album.

Three essays elucidate the Society's relationship with architecture. The much-debated notion of a 'Jesuit style' in architecture, synonymous with the baroque, was decisively undermined by the Jesuit scholar Joseph Braun in the early years of the twentieth century. Richard Bösel, in his panoramic tour of Jesuit architecture in Europe, demonstrates the startling variety of the Society's building projects. The recurrence of certain typological features is balanced by a profound responsiveness to local building traditions. The principle of religious simplicity gave rise to certain functional norms in Jesuit architecture, though, as Giovanni Sale notes, the Society was not always successful in enforcing them over considerations of a more formal character. This point is particularly well demonstrated in the design of the Society's mother church in Rome, Il Gesù, which, as Sale argues in a second essay, was the outcome of a fraught but ultimately creative partnership between the donor, Cardinal Farnese, and the superior general of the Society of Jesus, Francisco de Borja.

Though the straightforward identification of baroque art with the Jesuit order has long been discredited, the Jesuit apostolic enterprise did crucially involve an appeal to the emotions, an appeal with a connection to baroque art. It is probably because of the link with the Jesuits that the baroque became the first truly global style. Gauvin Alexander Bailey's remarkably comprehensive essay on Italian Renaissance and baroque painting under the Jesuits is especially useful in this context, making explicit the relationship between the use of the senses in the Spiritual Exercises and the imagery of works commissioned by the Society. The resulting development of a Jesuit iconographic programme is fully discussed by Heinrich Pfeiffer, from the adoption of the IHS monogram

and the struggle to find a likeness of Ignatius, to the painted cycles which came to be dominated by images of 'the saints, the blessed and the martyrs of the order'.

Further essays by Bailey cover Jesuit art and architecture in Asia and North America (the latter a new and welcome addition to the English-language version of this book), and extend our awareness of the profoundly hybrid nature of the work produced by the missions. In an essay on the legacy of the Jesuits in Spanish America, Ramón Gutiérrez and Graciela María Viñuales suggest that part of the Jesuits' artistic success was the order's ability to integrate 'daily life with religious life'; they highlight the important role played by lay brothers (of diverse origins) who were architects, sculptors, painters and silversmiths. Philippe Lécivain discusses the Jesuit 'way of proceeding' in relation to the missions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly missions to the very different worlds of South America and China, and the complex relationship between a respect for the 'other' and a commitment to evangelization.

Collectively these essays are a monumental testament to Ignatius' caveat that the Society's 'way of proceeding' be carried out 'as will seem best according to places, persons, and circumstances'. The ability of the Society to receive the inspirations of others and to assimilate local customs is an important counterbalance to the view expressed in other recent scholarship, for example Evonne Levy's stimulating *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (2004), that the purpose of imagery adopted by the Society was essentially 'to create subjects' and that the control of this imagery was in an important sense mono-directional. Nevertheless, the paradox referred to earlier between the emergence of a distinct programme of iconography in Jesuit arts and the Society's ability to incorporate 'the other' raises some interesting questions. One is left pondering why certain stylistic elements travelled as successfully as they did, while others were modified, altered or rejected. The beginnings of an answer to these questions is present in every contribution, but its delineation belongs to small-scale research rather than the 'big picture' historical scholarship represented by this volume. One is grateful that such an exceptional and comprehensive sourcebook enables the detailed enquiries to arise.

**Jane Eade**

**William V. Thompson, *Retreats in Everyday Life: A Handbook for a Month of Individually Guided Prayer* (Bath: Open House Publications, 2005). 0 9551859 0 4, pp. 120, £7.95.**

This book springs from the pastoral experience of its author, Rev Will Thompson. For nearly two decades before his sudden, untimely death in 2005, he had been the dedicated pastor of the Baptist congregation in Yeovil, Somerset. Now presented in a revised edition, *Retreats in Everyday Life* is the fruit of his long association with Ignatian spirituality and of his awareness of its pastoral effectiveness. The text is well laid out, and provides a practical and detailed explanation of how to organize and sustain a retreat in daily life. In three principal sections, the book addresses the task of planning, introducing and concluding such a retreat.

Within these sections the material is less immediately practical, but nonetheless helpful. There are five pages of brief introduction to the theme of discernment, for example, which engage with the subtleties involved despite their brevity. Another five pages contain a comprehensive selection of scriptural material to present to retreatants. The description of how to undertake *lectio divina* and of how this may lead into imaginative prayer is lucid. In the last section the author has brought together a collection of non-biblical material that he felt could be of use in addition to the scriptural passages. While the purpose of including an abridged version of T. S. Eliot's 'The Journey of the Magi' in this last section is not clear, the author's intention with regard to the whole book is evident.

He hoped not only to provide guidance for those who want to arrange retreats in daily life (no light undertaking, as the details included in the book make clear), but also, and more importantly, to help people to pray daily and to find something deeper through their prayer. In the foreword, Bishop Graham Chadwick notes the peculiarity of using the word 'retreat' for what 'is often an advance, a life-changing experience' (p. 5). Perhaps this book is actually offering approaches to something more accurately described as 'recollection'. It suggests ways of helping people to 'collect' themselves again around the unifying centre of God acting through their lives.

