

SAINTS FOR THE MARRIED. By Elizabeth Whitehead. (Mercier Press; 10s.6d.)

We are told in the Introduction to this little book that there is a prevalent idea that married people have never been saints. The purpose of the book is to show that heroic sanctity can be found in all states of life, even the married. The writer has chosen seven married people to illustrate her theme. It happens that only two of these are men; St Thomas More, the Englishman, well known as a model husband and father, and St Nicolas von Flüe, the Swiss countryman. The other five are women, the earliest in time being St Monica of the fourth century and the latest Blessed Anna Maria Taigi, who died in 1837.

It is a little surprising that St Nicolas von Flüe has been chosen as an example of a married saint, for he left his wife in order to become a hermit, left her moreover with ten children, the youngest of them being still a baby in arms. She had given her consent of course, but what else could poor Dorothy do when she found Nicolas so bent on becoming a hermit and living somewhere in a cave? She loved him very much, and did not want him to leave her, but she made no fuss at the parting. Moreover she never asked him to come back. By dint of hard work and the help of the older children on the farm she kept the home together. Twenty years later when she heard he was dying in the little mountain cell that had replaced the original cave, she went to him, bringing all their children with her. He spoke to them as they knelt round him, and then he received the last Sacraments in their presence. It may be that Dorothy von Flüe is one of the hidden saints of the world. She only appears incidentally in this book, but she makes an impression.

Among the women saints of the book the life of St Monica is the most poignant. The keynote of her life (motive would perhaps be a better word) running alike through her tragic sorrows and through the joy that came in the end, is told simply and with understanding.

FLORENS ROCH.

THE VATICAN: *The Story of the Holy City.* By Ann Carnahan; with photographs by David Seymour. (Odhams; 12s.6d.)

This book is remarkable for its beautiful photographs. There are unusual and fascinating shots of 'the world's smallest state' and 'the world's largest church', and particularly of the Piazza San Pietro. Mr David Seymour's camera takes Bernini's colonnade ten times in all, once from behind the statue of Pio Nono, once from behind the nine-foot apostles on the roof—so that a large stone hand is in the foreground—once so as to catch three Sisters of Charity fluttering against it. And usually the wide sweep of the sunny piazza is included covered with small figures converging towards the facade.

The text, by Anna Carnahan, is at first about the Vatican City, this 'tiny 108-acre state'. The smallness of its acreage is irresistible to the author by contrast with the magnitude of what goes on there, so that every diminutive adjective is exhausted, for adjectives cannot be dispensed with. (We even meet the works of 'the charming and gifted Raphael'.) But there is much that is instructive. We are taken swiftly round the Vatican Museum, given a résumé of Papal history, told about the 'ring round the Pope'—the Swiss Guards, the Noble Guards, and so on, and we are taken over the Lilliputian state and shown its railway station and post-office and so on.

But at the end the book becomes frankly the 'what porridge had John Keats?' kind. Even the clever camera wastes its talent on the Pope's black limousine, and a close-up view of the switchboard showing 'the stoppered sockets which are the Pope's private lines'. We are told what he has for each meal, and what kind of razor he uses.

It would be ungrateful to carp at a book undertaken in such a spirit of piety and containing such striking photographs.

BARBARA WALL.

THE MESSAGE OF ST THERÈSE OF LISIEUX. By M. M. Philipon, O.P.
Trans. E. J. Ross. (Burns Oates & Washbourne; 5s.)

The purpose of this little book, in the words of the Introduction, is to 'help souls to understand better the message, so suited to the present day, of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus: "to make God loved as she herself loved him" and to raise themselves by the practice of spiritual childhood to "the greatest heights of the mountain of love".'

Undoubtedly, St Thérèse of Lisieux is one of the greatest lights of the Church, and millions of souls have been brought under her influence, with the sanction of divine Providence and of the Church. Her doctrine of spiritual childhood is as old as Christianity itself, yet it is a new presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which if followed leads back to him.

In Part One there is a brief sketch of her life in her spiritual journey, mainly derived from the *Autobiography*, where it is indicated that the Saint made the love of the Cross the basis of her doctrine. And it was by terrible interior sufferings that God brought her into perfect configuration with Christ crucified. Part Two is a study of her new way to sanctity, with the conclusion that her way of holiness is available to all without diminution of the Christian ideal.

No doubt this book will prove useful as an introduction to the teaching of St Thérèse, especially to those to whom it is not yet familiar.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.