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Lent Book Number

IN THIS CORNER

Some Amazing Reading

Someone from the Diocese of Newark was considerate enough to send me a copy of a report adopted by diocesan convention there in January. *Our Common Life: Being an Episcopalian in the Decade of Evangelism*, the Revised Report of the Task Force on Episcopal Identity, is a remarkable document. I must admit that once I started reading, it was difficult to put it down.

In his convention address, Bishop John Spong of Newark called the report "one of the most exciting and debated papers that many of us have read." Debated is probably a more apt word to use than exciting. He added that "this report has offered hope to many. Its critics have been those who somehow feel that the major task of the church is to repeat ancient theological formulations."

Because I hold to such "ancient theological formulations" as the resurrection and the virgin birth, I guess I am now on the lists of critics of this report. Having read Bishop Spong's comments about it, I must admit my appetite was whetted. With its appendices, the report covers 32 pages of amazing, fascinating reading. It includes commentary on such topics as identity, modernity, authority and inclusivity, and is prepared by prominent members of the clergy and laity in Newark.

At the risk of being accused of taking portions of the report and appendices out of context, I offer to share the following excerpts:

On identity: "We suggest that who we are as Episcopalians is defined by our relationship to modernity."

On modernity: "This church . . . has been generally, if unofficially, tolerant of sexual relations before marriage."

On reason: "Can we grant authority to contemporary experience? We believe that we can."

On scripture: ". . . the theological point is that God changes!"

On homosexuality: "We affirm not only the civil rights of gays and lesbians, but also their right to ecclesiastically-endorsed unions. Clearly, non-celibate homosexual persons may be ordained to the priesthood as well."

On the Holy Spirit: "God has a witness to God's self in the corridor of time. She is the Holy Spirit."

On the present structure of authority: "It gives rise to the characteristically vague Anglican pronouncement that our faith is that of the historic church: we believe in the teaching of scripture and the authority of the historic creeds. This tells us nothing."

On the gospel imperative: "In the building of his (Jesus's) followers, there seemed to be very little indication that repentance was a crucial or qualifying activity."

The report also has interesting things to say about such topics as feminism, heterodoxy, the virgin birth and inclusivity, but you get the idea.

Is this the sort of thing that Bishop Barbara Harris meant when, at the same convention, she called Newark, "this exciting, often misunderstood diocese"?

The Diocese of Newark has given the rest of the church something to think about. Will any other dioceses reach the same conclusions?

DAVID KALVELAGE, editor

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ON THE COVER

Photograph taken at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, by James Ballard.

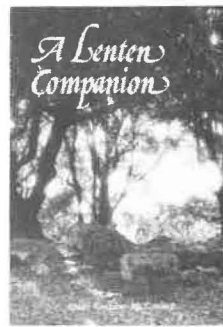
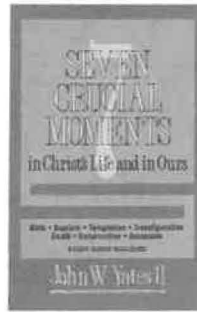
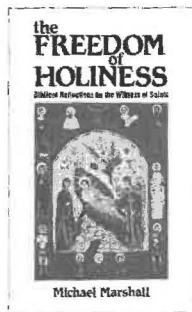
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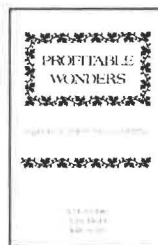
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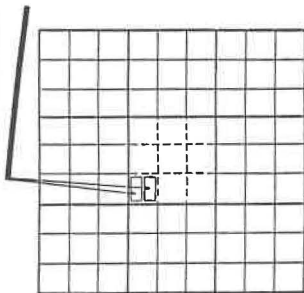
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LETTERS

Not So Rosy

Prof. R. William Franklin paints a rather rosy and optimistic picture of Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenical progress in his article [TLC, Feb. 2], although noting the persistence of "some differences." Yet the Rev. J. Robert Wright of General Theological Seminary sketches a much more sobering view (*Episcopal Life*, February 1992, p. 22).

Not only is Fr. Wright concerned about differences over the issues of papal infallibility, the nature of the primacy of the See of Rome and the alleged laconic statements about the ordination of women (an event which, to a large extent, has made Anglicans ecumenical hypocrites) contained in the Vatican's official response to the ARCIC-I statements, but also what he terms the "shallow and wooden" nature of the response. The only hope Fr. Wright sees is the ecumenical good will achieved by Roman Catholics at the grass-roots level.

It would be interesting and useful if, in future articles Prof. Franklin plans to write on this subject, he could deal in some depth with these issues Fr. Wright and others find so troublesome.

BRUCE P. FLOOD, JR.
Whitewater, Wis.

Thanks to TLC for bringing us news of the recent Vatican response to the ARCIC *Final Report*.

But please be aware of the misleading spin put on this by the author and the headline over the article. Rome has not agreed with Anglicans after some 400 years. Tragically, Anglicans have compromised some historic doctrines for the sake of relations with Rome.

JOSEPH R. MARTIN
Magnolia Springs, Ala.

Prof. R. William Franklin's positive evaluation of the Holy See's response to the ARCIC-I *Final Report* contrasts with the generally negative evaluations that have been appearing in news stories, letters and editorials in such English journals as the *Church Times* and *The Tablet*.

As chairman of a diocesan ecumenical commission (Rockville Centre,

N.Y.) at the time the ARCIC-I *Final Report* was published (1982), I and others studied it, discussed it and evaluated it painstakingly over a two-year period. Our judgment (then) concurs with the judgment the Holy See has issued now.

We were aware of the great progress made, especially in eucharistic doctrine and in ministry and ordination. But we were also convinced that consonance — meaning agreement with binding Catholic teaching — had not been reached on certain essential points, even points respecting the Eucharist and the ministerial priesthood.

We regretted that ARCIC-I did not affirm a teaching consonant with binding Catholic teaching. But ARCIC-I was such a major step forward that we decided to revise statements, combining the two on authority and including the content of the elucidations in their principal statements. We published the entire study (102 pages in a paperback) to illustrate how such consonance could be

achieved and sent the volume to, among others, all Roman Catholic and all Anglican bishops in office in English-speaking countries at the time (1985).

For those who want to study a (revised) ARCIC-I fully consonant with binding Catholic teaching, I recommend: *ARCIC-I Revisited: An Evaluation and a Revision*, Catholic Press Association, Hempstead, N.Y. 11551.

