

abstracts from the Mass as an *action*, 'an action that is repeated and which cannot be artificially isolated or immobilised; a collective action, the work of the whole assembly gathered about the priest at the altar'. Thus Père Roguet begins with what we find: an assembly of people brought together to offer sacrifice to God. And it is within the context of a mystery in which the Christian people are incorporated that he goes on to discuss the elements of the Mass: preparation, praise, daily bread, sacrifice, the pledge of future glory. His purpose, he explains, is not simply to show 'that the Catholic should, when he is present at Mass, know what he is doing or that he should have "ideas" about the Mass, but rather that he should live it'. And his living of the Mass is in terms of an action in which he shares; a meal to which he is invited; a life to which he is introduced.

Such a reconciliation of theological learning with a vigorous understanding of the actual needs of the faithful is a rare achievement, and Père Roguet's book (which, in default of anything comparable in English, we hope may soon be translated) should do much to deepen the appreciation of the Mystery of Faith. The need is imperative, for books 'about' the Mass are no substitute for living it, and it is this primary function of Christian faith which Père Roguet expounds with learning—and, not least important, with sympathy.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

CHRIST IN THE LITURGY. By Dom Illtyd Trethowan, O.S.B. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

'We must not *acquiesce* in a state of affairs in which the Liturgy has ceased to form the mentality, and to be the natural expression, even of those social groups which have remained most staunchly Catholic' (pp. 94-95). Dom Illtyd's book may be regarded, not as a mere refusal to acquiesce, but as a passionate protest against this state of affairs. The Liturgy is the sign and the means of our participation in the mystery of Christ; yet it is, for probably the majority of Catholics in this country, no more than an incident even in what they might call their spiritual life. They may very readily go to Mass frequently, follow the Missal intelligently, but their participation is regarded as a good work—perhaps indeed the most important of all good works—performed by an individual. How can they be aware of the Church as Christ's body, of their common membership *in* Christ, if they are not as a community worshipping, offering, sorrowing, rejoicing with Christ?

Dom Illtyd reminds us of all this and provides those who are trying to share more intelligently and more fully in the Christian mysteries with a stimulating commentary on the liturgical year together with a number of essays bearing on the same theme. Some of the views

expressed will not command general assent. He quite clearly favours, for instance, the Scotist view that the Incarnation would have taken place even apart from the fact of sin. But he is most certainly justified in protesting against the 'commercial metaphors' to which the thomist view is often reduced in the hands of its less able practitioners. And, although the Epilogue might more suitably be called an appendix, all good thomists will agree with its main theme of an intellectual life integrated in grace, directed to eternity and finding here and now both apt expression and ample nourishment in the Liturgy.

EDWARD QUINN

THE PRIEST AS MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION. By E. J. Mahoney. (Burns Oates and Washbourne; 5s.)

Senior missionary priests in some missions have the faculty of conferring Confirmation. But this concession has been limited and for the most part the Holy See has insisted on the normal rule of Canon 788 being observed. This has meant, however, that since a Bishop alone could confer the sacrament as ordinary minister, many children as well as a good number of adults have died without the benefit of this sacrament. Though in the words of the decree *Spiritus Sancti* (September 14th, 1946), 'confirmation is not necessary for one's salvation, nevertheless its excellence and the abundance of precious gifts which it confers require that parish priests, and others who have the care of souls, must make every effort in securing that no Christian should, through lack of opportunity, forgo so great a mystery of saving redemption. It admirably assists us in our warfare against the wickedness of the devil and the allurements of the world and the flesh, obtains for us on earth an increase of grace and virtue, and in heaven an added glory.' That so many infants and children and even adults should in fact die without the help of this sacrament is a matter of grave concern to the Church. To provide against such a loss the Holy See has made a far-reaching change in his present legislation. A parish priest and others having the care of souls may now administer the sacrament of confirmation as extraordinary minister to those who are in danger of death. This new law is embodied in the decree mentioned above. Canon Mahoney gives a clear and helpful commentary on the text of the decree and on two later decrees on the same subject. Though it is meant primarily for parish priests, there is much in this book of sixty-six pages which will be read with interest and profit by the ordinary layman.

K. W.-G.