Some readers may be deterred by the detail with which the book sets out its programme, but throughout there is an emphasis on flexibility and on adapting its suggestions to the needs of a person looking for help with their prayer. In using this book to help others pray, it would be worth bearing in mind the author's own remark that retreats are not ends in

themselves (p. 17), and his conviction that the real guide in such a ministry is the Holy Spirit (p. 12).

*Gero McLoughlin SJ*

**Thomas G. Casey, *Life and Soul: New Light on a Sublime Mystery* (Springfield, IL: Templegate, 2005). 0 8724 3267 X, pp. 189, £12.99.**

I recently discovered a surprising website, sponsored by the British government, entitled 'Mind, Body and Soul' ([www.mindbodysoul.gov.uk](http://www.mindbodysoul.gov.uk)). The first surprise was that any government should consider this part of its brief; the second was the site's content. It does not, as the name might suggest, offer a definitive view on, or even a review of, perennial philosophical problems. It is rather a health page, aimed at teenagers, with advice on issues ranging from alcohol abuse to physical exercise. Even the section promoting emotional well-being is restricted for the most part to resolutely practical counsel: let your feelings out, take time for yourself, socialise more. I imagine that the site, and the kind of information it provides, could be of real service to those who consult it. But why, I wonder, did its author choose to include the word 'soul' in the title?

Thomas Casey, an Irish Jesuit teaching philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome, has written an accessible book which asks what sense we can make of the concept of 'soul' in contemporary thought. He starts with the irony that, while orthodox Christians are talking about the soul less than they used to, New Age practitioners are giving it a higher profile than it has enjoyed in decades. So is it possible to employ the notion of the soul today in a way that stands in continuity with Christian tradition, without ending up in a disembodied, unworldly faith, at odds with belief in a God who chooses to become incarnate?

Throughout the book Casey tries hard to avoid a dualistic view that would understand soul and body as two radically separate substances which, in human beings, are 'simply added together in an external way like butter and jam in a sandwich' (p. 16). He wants to argue for the immortality of the soul, and therefore recognises that the soul can have a separate existence independent of the body after death. But this is, in his view, an impoverished existence (like that described in the Jewish idea of Sheol, a shadowy underworld). Only with the resurrection of the body will we be restored to that fully human existence which the book of Genesis depicts as God's original intention for this part of the divine creation.

To arrive at his own view, Casey first considers two expositions of the soul that he regards as partial. The 'fortress soul', a product of the Enlightenment, is (or aims to be) strong, self-contained and secure from doubt. This is the reasoning self that Descartes established as the foundation of his philosophy. The 'fragile soul' is, by contrast, acutely aware that human beings are interdependent, and cannot exist in isolation. Here Casey draws on the writings of a contemporary Jewish thinker, Emmanuel Levinas, whose own experience of the Holocaust convinced him of the fundamental need for people to take responsibility for each other, even when this does no more than reveal humanity's ultimate powerlessness. Casey himself searches for a model that can combine the strength and the passion of the fortress with the vulnerability and risk of the fragile.

This model is expounded in the last two chapters of the book, which characterize the soul as both 'loving' and 'utopian'. The former characteristic leads Casey into a consideration of the nature of human love that has much in common with Pope Benedict's first encyclical. In considering the latter characteristic he looks particularly at the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, finding there a utopian vision of a kind that human beings need if they are to achieve their full, God-given potential. The book ends with a personal testimony to the value of the human soul and its almost infinite capacity for renewal. It is the hope of inspiring such renewal that provides Casey's ultimate motivation in writing.

So how *do* you understand the make-up of a human being? Are we no more than higher animals, to be fixed when things go wrong with the help of the appropriate medical and psychological information? Or is there, within each individual, a mysterious element breathed in by God, an element called to grow in its response to God by showing love to every other individual? If you incline towards the latter answer, *Life and Soul* is a valuable guide to making sense of this idea in a contemporary intellectual context.

**Paul Nicholson SJ**

**James L. Wakefield, *Sacred Listening: Discovering the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Baker Books, 2006). 0 8010 6614 X, pp. 208, \$12.99 US.**

How do people respond to the experience of having made the Spiritual Exercises? One common way is to try to pass on to others something of the benefits they feel they have gained. If directors were thick on the ground, this objective might be achieved without difficulty. On completing the Exercises, you could recommend the experience, and a suitable director, to all your acquaintances. But (perhaps through God's providence!), good directors are not that common. So how can the fruits of the Exercises be made more widely available?

Between the late sixteenth century and the mid-1970s this would not have been thought of as problematic. The key themes of the Exercises were routinely preached to large numbers. In James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* there is a description—amusing or terrifying, depending on your outlook—of the Ignatian vision of Hell being passed on to a class of impressionable schoolboys. But the rediscovery of the value of individual direction since then has led people to look for other ways of making what the Exercises have to offer more generally accessible. *Sacred Listening* represents one of these attempts.

James Wakefield, the author, comes from a Protestant background, and thus originally approached the Exercises with great suspicion. Even after a good experience of being guided through them, he considered that the Ignatian text 'posed many problems' for a Protestant readership. He therefore offers an adaptation,

... for contemporary people with little or no formal training in spiritual disciplines. This adaptation accommodates a regular work schedule, highlights the scriptural inferences of the original Exercises, incorporates small revisions to avoid unnecessarily alienating Protestants, and allows for use with small groups. (p.16)

The result is a kind of work-book for a retreat in daily life which might be followed by an individual, with or without a 'listener', or taken up by a group. The text is divided into four 'movements' (by analogy with a symphony), and each movement into 'units'. Each unit has material that might take a week or so to pray with, and typically includes a descriptive theme, a grace to be sought, and then scripture to be worked with—this under the classical headings of *contemplatio*, *meditatio* and *oratio*. Wakefield recommends keeping a journal of the retreat experience, and finding someone with whom you can talk it through periodically.