(The Rev. Msgr.) DANIEL S. HAMILTON
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Lindenhurst, N.Y. (R.C.) Church

As Promised

In reading David Kalvelage's column [TLC, Jan. 26], my heart went out to him. I am one of those who has not renewed my subscription. TLC is a good, informative publication, but I have decided it is not helping me. Sadly, I have come to feel that, as an institution, the Episcopal Church is badly divided over the

basics of Christianity. Some of our leaders take action with impunity. The constant exposure to this division has not built up my faith. I realize I need to be investing more time in scripture and prayer to be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ.

Though the institution may crumble, the church will continue to grow, just as Jesus promised. He said the gates of hell would not withstand it, and I take great comfort in that.

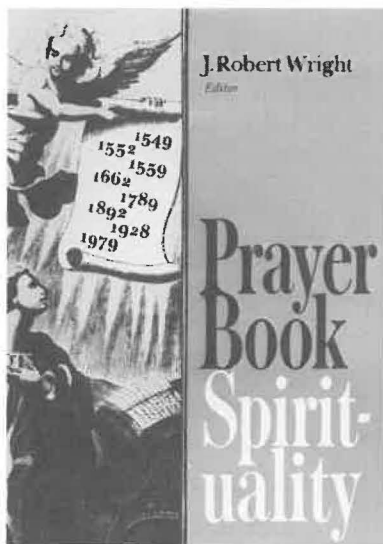
TLC has given a forum for both sides of the current debates and has done it well. You can't please everybody, only the Lord.

(The Rev.) ROBIN RAUH
St. Stephen's Church
Huntsville, Ala.

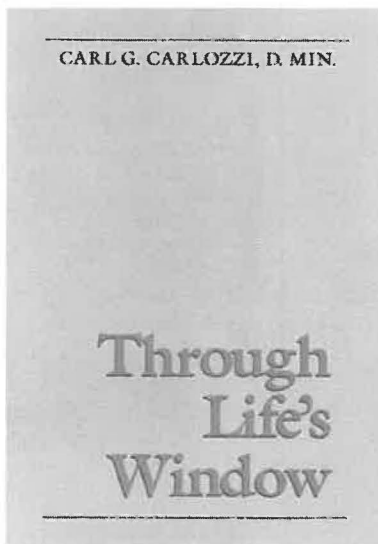
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I smiled as I read David Kalvelage's column, "It Can Be So Confusing." As a former managing editor of *The Episcopalian*, I was often similarly confused by reader responses to
(Continued on next page)

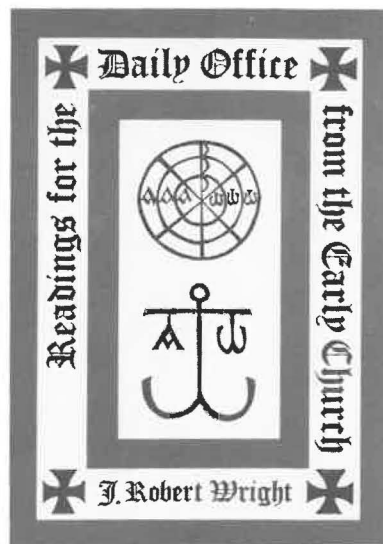
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LETTERS

(Continued from previous page)

articles we ran. I once even wrote a similar column but decided not to print it when other editors in our office convinced me it sounded snide and self-pitying.

I was never so daring as to telephone readers who asked that their subscriptions be canceled. But readers who didn't like what we printed sometimes telephoned me. Most were courteous but a few were sarcastic and insulting. One priest even hung up in my ear. I soothed myself by assuming such readers had problems in other areas of their lives which they were taking out on me.

The remarkable thing was how both the left and the right felt *The Episcopalian* was biased against them. Traditionalists thought we were in the pocket of radical leftists residing at 815 Second Ave. While members of the Episcopal Church Center staff (especially the more liberal ones) sometimes accused us of insensitivity or disloyalty for failing to publicize their views and

projects in the way they would have preferred. I finally concluded that we were doing our job right when the angry letters from the left and the angry letters from the right were roughly equal in number.

(The Rev.) RICHARD H. SCHMIDT
St. Paul's Church

Daphne, Ala.

No Argument

Thank you for your editorial tribute to the late Canon Dennis Bennett [TLC, Jan. 26]. There must be very many stories about him. Here's mine.

A neighboring priest was anxious for me to receive the gift of tongues. I thought I had better things to do. When Fr. Bennett visited his parish, my neighbor begged me to come meet him. I went, expecting to get into a theological argument. Never have I met a more charming man. I could have talked with him all night.

At the end of our conversation, I said "Let's face it, Dennis. With your personality, you could sell anything.

We're lucky you became an Episcopal priest!" His reply was a lovely smile. I'm glad we'll see him again.

(The Rev.) FREDERICK A. FENTON
St. Augustine's by-the-Sea Church
Santa Monica, Calif.

Lift of Hope

John L. Peterson's "A Rare Chance to Make Peace" [TLC, Jan. 5] gave my heart the greatest lift of hope of anything I have heard or read about the current peace efforts in the Holy Land.

The prospect of a conference on the spiritual basis of peace, called for by Bishop Kafity, among representatives of the three great Abrahamic faiths, would be the realization of a dream of mine. My even greater hope and belief is that the ultimate solution to conflict will be found when both Jews and Muslims will be led to acknowledge Jesus as God's final revelation of himself and his plan for peace on earth.

ELEANOR T. ANDREWS
Philadelphia, Pa.

Pastoral Sensitivity

Thank you for printing the insightful and pastoral response by the Rev. David M. Baumann [TLC, Dec. 1] to my letter [TLC, Oct. 6] addressing Nancy Doman's articles on singles and the church. His pastoral sensitivity to his parishioner warmed the inners of my heart and soul. My praise goes out to him and his flock.

I am sorry for his furor at sexual mores. Although I agree with him in principle, I would hope his judgments do not cloud his approaches toward "children of God" who are struggling with their own faith and sexuality in these turbulent times.

Thanks for your printing of conflicting views and concerns in our society and church.

(The Rev.) KENNETH O. WHITE
Memphis, Tenn.

