

Christianity alone is able to cope with the situation. The gulf yawns between understanding and faith.

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JEANNE JUGAN. By Mgr Francis Trochu. Translated by Hugh Montgomery. (Burns Oates; 15s.)

The Little Sisters of the Poor is among the best-known of the women's congregations in the Church, and a full-length biography of its foundress is welcome; the more so that for so long it was forgotten that she *was* the foundress. Jeanne Jugan takes a place with St Alphonsus Liguori, St Joan Antide Thouret and Bd Mary Teresa de Soubiran in being 'unseated' in the congregation she had brought into being.

It is a remarkable story. Jeanne Jugan, daughter of a Breton sailor, was already forty-seven when in 1839 she first took an invalid old woman into her home on the second floor of No. 2, rue du Centre, Saint-Servan, where she lived with a friend, Françoise Aubert. There was still only one house and four sisters when, four years later, Jeanne was deposed from her position of superioress by their spiritual director, who was later to appear as 'the founder'. Thenceforward till within a few years of her death in 1879 Jeanne was simply *la quêteuse*, who begged from door to door and from town to town on behalf of her sisters' work, which she lived to see grow beyond the bounds of imagination. For this task she had a genius, spiritual no less than temperamental: Jeanne Jugan with her umbrella and basket were famous throughout northern France; and Charles Dickens wrote great tributes to her and her sisters in *Household Words* and elsewhere.

Mgr Trochu's biography of the Curé d'Ars is a standard work; his lived of Bd Peter Julian Eymard, Bd Théophile Vénard and others are equally good, but not so well-known in England. In Jeanne Jugan he has a subject right to his hand, and he deals with it with his usual thoroughness, frankness and piety. But it is a pity that the translation is not better done. No doubt it is very accurate, but the reader can never forget he is reading a work originally written in French. '... Monsieur le Curé admitted to the feast which is not of this world the simple child in whom was hidden such depth of soul': this is characteristic—but it is hardly English.

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