Read from a Roman Catholic perspective, this presentation represents in some ways a significant impoverishment of the Ignatian Exercises. The role of Christ's mother, Mary, is curtailed. Though during the nativity contemplation we are told, bluntly, 'Using your imagination, be Mary', Wakefield simply omits the triple colloquy: a central repeated petitionary prayer in the Exercises where you are invited first to approach Mary, then, with her, to pray to Jesus, and only then, in the company of both, to come to God the Father. And the scene in which Ignatius sees Mary being the first disciple to whom the risen Christ appears (saying, in effect, 'Isn't it obvious that this would be the way it happened?') has likewise disappeared. So too have the 'Rules for Thinking with the Church', guidelines that Ignatius offers for thinking through how the experience of the Exercises can be lived out in a particular community of faith—with the result that Wakefield's presentation renders the Exercises even more vulnerable to the charge of individualism.

At the same time, Wakefield's book contains useful material not to be found in its parent text. There is a chapter on what a prayer guide might be listening out for—a resource that might be really helpful if there is no trained director available. There are also some useful and detailed instructions on how to keep a journal that would deepen the experience of the Exercises. And because Wakefield has clearly read widely, his notes and bibliography present a useful, up-to-date introduction to the more easily accessible literature in this field.

Ideally, someone wanting to make the Spiritual Exercises, whatever Christian Church they belong to, will find a skilled director to lead them along the lines put forward by Ignatius' text. Anything else is always going to be, in some sense, a second-best. But there are times when second-best is all that will be available, and the result can still be a powerful and even life-changing experience. *Sacred Listening* tries to strike a delicate balance: to give enough material for comparative beginners, while also encouraging those making the Exercises to trust their own experience, and thus to react in freedom when the unexpected happens. Wakefield's tendency to err on the side of the prescriptive would perhaps be softened by the empathetic listening and accompaniment that he recommends. And for a reader rooted in Catholic approaches to the Exercises, it offers the gift that Robert Burns prayed for: 'to see oursel's as others see us'.

**Paul Nicholson SJ**

**Philip B. Wilson, *Being Single: Insights for Tomorrow's Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005). 0 232 52592 7, pp. xv + 239, £14.95.**

What is it really like to be single in today's Church? This is the question asked by Rev. Philip B. Wilson, a single minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

His first two chapters provide social and historical background, describing how, not so long ago, the unmarried were in a minority, a 'special interest group' of oddballs in a couple-dominated society. Back then there were two main stereotypes: the 'altruistic soul devoted to high and worthy duties', and the 'boring, self-centred hermit with no social skills'. Within Catholic Christianity the practice of vowed lifetime celibacy was widespread; but the Reformation had led to marriage being understood as both a vocation and the norm in the Protestant Churches. Single lay people did not really fit in with either tradition. Apart from isolated figures such as John Wesley, some notable single women missionaries, and some groups such as the Shakers, few resisted the urge to marry. What single people there were had little option but to remain dependent upon their birth families.

Today finds Britain in a very different situation, for by 2010 single households are likely to account for 40% of all homes. More people remain unmarried into their mid-thirties, and still more are becoming single for the second time round, some with children. A new stereotype of the single person has emerged, perhaps even further from the truth than the old one: the 'wild party animal, having many sexual liaisons and the freedom of a large disposable income'. In reality, what might be a lifestyle option for some is for others an uneasy and not always transitory state, not of their own choosing. To understand the change requires us to explore what is happening in contemporary culture. Wilson rather suspects that many of our Churches fail to appreciate this point, and therefore provides a lively account of postmodern Britain. It is not helpful, he argues, just to bewail how attitudes to marriage and the Church have changed since the 1960s. The truth is that huge economic shifts and the technological revolution are leading more people to become 'work-alone, live-alone' personalities.

For the purposes of Wilson's study, a single person is someone who is neither married nor cohabiting nor casually dating. His three central chapters of qualitative analysis were based on interviews with 15 people aged 25 to 70, some single and some not, several of whom were in serious relationships. For the value of their previous experience, two older but



recently married couples were included. This was a relatively small group for research purposes, perhaps, but it allowed individual in-depth conversations to be conducted with reflective people, producing a variety of insights. The group included Protestants and Evangelicals, plus one young Catholic, but Wilson's findings and conclusions have wider ecclesial applications than this constituency would suggest. Only one out of the fifteen claimed to have had a totally positive experience of being single in his Church. The rest reported varying degrees of 'church pain' and 'church stress', summed up in one woman's feeling: 'Church for me is the loneliest place of all'.

The author believes that the younger church-going singles experienced their problems most keenly, with the Churches' perceived negativity about sexual relationships being particularly problematic for them. But the older people, struggling alone with difficult issues and their continuing need for intimacy, did not seem to have fared much better. Interestingly, none of the fifteen felt 'called' to be single and, of the four who had recently married, all reported feeling more fulfilled as a result. This tends to confirm previous research which has shown the emotional, financial and psychological benefits of marriage.