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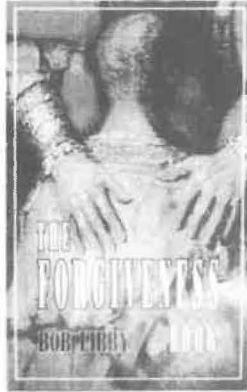
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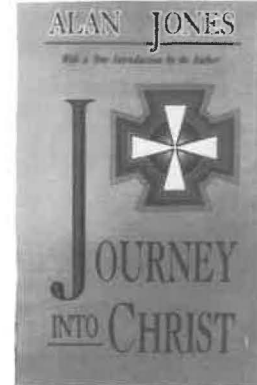
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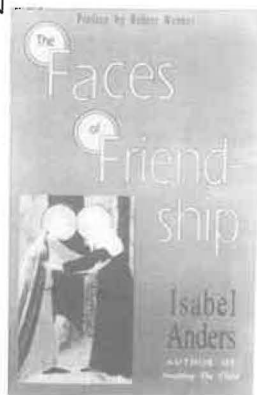
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Gay Couple Blessed at Pasadena Church

Two gay men who had been living together for eight years were recognized formally as a couple during a service of blessing at All Saints' Church in Pasadena, Calif. recently.

More than 500 people attended the service which was held for Mark Benson, 47, and Philip Straw, 45, who each promised to love, honor and comfort the other.

"Homosexuality is such a divisive issue, I'm sure there is a great deal of distress" concerning the ceremony, said the Rev. George Regas, rector. "But the people who were there, who

know these men, knew this was appropriate and good."

After a year of study and debate initiated by Fr. Regas, who is "solidly committed" to the blessings, the All Saints' congregation of 3,500 approved private services for same-sex unions. The blessing rite was done according to liturgy prepared by the parish's "Task Force on God, Sex and Justice" which had coordinated the year of study.

The Rt. Rev. Frederick Borsch, Bishop of Los Angeles, said of the proceedings: "While I personally believe

the church should move forward to affirm the covenants of all persons seeking a lifelong relationship of commitment and fidelity — and believe this would be beneficial for them and for society — this understanding has not been accepted by the Episcopal Church at this time."

The Rev. Anne Peterson, assistant to the rector, said persons who request formal blessings must meet the same requirements as heterosexual couples requesting a marriage ceremony. They also will be encouraged to sign a legal contract agreement.

Rural Parish May Join Episcopal Church

The Roman Catholic Church's decision to close a number of small parishes in rural northwestern Wisconsin has led some members of one congregation to petition to join the Episcopal Church.

Holy Trinity Church in Conrath, Wis., was one of 15 parishes closed by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Superior because of an increasing shortage of priests. After appealing unsuccessfully to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and even the pope for a reprieve, the 52-family parish contacted the Rev. Paul Walter, who heads

the small Episcopal congregation of St. Luke's in Ladysmith, and the Rt. Rev. William Wantland, Bishop of Eau Claire.

"We wanted to be careful we would not be involved in ecumenical fratricide," said Bishop Wantland. He talked with Roman Catholic ecumenical officers and Bishop Raphael Fliss of the Diocese of Superior, who were sympathetic. "We are continuing an ongoing dialogue with the Roman Catholic diocese on how best to handle this matter," Bishop Wantland said.

After meeting several times with members of the parish, Bishop Wantland discovered half the congregation had been members of the Polish National Catholic Church, and had joined Holy Trinity when their church was closed. He informed them that if they wanted to become Episcopalians they would have to receive religious instructions before being received. If they were interested in buying the building of Holy Trinity, they would have to do so on their own if the Roman Catholic diocese plans to sell it. At present the building stands empty and the diocese has not determined its future.

"I also told them that if they were unable to do this [buy the building], they could certainly join St. Luke's in Ladysmith," he said.

At this point, 11 families have joined the Roman Catholic Church in Ladysmith, about half the congregation is undecided, and a quarter want to become Episcopalians. The latter have been gathering with St. Luke's congregation for services and instruction.

Fr. Walter said he expects numerous Roman Catholic parishes will be closed in the surrounding area, and though many will probably consolidate, there may be others which will want to cross over to other churches.

By the year 2000, the Diocese of Superior expects to have only 45 active priests for a population of 83,000 Roman Catholics.



Photo by Richard Jackson

Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, Conrath, Wis.

CONVENTIONS

The 1992 pledge from the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia to the national church will remain at its full amount, delegates to the January 31-February 2 convention decided.

At issue during their meeting in Blacksburg was whether to cut \$9,000 from the national church quota in order to continue funding campus ministry at Radford University.

Those in favor of reducing the pledge questioned how money going to the national church programs is being spent. Others argued that "the national church has asked us to observe the Decade of Evangelism," and the Radford ministry can be considered such an effort.

Those opposing the pledge reduction reminded delegates that the Episcopal Church is not an organization of congregational churches, and that an Episcopalian is part of a larger body. If the diocese wants to support campus ministries, then such support must come from an increase in congregations' pledges to the diocese, they said.

In his address to delegates, the Rt. Rev. A. Heath Light, diocesan bishop, said that paying the diocesan pledge in full is not only a matter of tradition but "a sign of our commitment to the way we live together in community.

"Budgets must reflect our commitment to sharing. Budgets should not be used as bludgeons in order to have our own way," he said. "Our pledge is important because the way we are best related to the global mission of the church is through the general church's program budget."

Dialogue on sexuality continued, centering around two resolutions. One proclaiming "our inability to call same-sex sexual orientation a sin" passed by a vote of 85-68. Another resolution asked that "the next General Convention prohibit the ordination of persons who practice, believe or teach that sexual relationships outside the bonds of holy matrimony are acceptable." A substitute resolution asked the next General Convention to continue to study the subject, but it failed because it repeated resolutions already passed at last year's General Convention.

A 1992 budget of \$745,000 was passed.

MARY LEE SIMPSON

Trinity Institute: Viewing the Bible Imaginatively

Noted author Walter Brueggeman joined other speakers at the 23rd National Conference of the Trinity Institute, which opened in New York City January 27 under the theme "Imagination: Reconstructing Reality." A celebration of the Holy Eucharist at Trinity Church, Wall Street, formally began the conference.

Dr. Brueggeman, professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga., presented the opening lecture, "Finding Post-Modern Imagination." He described European intellectual history beginning with Descartes, noting that the emergence of objectivity was a response to the political chaos of the time. He argued that in the wake of the Enlightenment, this perspective resulted in a faith in scientific positivism and a view that there are objective truths which everyone everywhere can know. For biblical scholarship, this led to historical-critical methods, which Dr. Brueggeman asserted, caused the texts of scripture to be diminished.

