

of devotion: he is careful to show that many respected theologians have themselves been guilty of, to say the least, inaccuracies of expression. But, to remain entirely orthodox is rather like walking a tight-rope. An occasional false step is no shame provided one is willing to accept then the help of the divinely appointed guide-line. The wording of the liturgical prayers is often used by Père Congar as a corrective to the theologians (and not the other way round, as we see sometimes), for is it not true that, for Catholics, the liturgy is 'la grande éducatrice de la pensée et le la prière'?

DESMOND SCHLEGEL, O.S.B.

EDITH STEIN. By Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

In this book, dedicated to the memory of Edith Stein, the author, Sister Teresia Renata de Spiritu Sancto, has taken upon herself a grateful task. She has rendered a service to all of us today, and generations to come may consider themselves fortunate that such a book was forthcoming from Germany's most bitter times. The book proves in a very clear and moving way that a Jewess, too, can be deeply pious and religious; and this saintly life should arouse the sleepy conscience of many half-hearted and perfunctory Christians of the Catholic Church. Edith is love and kindness itself; plain and simple in her way of life from without. She does not strive for fame and honour; her outstanding spiritual qualifications and her enviable command of the knowledge of philosophy cannot alter her humble character. Her clear and well-balanced way of thinking forms her spiritual life and allows us to recognise, with admiration, a certain greatness in her personality. Highly gifted for metaphysics and mysticism, Edith Stein found her inner peace in the intensive study of Thomism which finally caused her to enter the Order of the Carmelites.

Professor Edmund Husserl, the founder of Phenomenology, appointed her as his assistant. But even then she remained the lay nun. Her aim was pacification of the soul, and she was not in search of theses. The works of Edith Stein tell of her mastery of Catholic principles. When reading these works, the biography is the commentary and at the same time a guide to her Catholic knowledge—understandable, of course, only to those who take it seriously. The doctrine of the cross by Edith Stein can become clear only if one were able to meet her personally, or read the book of the prioress. For her, to carry the cross does not mean to suffer. Suffering as such is only an auxiliary means of carrying—bearing—the cross. For Edith Stein it was a joyful event. The knowledge she acquired enabled her to have the natural healthy talent of harmonising with Christian ideas. For her it was the key to the understanding of all human weaknesses which she

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.