One of the strengths of the book is that, while empathizing with the disadvantages that single people face, the author also throws down some challenges. Could it be that singles feel excluded because they themselves are exclusive? Are some of us 'the products ... of an economic system that prizes individuality over community'? Various studies recognise 'the value and benefit of individuals belonging to a social group that requires something of them and from which they in turn can benefit'. The Church could be such a group, but is it currently equipped to provide what is needed? Not yet, according to most of Wilson's interviewees. At worst they experienced ostracism, and at best they attended services laid on by professional 'service providers', with friendship not being seen as very important. Can the Churches turn this state of affairs around? The author believes that genuine community, characterized by openness and truthfulness, needs to replace endless prohibitions and taboos. Only then will people understand what to believe and how to behave.

The two final chapters envisage a radical new Christianity, leaping backwards to a time before both the monastic era and the Reformation to re-root itself in New Testament values. Writing from a Protestant perspective, Wilson cites texts in the Gospels in which the unmarried and married alike enjoy friendship with Jesus and are called to discipleship, and there is richness in his exegesis. However, in my experience, Catholics who are involuntarily single can find themselves in a draughty corridor

between the recognised vocations involving vowed celibacy on the one hand, and marriage and family life on the other. In some Catholic circles, the scriptures which Wilson can use to call all church members to holiness and commitment are more commonly used in connection with celibate priesthood or consecrated life. Single lay people pick up a sense of unhelpful exclusivity.

Wilson contends that the Church, empowered to befriend and support, potentially offers the best forum in which 'the single life can be discussed, assisted and faithfully lived out'. But for this it must cease to be an institution *for* families and operate *as* a family, with all kinds of members. As the single population grows, anything less would be poor pastoral and missionary strategy.

'This is not just another self-help book for single Christians', claims its author, but rather a work of practical theology which he hopes will make compelling reading 'for anyone concerned about the Church's mission, authenticity and community'. Nevertheless it contains much that is helpful and heartening for the single person's spiritual development, as well as a good bibliography and some unobtrusive endnotes to guide further exploration.

**Margaret M. Sheldon**

***The Bible in Pastoral Practice*, edited by Paul Ballard and Stephen R. Holmes (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005). 0 232 52611 7, pp. xxiii + 316, £17.95.**

One of the questions that today face thoughtful Christians (a category which clearly includes readers of *The Way*) is that of whether and how we can properly make use of the Bible. Hidden beneath this question, and contributing to its formulation, lie anxieties of various kinds. Modern biblical scholarship, dependent as it is on critical historical method and on various forms of literary criticism, seems to inhibit our reading the Bible as believers. There is also the grim fact that even believers do not know the Bible as well as once they would have done, and therefore lack confidence about it. There is, too, the increasingly complex link between pastoral theology and the social sciences. Given all these things, this book is welcome: it is part of an admirable three-volume project coming out of the School of Religious and Theological Studies at Cardiff University, in partnership with the Bible Society. It deals head on with an important set of issues.

There is not space here to speak of all eighteen essays in this rich and diverse book, but people who read *The Way*, and who worry about the proper use of Scripture, really ought to know about the questions that are raised within this book, even though easy answers are not forthcoming.

The papers that compose this volume are distributed between three parts. Part I is a more or less chronological presentation of the use of the Bible in the history of Christian practical theology, from the beginnings to the present day, and across the three main divisions of Christianity. The theme is caught in the title of this section: 'Listening to the Tradition'. Part II considers the problems raised by contemporary biblical scholarship. Part III casts its net rather more widely, and looks at how the Bible has in fact been used in certain pastoral contexts. All the articles in this volume are, in their very different ways, worth reading for the light they shed on a difficult issue. Some of the authors are better known than others. Among the more eminent is Walter Brueggemann, whose admirably clear contribution is a magisterial piece making a compelling distinction between 'thick' and 'thin' readings of the text. A joint piece by Zoe Bennett and Christopher Rowland offers an intriguing series of glimpses of contextual and advocacy readings and of the power that they can exert. Readers of *The Way* will be particularly interested in a characteristically careful contribution from the editor, on how 'Ignatian approaches to prayer place us within the movement of the biblical text'.

Four observations may serve to locate the significance of this collection of papers. First, from all of them, taken together, it becomes clear how pastoral theology and practice form a hermeneutical circle. Through history, and across the variety of Christian traditions, it is possible to see that practitioners of pastoral theology often speak from a shared context, even those who might have been expected to reach widely different conclusions. Second, all the essays show, in their different ways, that we do not just 'read the Bible'. We read it always in a particular context, or rather in several overlapping contexts, including the intellectual and ecclesiological ones in which we find ourselves. Moreover our reading always takes place against the background of contemporary history.

Thirdly, the refreshing assumption that the Bible is and ought to be nourishing for Christian faith runs throughout this book; but the elaborations and implications of that assumption vary markedly from one contributor to the next. Finally, and perhaps underlying all the foregoing, is an insight which surfaces frequently in one form or another: the Bible is a story or set of stories, and needs to be read as such. The implications of this notion will vary widely among the authors; but it is a point to which

they return again and again. The problem, of course, is 'which story?' Not just any story will do, and some stories are better than others.