Dr. Brueggeman suggested that a creative engagement with the text is the necessary response of today's church, living as it does amidst international, political and cultural change. If imagination is the quintessential human act, it is possible through the imagination to encounter the text in new ways.

Sallie McFague, professor of theology at the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University, called her subsequent lecture "a minor illustration of what Walter is talking about." In "Constructing a Theology for the Planetary Agenda," Dr. McFague sought to correct existing views of God in response to the current environmental crisis. Her approach was to connect ecological theology to liberation theology, suggesting that the fate of the oppressed and the fate of the earth are interrelated inextricably. She examined some images of God, particularly that of kingship. This "monarchical" portrayal, she said, makes people feel that the world is empty of God's residence. Additionally, the "kingship" metaphor relates only to the human,



McFague



Brueggeman

not the animal or vegetable world, and presents a God controlling through domination or benevolence.

Dr. Brueggeman's second lecture, "The Counter World of Evangelical Imagination," began by reminding the audience that "evangelical" is an adjectival form of the word "gospel." He said a preacher has a chance to create an evangelical world view by imaginatively engaging the congregation with the text of scripture. Consumerism, he said, is the dominant model of our culture, but the claims of scripture are thoughtful, historical and constraining.

Genesis, for example, tells endless stories of the birth of babies, as a celebration of creation and history. Such memories counter amnesia, which is, according to Dr. Brueggeman, "the final payoff of modernity . . . you don't need to remember anything." Scriptural texts speak to the future, to God's coming newness. He compared biblical eschatology to the Rev. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech: an outrageous assertion about the future for which there is not apparent ground in the present. To Dr. Brueggeman, interaction with scripture replaces amnesia with memory and despair with hope.

The program on January 29 began with Dr. McFague's talk entitled, "The Body of God: Imagining an Ecological Theology." With a metaphor of the universe as the body of God, she argued, every human being is connected to every other living creature through the body, accepting rather than rejecting other bodies as kindred. Matter, as the bedrock of the universe, ought to

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

be considered as an important metaphor for God. Although God is the animating spirit of the universe, God is also the very substance of the universe.

In Exodus 33, for example, God used body language (hand, back, face) to speak to Moses. Dr. McFague called this an important example of incarnational theology and suggested that it imagines an entire planet that reflects the glory of God, although it does not show the face of God. Such an incarnationalism does not allow aesthetic delight at the wonderful world of bodies without noticing the suffering bodies of created beings.

"Inside the Counter Drama," Dr. Brueggeman's final lecture, focused on his assertion that "biblical theology is done one text at a time." Urging preachers and teachers to track the words of scripture and be aware of the "naughty parts," he added that the historical criticism learned in seminary is anti-text and faith-killing. When pastors and interpreters are free of anxiety, he said, taking scripture like a script for drama is a revolutionary act. Texts that don't fit in or that seem irrelevant don't need to be explained, just told. And "hard texts" bring to consciousness the violent and ugly parts of life that we try to keep hidden. It's important, Dr. Brueggeman explained, for people to know that God has dealt with all our sins before.

BONNIE SHULLENBERGER

Priest Renounces Vows, Serves Church in Missionary Diocese

A priest in the Diocese of Texas renounced his vows on the 44th anniversary of his ordination in the Episcopal Church so that a new congregation could join the missionary diocese of the Episcopal Synod of America and avoid the "serious consequences" suggested by the Rt. Rev. Maurice Benitez, Bishop of Texas.

The Rev. Patrick Murphy, who formed St. Peter's Church in Houston, said Bishop Benitez gave him several options after learning his plans to establish a congregation in the missionary diocese. He chose renunciation over canonical action or giving up his ministry with St. Peter's, which is not a recognized parish in the Diocese of Texas [TLC, Jan. 12]. Fr. Murphy is the retired rector of St. Barnabas' Church, Houston.

"I felt this was something I had to do for the laity who have left the church," Fr. Murphy said. St. Peter's is made up of people who have dissociated themselves from the Episcopal Church, he added. Many had been attending Orthodox or Roman Catholic parishes in the past. When the missionary diocese was incorporated, a dozen people from St. Peter's petitioned the Rt. Rev. A. Donald Davies, head of the missionary diocese, to be allowed to join. Fr. Murphy agreed

and Bishop Davies celebrated a service with the congregation in January.

"I felt it was God's will," Fr. Murphy said of his renunciation. "I leave [the Episcopal Church] with no rancor or bitterness at all"

Contacted before Fr. Murphy's renunciation, Bishop Benitez said he was very concerned that an Episcopal priest was ministering to a "congregation established without [the diocese's] knowledge and approval." He added he was "trying to negotiate toward the reversal of the decision to establish the congregation," but would not elaborate.

He agreed that once Fr. Murphy renounced his vows, the conflict would be lessened. He has not discussed the situation with Bishop Davies. Bishop Benitez declined comment about Bishop Davies ministering within the Diocese of Texas.

Bishop Davies said the congregation was "very promising" with "a lot of potential members coming from that area." He agreed with Fr. Murphy that "Bishop Benitez had not been hostile toward anyone in his diocese."

Four more independent congregations have begun the process of joining the missionary diocese, including one in Tacoma, Wash., and another in Canada, Bishop Davies said.



Photo by Maggie Snyder

Shortly after last summer's General Convention, Bishop Alex Dickson of West Tennessee began having the Episcopal Church's flag hung as a distress signal (upside down) outside his residence in Memphis.

BRIEFLY

Following the car accident death of the Rt. Rev. Alexander Muge in August 1990, the Diocese of Eldoret of the Church of the Province of Kenya elected the Rev. Stephen Kewasis to succeed him. Because Fr. Kewasis belongs to the Turkana tribe, the election was overturned by a group of Nandi tribespeople who wanted a fellow Nandi in the post. In their effort to keep Fr. Kewasis from taking office, the group took their case to court, which upheld Fr. Kewasis' election. In a repeat election held December 7, 1991, Fr. Kewasis was overwhelmingly elected bishop for the second time.

In two weeks Parish Administration Number

An Editor's Perspective

By CYNTHIA SHATTUCK

One of my favorite stories in the Bible has always been that scene in the Book of Jeremiah where King Jehoiakim sits in his comfortable winter palace, toasting himself in front of the fire, and with his penknife cuts the scroll of Jeremiah's oracles to pieces and feeds them to the flames, bit by bit. The prophet's words are just too hard to take. The king lops off every few columns of prophecy and consigns them to ashes. Some of the princes there with him, we are told, were a bit alarmed by this, but the king himself was unmoved.

