

able to be translated into terms of day-to-day family life, sorrowing, fasting, feasting and rejoicing in season. She is quite frank: ' . . . It began, for us, with an Advent wreath and reading the fine print in the missal: after that, we read everything we could get our hands on that would help us. One by one the seasons of the Christian year began to shape our prayer and our activity, and shed light on how we were to use the doctrine. We were a long time reaching the point where we fell naturally into the practices we now use to celebrate feasts and keep vigils. . . . It entered us slowly, this "Christening" of our life'.

For us to take over this full and rich life she describes would indeed be unbearable, artificial and unreal, and very far from the author's intention. The fruitful Catholic life must be native to its environment, springing from strong and healthy roots, not a hothouse plant, transplanted with care. Rather, this book should be an inspiration to us to start in a small way, using Mrs Newland's ideas, perhaps, but translating them into terms of our own circumstances, our own families.

ROSEMARY HEDDON

BEFORE MASS. By Romano Guardini. Translated from the German by Elinor Castendyk Briefs. (Longmans; 8s. 6d.).

Many of the books on the Mass that have appeared in English in recent years, give the reader to believe that all his difficulties would disappear if only certain changes could be made in the liturgy, certain old forms restored and other more recent accretions excluded. Or even, we are told, if the clergy would avail themselves of such legitimate practices as the dialogue Mass, and the offertory procession, participation in the Sunday Mass would become so much easier. This is no doubt very true, but we are still on the periphery of the problem; its heart lies very much deeper. For this reason we are very glad to be able to welcome the English translation of Fr Guardini's *Before Mass*. This book attempts to prepare the reader for genuine participation in holy Mass by showing him what the Mass demands of him and how these demands may be properly met. Its approach is refreshing, for the author is content to discuss the Mass as it is today in relation to the needs of the modern Christian without constantly referring to the practices of past ages. Fr Guardini has no quarrel with the efforts of the liturgical revival, but in this book he takes all that for granted and approaches the subject from a new angle.

The first part of the book is devoted to sacred bearing, and a glance at the list of contents will show the train of the author's thought: Stillness, Silence and the word, Silence and hearing, Composure, Composure and action, Composure and participation; these are some of the heads that meet the eye. At a time when so much emphasis is placed on action in the liturgy it is very salutary to be reminded that

these dispositions are fundamental. 'Liturgical action', writes Fr Guardini, 'begins with learning composure; everything else, the use of the missal, instruction on the meaning and history of the Mass, and the chorals, is important and fruitful as long as it is rooted in self-collectedness.' Having laid down these initial conditions, he proceeds to explain some of the basic notions of the liturgy: Holy place, Altar, Holy day and hour, the use of the spoken word; most important of all perhaps are the chapters on the meaning and nature of 'Congregation'. The second part of the book deals with the essence of the Mass and is a little masterpiece. Here in simple language which is entirely free of technicalities is expressed the fruit of many years' study and meditation.

This book should prove of great practical and instructional value, and many will be grateful to the translator for making it available in prose that is so smooth and readable.

P.M.

WISDOM SHALL ENTER. By Leo Trese. (Geoffrey Chapman; 10s. 6d.)

Though Fr Trese's new book is described as a 'simple discussion of the Catholic faith', I think it might be more aptly called a digest of apologetics: and a very clear and lively one it is. That a digest can be called 'lively' is a measure of its author's ability to write; to add that it is rarely, if ever, superficial is to appraise his understanding of his matter. His chapters are brief, but all the principles are there and the main arguments from them outlined. The book seems to be addressed to the Catholic who may be challenged to show reasons for his belief rather than to his challenger and the author is more concerned to make these reasons intelligible than to dwell on possible objections to them. If, as I think, it is unlikely to reach many of those Catholics in this country who would gain most from it (it was written originally for an American public), those who do read it, though they may learn nothing new, should be helped to put into order and to see the apologetic application of much that they may already know. The book may well whet the appetite of some readers so a short bibliography would have been useful.

The first appendix is an excursus on Natural Theology and, as the author himself appears to realize, it is weak. Here he says too little to be useful and, in some instances, even completely accurate. Incidentally, it is not the case, as is said here, that God knows things because they are: God's knowledge is creative and things are because he knows them. Such statements as this, however, need much more explanation than can possibly go into a short appendix and it might have been better had this section been left out altogether. Better still, Fr Trese might give the subject a book to itself.

This is the sort of book that could be considered for publication