This is a book that readers of *The Way* will find very stimulating, even if more for the questions that it raises than for the answers it gives.

**Nicholas King SJ**

***The Bible, the Church and Homosexuality*, edited by Nicholas Coulton (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005).**

**0232 5260 60, pp. x + 136, £10.95.**

***Opening Up: Speaking Out in the Church*, edited by Julian Filochowski and Peter Stanford (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005).**

**0232 5262 49, pp. xvii + 284, £14.95.**

Many Christians today find themselves facing a dilemma regarding homosexuality. On the one hand, they want to support the person who has found love in a long-term partnership with a person of the same sex. On the other hand, they are told that the Scriptures clearly condemn any physical expression of homosexual love. Even the orientation itself is described by some influential voices as a 'disorder'. *The Bible, the Church and Homosexuality* is a collection of essays, largely from Oxford, addressing this dilemma. The central theme is twofold: the first point is to advocate a responsible attitude to the Bible, one that does not ignore some parts and highlight others. 'How are Christians to treat a Bible which applauds Israelite genocide of neighbouring Canaanites or, in the Psalms, the beating out of the brains of Babylonian babies?' The second is the importance of being attentive to the Spirit at work in the Church today.

Nicholas Coulton, the editor, introduces the discussion, which is important for the Church. In spite of changes in the law, there is still widespread prejudice, hostility and intolerance towards homosexuals. The high suicide statistics indicate significant pressure and cruelty encountered or feared by young gay people. Physical attacks on homosexuals occur frequently. 'What is perceived to be the Church's official disapproval of homosexuality lends encouragement and sanction to such attacks.' (p. 7)

In a masterly essay, Christopher Rowland discusses the way in which Christians today should weigh the authority of Scripture alongside what they believe they see the Spirit doing in the world. He does not discuss directly the scriptural texts that have been at the centre of the

controversy. His central question is: what is the role of the Bible in enabling followers of Jesus Christ to discern what it means to be true to their calling? It is a mistake to equate the Bible directly with revelation. It must always be read in the light of the mystery of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Rowland argues that understanding the divine will is less about textual exegesis and more about discernment. And Christian discernment must be informed, not only by the insights of Scripture and Tradition, but also by the ways in which God meets people in everyday life, especially in human relationships. He shows that right from the start of Christian history mere appeal 'to what the Bible says' was never thought to be an adequate ground for the Christian life. In Paul's dispute with Peter in Antioch, Paul's opponents had the best arguments from the Bible on their side, but Paul brushed these aside. Similarly, in the account of Peter's journey to Cornelius, the instruction to 'sacrifice and eat' cut across the teaching of the Bible. What Peter and Paul were doing here was to relativise the place of Scripture in the light of the experience of the Spirit. 'In doing this, they laid down an approach to their ancestral Scriptures which should be central to Christianity. Christianity has never been a religion of the book'. (p.29) They were showing that Christians should not treat the Bible as a code of law, and act as if they did not have a doctrine of the Spirit.

Marilyn McCord Adams shows how societies have invented institutions to control sexual expression and explores how institutions respond when taboos start to change. She argues that taboos are enemies of discernment, because they make an idol of the status quo and tend to make change unthinkable. Jane Shaw describes ways in which the Church's attitudes to sexuality, marriage and celibacy have changed over the course of 2000 years, and asks how we are to locate our current debate within that history. Another essay, by Margaret Bedgood, offers 'a perspective derived from the theory, practice and experience of the modern human rights movement' (p.80):

A more philosophical approach is taken by Robert Merrihew Adams, for whom the argument that sexual intercourse between people of the same sex is contrary to nature does not stand up to rigorous analysis. It presupposes judgments made on other—perhaps not very good—grounds about what is good and right in discerning divine purposes in nature. The fact that God has a procreative purpose for human sexual intercourse does not imply that God absolutely forbids sexual intercourse where procreation is impossible. The Bible itself (Genesis 2:23-24) speaks also of a unitive function for the sexual relationship. John Drury discusses what it means to be a good reader, observing that we are all prejudicially selective

readers, and that we should be critically self-aware about this at all times, but especially in our reading of the Bible.

This is a book that should be read by anyone interested in the homosexuality debate. The essays are well-argued and contribute fresh thinking. They approach the question from a variety of angles, and they argue persuasively that a change in the Church's approach to homosexuality would be consistent with the Church's understanding of Scripture and its traditional ways of working with doctrine.

The second book, *Opening Up: Speaking Out in the Church*, is a collection of 21 essays, most of them by Roman Catholics, written to mark the sixtieth birthday of Martin Pendergast, who was co-founder of the Catholic AIDS Link charity in London, and active in the setting up of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. Here, however, the focus is broader than the Churches' debates about homosexuality. Instead, a variety of questions facing the Church are openly discussed. Timothy Radcliffe describes those who are excluded by being on the margins of society to whom the Church offers 'a Eucharistic wisdom'. In the face of modern violence and brutality, the follower of Jesus is to act in ways that signify peace and justice. Eucharistic wisdom reminds us that our community is gathered around the altar in the memory of one who was cast out. Jon Sobrino stresses that the option for the poor is still absolutely necessary because poverty is still a scandal; the poverty he is discussing is not only economic poverty but also the condition of all who are isolated, despised, ignored or excluded. Enda McDonagh notes how theology has taken marriage beyond a simple contract in canon law to the more human and Christian category of a community of love. This has important consequences for sexual morality in both homosexual and heterosexual loving. He also underlines the importance of not attempting to restrict unduly the freedom of voters and legislators to follow their conscience. The same point is discussed more fully by Aidan O'Neill in his essay, 'Can a Catholic Be a Good Democrat?' Julian Filochowski describes the enormity of the problem of poverty in the world: 'half the world's population, three billion people, live on less than \$2 a day' (p. 164). It is imperative that Christians face this crisis in a constructive way.