I like to think of this as the first editing job we read about in history, and one to strike a responsive chord in the breast of even the gentlest editor. How many of us would like to have that power of life and death over someone else's handiwork?

Publishers call their craft the accidental profession, and that is how I came to it, without experience or obvious qualifications, equipped only with my seminary degree and a vague longing to be part of that world I had discovered there. My first mentors were the editors I met in the pages of the Hebrew Bible, J, E, D and P — the four editors of the Pentateuch who took the different stories of Israel's history and wove them together to make a new thing: a vast book that testified to the workings of God in history. These editors were true literary artists, who did not invent the stories of the fall, the flood, the ark or the covenant, but used them to reinterpret the past and give the future new meaning.

In Old Testament courses, we spent hours tracing these distinctive editorial hands with loops of colored pencil — red for the Jahwist, green for the Elohist, blue for the Deuteronomist. Late one night, a friend of mine found he had mixed up his color scheme halfway through Deuteronomy and at 4 a.m. had to throw his Bible away. This

Cynthia Shattuck is the editorial director of Cowley Publications, a ministry of the Society of St. John the Evangelist. She acquires and edits works of theology and spirituality of particular interest to Anglicans.

incident made a lasting impression — all that work! All those editors!

When I became a religious book editor, I remembered the fearless people who edited the Bible and shaped scrolls into books, attaching a prophecy here and a poem there, bringing order to the riot of hymns, sermons, stories and creeds that make up the scriptures. A sense of the freedom these communities had to shape their writings, seeing God's purposes in the fall of an empire or a sparrow, taught me to be a bold editor. Boldness is important because the first drafts of manuscripts, unlike the works of Jesus in our childhood Bibles, are never written in red. One of the hardest things a new editor learns is a healthy skepticism for the grammar and sentence structure of her elders and betters — especially when they know much more than you do and may even have taught you in seminary.

Jeremiah's Scribe

Editors nowadays, of course, no longer work with oral traditions handed down from families and tribes, as J and E did, but book proposals, contracts and 3¹/₂-inch diskettes. Modern editors, in fact, are more like Baruch, who was the prophet Jeremiah's secretary, scribe, editor and sidekick. From Baruch's personal memoirs, we know that he even became the prophet's voice for a time, his mouthpiece, just as Jeremiah was the mouthpiece of Yahweh. Baruch published Jeremiah's oracles, read them aloud to the people when Jeremiah was barred from the temple, and eventually shared a common fate, going with the prophet into exile in Babylon.

This sense of mutual purpose is crucial for me, even if I never have to follow an author into exile. I know editors who can simply define a subject area and then go looking for the books and authors to fill it, but I usually accept a manuscript because I have fallen in love with something about it, some elusive quality that is hard to describe on an "author's guidelines" sheet. Sometimes I fall in love with a book's possibilities — some picture or idea or moment that is unique,

around which you can see ideas clustering like filings around a magnetic field. Sometimes it is only a sense of that author's possibilities, a quality of imagination and mind you would give anything to work with.

Discernment and intuition are other valuable qualities for editors, because often you must help the author discover what it is she or he has to say and in what order to say it. With some authors, you need to back off and let them struggle alone, while with others you keep company along the way.

And the way can be longer than most people realize; books, like music, are written in time. You have to take the time, which is not a popular idea. Authors are amazed when the three months of sabbatical time they have allotted to writing fails to bring forth a book, only chapters with some resemblance to a book. Then these pages have to be slept on, mulled over, discussed, dreamed on, thought about. That is why best-selling authors are in so much danger from their editors and publishers. Pushed to produce more and more, they start turning out bad imitations of themselves.

The relationship between editor and author is a strange alliance. Both have a stake in the book that is making its way to life. Each makes sacrifices of time and energy, and gives it that patient attention which is a form of love. But only one name appears in the book. Reviewers tend to mention bad editing but never good editing, because the purpose of good editing is to remain invisible. An editor is always the bridesmaid and never the bride. Editors work behind the scenes, trading visibility for influence. It is a servant's vocation.

The last glimpse we have of Baruch is a poignant one, but speaks to an editor's role. The exiled Baruch, all hope gone, lifts up his voice to God. Perhaps he had expected better things from Jeremiah's ministry. Perhaps he thought the nation would repent. God tells Baruch, however, not to seek great things for himself nor to despair. He must go into exile with the prophet, but his life will be preserved and he will remain faithful to his calling. This was Baruch's vocation, and so shall it be for his descendants.

Authority Ignored Again

The recent blessing of the relationship of two men in Pasadena, Calif., is further evidence of the lack of authority in the Episcopal Church. Even though scripture speaks strongly against homosexual behavior, even though the Diocese of Los Angeles defeated a resolution affirming such blessings, and even though the Bishop of Los Angeles admits that the Episcopal Church cannot accept such a blessing, the unauthorized service took place [p. 8].

The Rev. George Regas, rector of All Saints' Church, where the service took place, officiated at the blessing, which the *Los Angeles Times* said included promises "to love, comfort and honor each other." The action taken by Fr. Regas is the latest incident in which a local church or diocese does as it pleases without regard for the rest of the church. Churches hold back funds, parishes leave the Episcopal Church for independent status, bishops ordain practicing homosexuals or cross diocesan lines to perform episcopal ministries without punishment.

The main problem with the service in Pasadena is, of course, that it is contrary to the teaching of scripture. The teaching of Jesus and others about marriage is clear. That is, as the House of Bishops stated in 1977: "Heterosexual marriage is unanimously affirmed and homosexual activity is condemned." That same statement added: "The church therefore is right to confine its nuptial blessing exclusively to heterosexual marriage." When the church includes such a blessing as part of its corporate worship, it violates its own teaching.

The chance of Fr. Regas being disciplined would seem to be remote. After all, his bishop, the Rt. Rev. Frederick Borsch, is on record as supporting such affirmations, even though he admits he can't grant permission for such events to take place.

We deplore the blessing in Pasadena, and we hope the House of Bishops will deal seriously with the issue when it meets in closed session later this month.

Re-newal through Books

Lent is a "re-" kind of season. We re-play lots of memories, we re-do lots of ritual acts from re-ceiving ashes on Ash Wednesday to re-newing our baptismal vows on Easter Eve.

