

The author of *The Imitation* writes, as if addressing Christ, 'Thou wilt give me this heavenly meat and this angel's food which is plainly none other but thyself, that art the living bread that descendest from heaven and givest life to the world. It is a marvellous thing, worthy to be believed and far above the understanding of man, that thou, Lord, who art God and very man, art wholly contained under a little likeness of bread and wine. O my soul, be thou merry and glad for so noble a gift and so singular a comfort—for as oft as thou takest the body of Christ, so oft thou workest the work of thy redemption and art made part-taker of all the merits of Christ'.

With its innumerable quotations from the Bible, *The Imitation* can form a link between the Bible and the Mass for the seeking Protestant.

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EXTRACTS

AMONG the reviews of the first months of this year dedicated to the centenary at Lourdes, *La Vie Spirituelle* (February), as we might expect, takes the lead in profundity as well as attractiveness. The major part of the number is devoted to Lourdes, its apparitions and miracles, but the most instructive section is 'Prayer to Mary'. Père M.-F. Moos, O.P., writes of the Psalms of the Lady Office and how and why the Church applies them to our Lady. By what he calls a *mystical literal sense* as distinguished from an historical literal sense, the Church has taken the Gradual Psalms and dedicated them to the Blessed Virgin with whom our prayer ascends to Jahwe. This 'sense', 'thanks to the analogy of faith, bursts forth from the very words by a kind of fullness of meaning intended by God who is the principal author of Scripture'. With regard to these psalms sung by the pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem,

we must remember that Jerusalem is primarily the figure of the Church militant. We have to join ourselves to her more every day by the assent of our faith and our love. In the praises which are offered to her, Jerusalem in a particular way represents Mary, 'the

Church made woman', more powerful and more holy in herself alone than all those who form with her the city of God. . . . The inspired text incites us to praise Mary and direct our steps towards her with as much eagerness as the Jews in setting off to hasten to their religious capital.

The author then takes the Gradual Psalms and comments briefly on them in this light.

Père A. Humbert, O.P., then considers 'The Rosary and the Liturgy'—a much-needed treatise at a time when these two are so often set in antithesis against each other.

The liturgy unfolds through the year the mysteries of Christ, which can be divided into three cycles: Epiphany, Paschal and Pentecostal, corresponding fairly closely with the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of the Rosary. Each liturgical feast presents us with an historical event of Christ's and Mary's life. . . . But the events of Christ's life are not recalled in the liturgy and the Rosary merely as 'souvenirs', as an old missal put it, but they are 'mysteries'—that is to say, sources of light drawn from the historic event, and sources of grace drawn from the uninterrupted saving action of Christ the mediator.

Thus the Rosary, like the liturgy, by its meditation and fervent prayer, can put us in very direct contact with the source of all light, of all grace and of all sanctification, and also with the one who distributes these. And, as with the liturgy, the centre and the summit of its mysteries is the Paschal Mystery.

This theme is taken up by Père H.-D. Béchaux, O.P., in the following article in which he takes the reader step by step through the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary to show that they are 'the unique mystery of Jesus revealed by the Bible and chanted in the liturgy'.

In the Lourdes centenary number of *Doctrine and Life* (February-March) the most notable article comes from Archbishop Finbar Ryan, who compares the messages of Lourdes and Fatima. At Fatima our Lady 'dotted the i's and crossed the t's' of her message at Lourdes. But there is a contrast too.

For the over-confident 'scientific' nineteenth-century world she set up at Lourdes an observation-theatre, so to speak, where Heaven's miraculous interventions in human affairs might be minutely studied. . . .

But twentieth-century prayerlessness called, not for a sharply-focussed centre of heavenward movement, but for a stimulus diffused throughout the world to persons of every estate and environment. . . . Our Lady did not invite people to Fatima as she did to Lourdes. There her call was centripetal, in Fatima it was centrifugal,

but the messages of both Lourdes and Fatima are substantially identical: O my children return, return to my Son.

But *Sursum Corda* (Waverley, New South Wales) for February gives us another approach to our Lady in Fr Ambrose Ryan's 'Austrian Devotion to Mary'. This article is the first of a series and so he begins with the arrival of Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros off the New Hebrides in 1606. On Whitsunday

the crews disembarked accompanied by a group of Franciscan Friars and Brothers of St John of God, missionaries for the conversion of the natives. The first action of the Catholic Spaniards was to erect a fort on the shore, within which 'a clean and well-ordered altar was erected'. This was the first church, and was named by the Captain 'Our Lady of Loreto'.

From this 'church' a proclamation was read claiming the new lands in the name of our Lord and the Church and the Catholic King of Spain. But the mixture of the conversion of the infidel with empire building has always produced a dubious paste. This typical piece of history recalls Italy's Abyssinian campaign during which picture postcards were circulated showing our Lady floating in the clouds above the Italian tanks going into action. The empire building of fervent Catholics presents a problem which has no easy solution, but we hope that our Lady will not be often associated with the use of force, since she is now more than ever before the Queen of Peace.



REVIEWS

OUR LADY OF LOURDES. By Rt Rev. Mgr Joseph Deery. (Browne and Nolan Ltd, Dublin; 18s.)

The number one hundred has a peculiar fascination—whether it be the number of runs scored on the cricket field or the number of years of life of a person or an institution. Cricketers have various ways of proceeding when they reach their century. Some think the time has come when they should now begin to hit out indiscriminately at every ball. Others think that the time has come for a fresh guard to be taken and a new start on the road to a second hundred begun. When the centenary of the foundation of any sort of institution, a school, a club, a parish church, is reached, it might be felt that the time has come for the institution to close down because it has outlived its usefulness. On the other hand, it might be regarded as the time for making a fresh