Kevin Kelly, in the last essay, 'Do We Need a Vatican Three?', recalls that the religious authorities of his day rejected Jesus because of his teaching that 'the sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the sabbath'. 'Are there "sabbaths" in the Church today', Kelly asks, 'to which we can be tempted to subordinate the good of human persons?' He lists a number of such 'modern-day sabbaths' that are in need of open discussion before the Church will be ready for Vatican III. Among these

are: a fundamentalist approach to homosexuality, lay participation in the life of the Church, general absolution, intercommunion, divorce and remarriage, and birth control. Open dialogue within the Church about such questions, giving primacy to the human person, must precede the calling of another general council.

In both of these collections of essays problems facing the Church are openly discussed in an interesting, informed and refreshing way. They provide good bases for the constructive dialogue we so badly need, and so rarely find.

*Clarence Gallagher SJ*

**David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard UP, 2006). 0 674 01875 3, pp.ix + 308, £31.95.**

This intriguing book examines the evidence, mainly from Egyptian sources, of the spiritual combat to which the monks of the early Church submitted during the course of their quest for perfection and above all for self-mastery.

The book divides roughly into two halves. In the first, entitled 'The Monk in Combat', the initial chapter deals with the general theme of the monk as a fighter of demons. The next four chapters consider in turn Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, Evagrius Ponticus, Pachomius and Shenoute, with his stinging attack on hypocrisy in general, and in particular on the duplicity of the Christian governor Gessius, who was detected reverencing pagan temples.

Part 2 bears the arresting title 'War Stories', and is more concerned with the general themes which run through the whole period. Chapter 7 deals with Ethiopian ideas about demons and explores the relationship between the monastic self and the diabolical other. Chapter 8 concerns gender in combat, and deals with manly women—a familiar Gnostic theme—and female demons.

An afterword, 'The Inner Battle', has much to say about the way in which the wisdom of Egypt, above all that of Evagrius, found its way to the West—especially through the *Institutes* and *Conferences* of John Cassian (360-435). This is exemplified by the appearance in the West of the eight (later seven) capital or deadly sins. The list owes its inception to Evagrius and became canonical through its adoption by Gregory the Great in his *Moralia on Job* of about 585 AD. This development illustrates a

central thesis of the book: what begin as demons, as external spiritual forces with which Antony wrestles and to which Ephesians 6: 12 refers, eventually become inner spiritual forces.

How and why did this change take place? It would be a great mistake to suppose, as the author perceptively points out, that what may seem to us the more simplistic account of the demons was the result of a lack of culture or education on the part of the early monks. Antony himself was by no means stupid or poor, though the *Life* admits that 'he had no education'; his conversation with the pagan philosophers, recorded in chapters 72-80, is not a fiction. And it was not only the ill-educated who were convinced of the power of demons, that is of heavenly powers who have fallen from a condition of bliss. Origen, in *Contra Celsum* 4:92, writes: 'We hold that there are certain evil demons ... who have become impious towards the true God ... they creep into the most rapacious wild beasts and other animals'. Antony has much to say on the subject of discernment of spirits, and for him 'spirits' almost always mean external, invasive spiritual powers, determined to distract the monk from the purpose for which he left the world. For Evagrius, however, the terms 'demon' and 'thought' (Greek *logismos*) are used interchangeably, with the emphasis falling on the 'thought'.

Another crucial term for Evagrius was *apatheia*, an aim which the ascetic sets himself as a necessary stepping stone on the journey to contemplation. This need not mean the destruction of feeling, but can simply be regarded as a control over wayward spiritual emotions. The difficulty in interpreting what Evagrius (and others) meant by it is, as Brakke aptly points out, the difficulty of deciding what philosophy underlies the understanding of *pathos*. It could be an intellectualised Stoicism, for which *apatheia* would mean something external to the soul, or Platonism, for which *apatheia* would be the ill-disciplined character of the aggressive and acquisitive parts of the soul itself.

This is a fruitful book which deserves attentive reading, above all in its exploration of the nature of spiritual combat as seen by fourth- and fifth-century ascetics. Little is said in the book, or in the texts that it discusses, about liturgy. Was it assumed or regarded as an optional extra? Perhaps there is no simple answer.