Much comes back to life during Lent — the earth, the spring plants, and if we are also oriented toward the interior life, our own hearts. We re-mind ourselves, as the church re-minds itself, of the desert our lives have become without the waters of nourishment and life that we call grace. We prepare then, through memory, action and discipline, for the re-surrection of our Lord and for the re-surrection of our own faith and hope and charity. We cannot do this alone. We need the collective memory of the community of faith, we need the spiritual examples of other lives — lives often pitiful, lives often heroic. We need the dialogue of the liturgy, the dialogue of prayer, the dialogue of reading.

Certainly books are a key companion of most of us

during Lent, a daily devotional. A new biography. A collection of rousing sermons. A small collection of poems or prayers. A solid history or piece of biblical criticism. Whatever the genre, a good book can be both spiritual guide and spiritual friend during the holy seasons of the church's year. The reading or re-reading of a good book can be re-laxing, re-warding and re-newing.

We hope that some of the books which are re-viewed here for you, our faithful reading companions, will deepen and inform your Lenten season.

A Self-Disciplined Lent

We approach again, Lent, that holy season of penitence and fasting. While the church can offer us guidance on how to observe Lent, it is up to individuals to assume responsibility for that observance.

In the liturgy for Ash Wednesday, we are invited to participate in "self-examination and repentance; prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word" (BCP, p. 265).

If we are serious about following the church's invitation, we will need to do it ourselves. While we can receive advice from our clergy and support and encouragement from friends concerning our Lenten journeys, it is our responsibility to observe a stronger, more disciplined spiritual life. Let us take this responsibility seriously during this Lent.

Welcome Communications

In recent days, the Episcopal Synod of America has done its best to explain to the rest of the church why it felt the formation of a "missionary diocese" was necessary.

First, the Rt. Rev. Clarence C. Pope, Jr., president of ESA, sent a letter to bishops concerning the unusual action of the synod [TLC, Feb. 2]. He said the missionary diocese has been established for those outside ECUSA and that its main purpose "is to hold together those who have departed the Episcopal Church and have chosen not to align themselves with 'continuing churches.'"

In a following statement, nine bishops associated with the synod attempted to set the record straight [TLC, Feb. 16]. Those bishops appear to be honoring their commitment to ESA's Action Plan, issued last November, which said, in part: "The bishops of the synod pledge to continue their ministry within the present structures of the Episcopal Church and call on the synod's clergy and laity who are in union with godly and orthodox bishops to do the same."

The communications from Bishop Pope and the other ESA bishops are a welcome attempt to justify their action. The bishops' statement is irenic and encouraging in that it urges existing congregations to remain in place "in their Episcopal Church dioceses." Whether these congregations follow the bishops' advice is another matter.

What Religious Life Is Facing

By TOBIAS STANISLAS HALLER

The first article in a two-part series on religious life in the Episcopal Church [TLC, Nov. 24, Dec. 1] took as its subtitle, "Religious orders find numbers down in an age when personal growth seems more important than service to others."

Contrary to the views expressed by some in the article, not all forms of religious life are in decline. And the reasons for decline in some communities are far more complex than many would suggest.

While there has been a renewed focus on self-development in the latter half of this century, it is unreasonable to note this as the primary cause for decline in religious vocations. Many religious communities have long seen themselves chiefly as centers for personal spiritual growth, and they are as much in decline as some of the more active, service-oriented communities.

The real cause for decline may lie in seeing personal growth and service to others as mutually exclusive options. Jesus balanced his time among the sick and poor with times of spiritual refreshment in the wilderness. Mary, though she chose the "better part," is still Martha's sister. Contemplation and action are both aspects of a full Christian life.

Moreover, spending time theorizing about reasons for decline in a church or an order is largely a waste of precious time. Studies show that roughly three-fourths of all religious orders eventually cease to exist. In short, institutions die, just as people do. The crucial factor is not how long they live, but how well. Evaluating the quality of one's community life requires asking hard questions about decline, but the

Brother Tobias Stanislas Haller is a life-professed member of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory. He works in the development office of The Light-house (New York Association for the Blind).



great challenges to renewal in the church, and in religious life, lie ahead, not behind.

Key to renewal is the ability to challenge oneself, and to accept challenges from others. Renewal entails the ability to ask, "Why do we do this?" When any idea or tradition, however venerable, is held to be beyond question, it ceases to be life-giving.

Renewal doesn't always mean change. The question, "Why?" is not to be taken as an implied negative judgment. A renewal-oriented society will see the question as a means to explore its identity more deeply in a recommitment to living ideals. The youngest present at the Passover *seder* asks, "Why is this night different from all the others?" not to hold the event up to criticism, but to evoke the retelling of Israel's formative story. Challenge can promote change, but it also promotes deepening fidelity.

The challenges facing religious life in the immediate future will come from within the communities and from the environment in which they function. Among these challenges will be:

The changing meaning of community — Many communities have members working or living (alone or in small groups) away from the main body. How can a sense of community be sustained? How do you keep the family spirit after the kids have left home?

The externals: the habit and the "image" — Does the traditional habit continue to fulfill its functions of witness, identity and community spirit-building, or is it an obstacle to growth? Should a "contemporary" community wear a "traditional" habit? Should a traditional religious order "modernize" its look?

The greying of religious life — How does an aging community attract younger members? How can elderly retired members still feel valued in communities whose major focus is on active ministries, in which they can no longer participate? What about pension planning?

Individualism and pluralism — Religious communities will be challenged to accept and affirm the differences among, between and within them, and to rejoice in the variety of gifts each community and each member possesses. Rather than seeking to conform each member to a perhaps outdated model ("We are all teachers," "We are all nurses," "We are all contemplative"), religious life will be challenged to transform each member into the likeness of Christ.

Religious communities that participate in the process of renewal will adapt through fidelity to the gospel, examination of their history and gifts, and in response to the needs of the world of which they are a part. This ongoing process of renewal applies to the church as a whole as well as to each of its members. We are called to personal growth and service to others; and it is the Holy Spirit who guides that growth and empowers that service.

A Bittersweet Odyssey

FATHER MELANCHOLY'S DAUGHTER. By Gail Godwin. Morrow. Pp. 512. \$21.95; Avon, \$5.99 paper.

Fiction may not be first priority, but if you are intrigued by telling portrayals of parish life, here's one that's worthy of being put aside the English satirist Barbara Pym, if not Anthony Trollope.

