

familiar with the practice of mental prayer. In all there are thirty-eight meditations which give the impression of being rather diffuse. The author however suggests that only one point should be taken each day. To avoid repeating what is to be found in other books for seminarists, Fr Nash does not draw on the Rite of Ordination for his subject-matter, but turns primarily though not exclusively to the gospels. Those who use this book should find in it an aid both to the better understanding of their obligations as students for the priesthood and to progress in the spiritual life.

N. J. KELLY

## NOTICES

In *MEN AGAINST HUMANITY* (Harvill; 18s.) M. Gabriel Marcel approaches the problem of human freedom today together with cognate problems from his own metaphysical standpoint, both profound and difficult. He explicitly excludes the religious approach to these problems (p. 88), because he insists that the philosopher must make his own special contribution; and there is no doubt about it that those who can must follow him into these realms to discover the nature of man and the nature of the contemporary attack upon him and in particular upon his spirit.

*WIFE, MOTHER AND MYSTIC* (Sands; 10s. 6d.) is the story of Bl. Anna-Maria Taigi, told by Père Bessières, S.J., and translated by Fr Stephen Rigby. She was married at twenty in 1790 and reared seven pleasing children, some of whom lived to make depositions at the beatification process of their mother. And her husband too was there to say: 'A year after our marriage . . . she gave up all the jewellery she used to wear and took to wearing the plainest possible clothes. She asked my permission for this and I gave it her with all my heart.' With such a promising family background she developed into a saint who spoke with our Lord and was constantly beset by devils. She was indeed a 'mystic' of the most extraordinary type, and her life was of special significance for the critical period in which she lived. She had a constant vision, a sun in which she followed the life of Napoleon and the evils of the times. The book, though rather jumbled in its plan, is of considerable interest, especially for those who seek holiness in married life. Readers should not be discouraged by the jacket, which gives the impression of 'Another Nineteenth-Century French Nun Beata'!

Desclée De Brouwer have published a French translation of Thomas Merton's *Waters of Silence* under the title *Aux sources du silence* which is pleasantly produced and illustrated with eight photographs of life at Gethsemani.

ADAPTATION has become almost a key word for modern religious, and Fr Lord, S.J., has considered its meaning carefully in his *LETTERS TO A NUN* (Clonmore and Reynolds; 17s. 6d.) which is meant for the modern nun. Fifty-five letters see the nun through her novitiate to her full life of responsibility in chapel and in the daily labours. Though many may have grown tired of the letter device, the sisters who read this will find much in it to profit them.

ASCENDING BY STEPS (Clonmore and Reynolds; 6s.) is a modern attempt by Fr William Stephenson, S.J., to help religious up the scale of perfection. It suffers perhaps from its composition. The first eight steps are practical considerations taken from afternoon retreat conferences, the second eight from short morning talks under similar circumstances. The doctrine of the book is general and the laity will find nothing exclusive about it.

EDEL MARY QUINN was an Irish woman who as a member of the Legion of Mary achieved prodigious results in her apostolic work in Central Africa; she died a holy death at Nairobi in 1944. Her book on the Apostolate is having a world-wide success, and now her biography is written by his Lordship Mgr Léon-Joseph Sueuens and published with the sub-title *Une Héroïne de l'Apostolat* by Desclée at Bruges (96 Belgian francs).

THE MEDIEVAL Morality Play 'Wisdom who is Christ' is the subject of a theological and historical interpretation by Fr J. J. Molloy, O.P., as a doctorate thesis at the Catholic University of America. He shows, contrary to previous rather half-hearted judgments, that the play in accurate theological terms unfolds the teaching about grace and the growth in perfection. It is a pity that the text of the morality could not have been published with this commentary. But the publication of this book is a welcome event that shows theologians at length turning their eyes on the English heritage. (Catholic University, Washington; and Providence College; n.p.)

MISS MAISIE SPENS has written several books of a metaphysical-mystical character. Her latest, 'RECEIVE THE JOYFULNESS OF YOUR GLORY' (Hodder and Stoughton; 15s.), is perhaps her best. Its theme is that of Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity, but extended to the whole of creation, which participates in the Transfiguration. The author's style however is not easy; 'would-be prayer-sharers' and such phrases were surely avoidable.