**Anthony Meredith SJ**



**Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Theological Bioethics: Participation, Justice, and Change* (Washington: Georgetown UP, 2005).**

**I 58901 075 2, pp. x + 310, £16.95.**

What is 'theological bioethics' and how does it differ from any other type of bioethics? Lisa Sowle Cahill, a prominent moral theologian and professor of theology at Boston College, tells us that theological bioethics is a form of participatory or public bioethics. The adjectives 'participatory' and 'public' are important, as they distinguish Cahill's approach from others advanced in similar publications. Such approaches usually amount to either theoretical presentations and normative judgments regarding clinical issues, or demonstrations of moral commitment to, for example, the protection of embryos and fetuses, of the kind to be found in the literature of pro-life movements. Although Cahill acknowledges the importance of a theory and a moral stance, she goes beyond these and proposes to view theological bioethics as a form of activism which takes part in a 'global social network of mobilisation for change' (p. 3). Her book is about engagement, not theory. It is informed by the 'common good' tradition of Roman Catholic social thought and the insights of liberation theology. Justice and solidarity, claims Cahill, are the most important concerns and priorities of theological bioethics. When she talks about *justice* she usually means distributive justice, understood in terms of global access to health-care resources. By *solidarity* she means a sense of unity with the poor and outcast as exemplified in the healing ministry of Jesus—something to which all Christians should be committed.

The book works on two assumptions: (1) bioethical decisions about individuals cannot be separated from social ethics; (2) despite the particularity of moral practices and perspectives, many common moral values regarding life and health can be defended across cultures. Regarding the latter Cahill refers to initiatives in which Jewish and Muslim scholars join Christians in formulating cooperative projects of participation in health-care matters. This well-researched book is enlivened with practical applications to enduring controversies. When discussing, for example, aging and the decline of abilities, she does not simply focus on the arguments of those who advocate physician-assisted suicide or on the opinions of those who advocate keeping patients alive indefinitely with artificial nutrition and hydration. Central to Cahill's case is a claim that the arguments on both sides of the standard debates reflect an overly technological and overly individualistic approach to decline and death. Cahill is more interested in how to integrate the elderly and the terminally ill and dying into their communities so that they can live more

fulfilling lives and continue to *participate* in those communities as far as they are able. Some of the cases she discusses are specific to her own context, the USA; nevertheless they do convey points that are common to all modern Western cultures which are informed by narratives of liberal individualism, scientific progress and the market. Even though the US leads the world in spending on health care, it does not ensure basic access for all citizens (45 million US people lack health insurance and this number continues to rise). The issue of access to health care is a world-wide problem which Cahill links to inequalities in other areas of social access, namely education, gender and market economics. To overcome these inequalities, Cahill calls for progressive religious thinkers and believers to join in the effort to reclaim the best of their traditions through engaging political forces at local, national and international levels.

The first two chapters offer an interpretative history of the field of theological bioethics and propose an understanding of its role in changing social relationships and institutions. They offer a theoretical grounding for specific issues which are then addressed in the final five chapters in the following areas: aging, decline and dying; health-care access reform; AIDS; and 'beginning of life' technologies.

The work is grounded in a deep and wide scholarly reflection, with references to authors such as Edward Schillebeeckx, Jim Wallis, Robert Schreiter, Paul Ramsey, James Gustafson, Richard McCormick, Margaret Farley, Karen Lebacqz, James Childress, Charles Taylor and Beverly Wildung Harrison. It draws on the experiences of organizations such as the Catholic Health Association, Catholic Relief Services, Christian Aid and the Sant'Egidio communities—all of which exemplify participatory theological bioethics.

Even if not every reader will agree that theological bioethics must go beyond intellectual engagement and become a form of activism, Cahill's book will leave few resting comfortably with the current world-wide state of affairs regarding health care. A thoughtful reader will be convinced that theological bioethics is about developing a more compassionate attitude and about alleviating the social conditions that create inequalities in matters of health. This book offers a vision and a voice that enriches the field of bioethics and invites the reader to take specific practical steps: actions that will eventually become true democratic activism, both locally and globally.

**Anna Abram**

**Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005).**

**0 8020 8718 3, pp. xiv + 450, £55.00.**

Revisionist accounts of the Second Vatican Council, from all sides, are now regularly appearing. One effect of this is that the contribution to the conciliar renewal from French theologians and thinkers is being appreciated more fully; in the Anglophone world particularly, there has been a series of new translations and editions of their works. Thus Stephen Schloesser's study of French Catholicism in the aftermath of World War I, *le désastre*, could not be more timely. It is impossible to assess appropriately the work of Congar, Chenu, Daniélou or de Lubac without reference to the philosophical and artistic Catholic renewal that arose from the devastation.

In France the power of the Church had initially been broken by the Revolution, and before World War I many citizens of the 'eldest daughter of the Church' perceived Ultramontane Catholicism as incurably reactionary, wedded to Pius IX's repeated condemnations of modernity, and to an intransigence which found its shameful apotheosis in the Dreyfus affair. The 1905 laws of *laïcité* appeared to many as the triumph of the state over the Church. Twenty years later, however, 'Jazz Age' Paris witnessed the emergence of a Catholic intellectual élite who proclaimed their religious faith as modernity's truest expression. Moving Catholicism from the margins of culture to its centre, this postwar *renouveau* led to an unprecedented flowering of French Catholic intellectual life, involving both recent converts and established apologists.

Schloesser makes a major contribution to our understanding of this phenomenon. It emerges from the national sense of bereavement, on a scale previously quite unthinkable, after World War I. France went through a 'crisis of mind'; it was as though civilisation itself had perished in the trenches. In his study of the philosopher Maritain, the painter Rouault, the novelist Bernanos and the musician Tournemire, Schloesser offers examples of how Catholic identity and self-understanding shifted, becoming marked by a 'rage against the modernity of liberal rationalism'—a rage which it shared not only with Surrealism and Dadaism, but also with Fascism and Communism.