Set against a background of Anglo-Catholicism in a small Virginia town, complete with all the devotions and defenses that still cling to the 1990s, it is the poignant story of a man and little girl deserted by a mother who, urged to take a vacation from the rectory, goes off with one of her school day friends, never to return. The patient rector, already prone to a familiar clergy condition that he calls his "black curtain," is still a faithful shepherd — indeed, "all the corners of his days were filled in, as they are when someone has found the work that best suits his disposition."

He believes in probing discouragement to its depths for whatever spiritual message it may hold, a condition hardly mitigated by prayer book revision and the activist rector of a parish across town. As might be expected, there's a vestry and a study group in which "some were definitely saner than others."

Other haunting moments include the priest's thoughts during Lent about an old stone crucifix in the churchyard. "It's almost over for you again, isn't it?" he muses. "I wonder when mine will be over?"

A bit of probing discloses that Gail Godwin grew up in St. Mary's Church, Asheville, N.C., per chance encouraged by the ghost of the novelist Thomas Wolfe, and is currently a communicant of the Church of the Holy Cross, Kingston, N.Y. She knows the church as well as she knows human hearts.

Although a brilliant commentary on the beauty and pain, serenity and consternation, certainties and contradictions in the contemporary church — a gem of documentation, meditation, and endearing entertainment — the book's forthright depictions of pettiness and hypocrisy will not much surprise the secular readership that it finds as a selection of the Book of the Month Club and its now greatly-

enlarged circulation as a paperback.

It is a public confession and the penance is to reform. More than a few Episcopalians are asking each other, "Have you read *Father Melancholy's Daughter*?"

(The Rev.) JAMES B. SIMPSON
Washington, D.C.

The World of Devotion

NEW EVERY MORNING: A Journal for Personal Reflection. All Saints Convent (Box 3127, Catonsville, MD 21228). Pp. 90. \$13 plus \$2 shipping.

Here is a special gift for a special person. Partly a diary, partly a book of observations on the interior life, *New Every Morning*, like Keble's poem from which the title came, provides "a road to bring us daily nearer God," with space for one's own ruminations, hopes, prayers, poetry, etc. The photographs allow us to share for a moment in the world of devotion, beauty and silence that makes up a good part of monastic life and is shown here amidst the All Saints Sisters at Catonsville.

All proceeds from sales of this book go to the support of the Joseph Richey House in Baltimore, which provides hospice care, a ministry shared by the All Saints Sisters and Mt. Calvary Church. All is done in the name of Jesus Christ, who said, "If you have done it unto the least of these . . ."

Buy the book. Someone you know would enjoy having it. Someone you do not know will benefit from your purchase.

KATHLEEN REEVES
Racine, Wis.

Immediacy Recaptured

THE BIBLE IN STAINED GLASS. Edited by Tim Dowley. Photographs by Sonia Holliday and Laura Lushington. Morehouse. Pp. 160. \$39.95.

To stand in the nave of a great cathedral on a rainy day is to experience color as you never have before. The transparency of the glass windows and the moisture in the air invite the light to penetrate and glow in a way that is magical and glorious. Medieval philosophers created with light a symbol for the presence of God.

Chartres Cathedral in France is one of the richest in Europe with its 176 windows of stained glass, the earliest dating to the 12th century. When the people could not read books, stained

glass windows gave them the stories of the Bible. In brilliant, clear colors bound together by lead outlines, the common people learned of the creation, the flood, damnation and salvation — the lessons of the Old and New Testaments, with the many characters and saints of the biblical texts. In brilliant sunshine the drama of biblical figures in the glass seemed to bring them to life.

If this instructional value of the windows has lost its immediacy for today's visitors to the cathedrals, it can be recaptured through modern technology of color photography. *The Bible in Stained Glass* is a remarkable book, where we can read excerpts from the Bible and look at stained glass windows that illustrate these texts simultaneously. Lovingly created by Sonia Holliday and Laura Lushington, who started photographing stained glass in 1971 and published their first book in 1976, this collection was the realization of their long-term ambition and intent.

Illustrations include windows in a wide range of churches from around the world, especially Chartres, Canterbury and Ulm Minster, where some of the finest examples of the glazier's art may be found.

One can read the Bible with great enjoyment throughout this book or turn to informative notes about each work of art and its source.

LOUISE LEQUIRE
Franklin, Tenn.

Our Roots

A HISTORY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH. By Robert W. Prichard. Morehouse. Pp. 256. \$29.95.

It is difficult to imagine the history of the Episcopal Church being recounted in only 256 pages, but Robert Prichard seems to have pulled it off.

The author, professor of church history at Virginia Theological Seminary, has put an incredible amount of research into this valuable work, as witnessed by the immense number of bibliographic references.

Those interested in the earliest accounts of Anglicanism in America will find this book to be especially rewarding. Nearly half of Mr. Prichard's work is spent examining events before 1800. The growth of the church in the American colonies is presented in detail,

(Continued on page 16)

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BOOKS

(Continued from page 14)

and the recollection of arguments among early Anglicans helps to remind us that the Episcopal Church's current squabbles aren't so new after all. A particularly noteworthy chapter provides a thorough look at the "Great Awakening" of the 18th century, led by George Whitefield.

For all its strengths in the treatment of the colonial period, the book falls short in examining recent trends. The rise of cathedrals in the American church receives one paragraph, the ordination of women gets 2 1/2 pages, and charismatic renewal is covered in about 1 1/2 pages. Amid those cursory looks is an effective section covering the change in Books of Common Prayer.

Readers who appreciate historical anecdotes ought to enjoy such gems as the church's first bishop, Samuel Seabury, signing his name as the "Bishop of All America" (p. 89), Bishop Joseph Talbot referring to himself as the "Bishop of All Outdoors" (p. 161), and fundamentalists appearing as early as the World War I era.

The book is timely, with such personalities as Stan White, Barbara Harris and Robert Williams appearing in concluding chapters.

All in all, it is a book which should be enjoyed by students of history and Episcopalians looking for their "roots." Mr. Prichard's smooth writing is easy to understand, yet comprehensive.

DAVID KALVELAGE, editor

Context and Content

WORSHIP: Praying the Sacraments. By Peter E. Fink. Pastoral. Pp. x and 220. \$12.95 paper.

The essays in this collection were originally published over a 17-year period, and they reflect Fr. Fink's desire "to weave together not only sacramental doctrine and liturgical action, but the dimension of Christian spirituality as well" (p. viii), opening up "what the church does" liturgically to greater participation and deeper understanding by all.

Fr. Fink displays vision and clarity in his drawing together of sacramental meaning, purpose and practice. His synthesis occurs most effectively when he discusses the depth of meaning in ordinary events of life (including worship). For example, he notes that the contemporary liturgical renewal

among Christians "might well be called the rediscovery of the role of the meal in Christianity, and indeed the recovery of the Eucharist as a meal" (p. 74).

He urges that the priest is not a "quasi-divinity" but a representative of the church assembled in which Christ is sacramentally present.

Fr. Fink writes from a Roman Catholic perspective. He frequently cites Roman Catholic consiliar documents on sacraments and liturgy. Nevertheless, his essays reach far beyond the limits of denominational perspective or concern.

The essays point us toward a spirituality that is more than self-fascination. The author calls for liturgy that will keep the language of spirituality public and honest, as he calls for spirituality that will keep liturgy humble and true (p. 162).

He urges that "the public life and action of Jesus was always the context of his inward journey, and his journey inward became the content of all that he said and did" (p. 171). And, in many different ways throughout this collection of essays, he commends that same balance to us.

(The Rev.) ROBERT B. SLOCUM
St. Philip's Church
Waukesha, Wis.

Anglican Corrective

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER: Jeremy Taylor and Christian Ethics Today. By David A. Scott. Latimer Studies 38. Latimer House. Pp. 62. £ 1.75.

This is an admirable little book. Dr. Scott, a professor at the Virginia Seminary in Alexandria, writes succinctly, clearly and logically. He introduces the reader to the concept of ethics of character as developed by Stanley Hauerwas and some other contemporary writers, and he explores the strengths and weaknesses of this generally helpful approach to moral questions.

He argues that Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) provides an important Anglican corrective and enrichment, relating ethics and moral development to human reason, to Nicene trinitarianism, to the incarnation, and to the corporate and sacramental life of the church. One does not need to be specially interested in the contemporary ethics of character school in order to find this study illuminating and helpful.

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SHORT and SHARP

By TRAVIS DU PRIEST

RELIVING THE PASSION: Meditations on the Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus as Recorded in Mark. By Walter Wangerin, Jr. Zondervan. Pp. 156. \$12.99 paper.

Forty meditations for the Lenten season by the popular Lutheran pastor-writer, currently writer-in-residence at Valparaiso University. Some are more truly in a meditative genre than others; I particularly liked his piece on Mark 14:1-9, a beautiful "address" to the woman with ointment. Some others are a bit more analytical and preachy.

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS. By Rita Coleman. Liturgical. Unpaginated. \$1.95 paper.

Script, cast of characters, stage "props," costume suggestions, and notes for a dramatized presentation of the Stations of the Cross for children. The narrative is well-written and free of jargon; the brevity and simplicity of the short prayers which end each station make them easily read by small children. We have included our own version of such a children's stations within the Three Hours on Good Friday with success in our parish; I am glad to see a similar set in print.

PASSAGE TO THE PASCHAL FEAST: A Weekly Guide for Lent. Liturgical. Pp. 40. \$4 paper.

Based on the premise that all the baptized have responsibility in the church's corporate prayer life, this handsomely-printed pamphlet is a resource for planning and discussion for small groups (8 to 10) of adults. Includes short exegetical paragraphs on the scriptures for each Sunday in Lent, as well as reflective guidelines for personal and corporate entrance into the heart of the Lenten passage.

THE FREEDOM OF HOLINESS: Biblical Reflections of the Witness of the Saints. By Michael Marshall. Morehouse. Pp. 195. \$11.95 paper.

The newly-named advisor for evangelism to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Marshall inspires us with scriptural reflections and the witness of a variety of Christian saints —

Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc, Benedict, Dame Julian and many others. Set up around six themes, the book is ideal for Lenten study groups. Covering vision, repentance, forgiveness, healing and other topics, the book parallels thumbnail sketches on scriptural passages with the life and experience of a saint from the tradition and our own experience. A clever approach.

GIFTS OF LOVE. By Robin Gill. HarperCollins. Pp. 144. \$9 paper.

At last a book of short meditations which boldly states that it is written to be read before falling asleep at night. I liked the author's honesty; by the way, he is professor of theology at Newcastle University in England (the book has a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury), and his theme is that of gifts — the gift of life, the gift of animals, music, sports, peace, land, healing and on and on. He also touches on such topics as being gifted and abusing gifts. Of all the six-week books of meditations for Lent, this is the most appealing and the most Anglican in spirit and sprightliness.

THE GOSPEL DAY BY DAY THROUGH LENT. By Brian Moore. Liturgical. Pp. 111. \$5.95 paper.

A re-issuing of the well-known Roman Catholic writer, Brian Moore's 1988 book which gives short meditations for the Sundays (Years A, B and C) and weekdays in Lent.

SPIRITUAL GUIDES FOR TODAY. By Annice Callahan. Crossroad. Pp. 176. \$11.95 paper.

The professor of spiritual theology at Regis College, Toronto, assembles for us six 20th-century pathfinders for our quest to God — Evelyn Underhill, Dorothy Day, Karl Rahner, Simone Weil, Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen. Two high points of the book for me were the sections on connections (Introduction) among the writers themselves and that on solitude and compassion (Thomas Merton).

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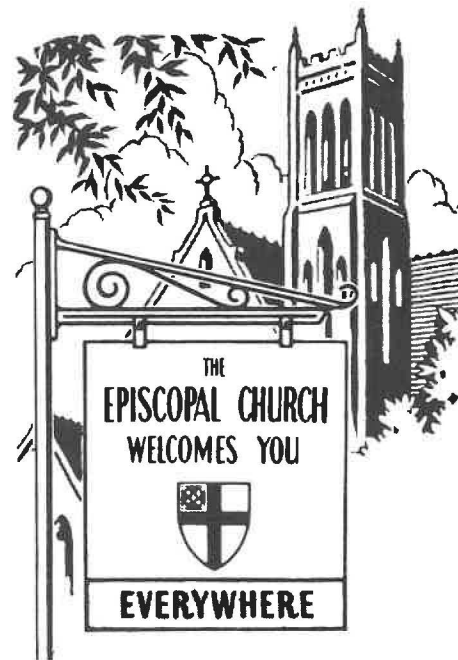
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