The book's erudition is challenging; it is not a text for the faint-hearted. But its wealth of fact and interpretation cannot fail to fascinate. The many currents and counter-currents in French political and cultural life at the turn of the twentieth century are well described, as are the suffocating tensions in French Catholicism at the time of the Modernist

crisis. As we follow Jacques and Raïssa Maritain in their intellectual and spiritual odyssey, we move from free-thinking republican socialism to the nationalist proto-fascism of Maurras' *Action Française*. Schloesser does not shrink from the paradoxes and contradictions in the Maritains' journey, and well conveys the complex process through which Jacques Maritain transformed Catholicism into ultramodernism. His famed exchanges with Jean Cocteau both gained and lost him admirers, as did his submission to Rome's condemnation, in 1926, of *Action Française*. For our generation, much of this context is lost in a mist of failed memory, and *Jazz Age Catholicism* will make us aware of the complex twentieth-century ancestry of contemporary Catholicism.

Schloesser does not give us a survey of Rouault's work, but presents his paintings as an expression of Catholic renewal, and shows how their dialectical juxtaposition of the sacred and the monstrous provoked sharply divergent reactions among critics. A painter whose works shocked, disgusted and fascinated in equal measure, Rouault depicted the profane and the sacrilegious as masking religious mystery. Maritain, at one point Rouault's neighbour, perceived splendour and 'privileged interior reality' bursting out of the raw, miserable figures of Rouault's clowns and prostitutes.

Like the chapter on Rouault, the chapter on Bernanos does not discuss the subject's work as such. Rather, by looking at contemporary reactions to *Sous le soleil de Satan*, Schloesser traces the emergence of 'the Catholic novel', and its redefinition of the notions of Catholicism, religion and human existence through its dialectical realism.

A fourth main chapter looks at the music of Charles Tournemire. French music of this period, like the philosophy, visual art, and literature of the period, needs to be seen in the wider French context, both religious and political. The point applies also to the revival of plainchant led by Dom Guéranger and the abbey at Solesmes. Moreover, like other aspects of French culture, music became radically politicised by the Dreyfus affair. A pupil of both César Franck and Charles-Marie Widor, Tournemire entitled his monumental cycle of 51 organ masses for the liturgical year, *Lorgue mystique*. Combining as it does plainchant with modern chromaticism, his music was a deliberate attempt to forge a hybrid language, or, as Schoessler describes it, an 'intersection of incongruities', a 'semantic vertigo' in which the eternal and the modern are both juxtaposed and fused.

Schloesser claims his book is a 'modernist desecularization project' and an exploration of cultural Catholicism, and it is indeed both those things. The only disappointment is the abrupt end, which allows for little

reflection on the period in its totality. Nevertheless, for most readers *Jazz Age Catholicism* will be a fascinating and insightful window into a world whose significance was largely engulfed by the subsequent catastrophe of World War II, and by the yet further profound changes in Catholic religious thought and culture which followed.

**Gemma Simmonds CJ**

***The Worlds We Live In: Dialogues with Rowan Williams on Global Economics and Politics*, edited by Claire Foster and Edmund Newell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005). 0 232 52614 1, pp. ix + 129, £10.95.**

This book reproduces four public dialogues with Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, held in St Paul's Cathedral during September 2004. Williams is joined by politicians, academics and activists of diverse backgrounds in dialogues about world governance, global capitalism, the environment, and health issues. In the first chapter, David Owen and Philip Bobbitt debate the future of the nation state, while Williams adverts to the transformative potential of non-government institutions, Churches, and people of good will. In the second dialogue, 'Is there an Alternative to Global Capitalism?', economist John Kay gives a vigorous defence of the free market, going somewhat against the grain of the collection as a whole. The fourth dialogue, 'Is Humanity Killing Itself?', takes up such issues as population growth and the controversial role of Western drug companies in the face of the worldwide AIDS epidemic.

The third dialogue, 'Environment and Humanity—Friends or Foes?', is perhaps where Williams is best able to bring a Christian perspective to the issues, but it is also the most frustrating chapter of the book. Mary Midgley paints in excessively broad strokes when she accuses early Christianity of seeing the earth as 'something that stands in our way when we try to get to heaven' (p. 72). Williams is right to correct her interpretation: early Christians also understood the world as sacramental, as a system of (God-given) meaning (p. 76); the hubristic imposition by human beings of their own meaning thus takes on blasphemous proportions. Salvadoran activist Ricardo Navarro vividly portrays the destruction of the earth and its enormous implications for human existence, but he is prone to rhetorical exaggeration, particularly in his anti-US invective. Williams combines the sublime with the homely in his vision of humanity exercising a priestly role in creation, and in his call to

engage with 'the limits of the natural world' by walking more, getting wet, and digging gardens (p.93).

In the afterword, Williams notes: 'The dialogues were in no way designed as an exercise in Christian apologetic' (p. 129). He resists quick answers, and happily accepts qualification and correction from his interlocutors. Theology undertaken in such a spirit of humility and openness, but with full confidence in the perennial relevance of the gospel message, has a great deal to say to the modern world, rife as it is with fundamentalisms both religious and secular. One hopes that such dialogues continue, and not only under the dome of St Paul's.

**Mark L. Yenson**