

NAISSANCE DU CHRÉTIEN. Par Pierre Herbin. (Editions du Cerf.)

This is a lively book, and one that many would not perhaps at first recognize as 'liturgical' if they were expecting only pious meditations or a history of ceremonial. There is here pious meditation enough on the meaning of four sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist and Penance. But it is all linked up in a most intelligent way with ancillary rituals such as the blessing of a pregnant mother or the consecration of a baby to our Lady, and with innumerable practical matters such as how to dress for first Holy Communion, what offering to make the priest after Baptism, invitations to the christening party, photographs after first communion. This is all excellent and far from trivial because it makes a unity of the Christian life. One brief passage replies to 'Pourquoi M. le Curé ne fait-il pas comme dans la paroisse d'à côté?'. And apparently certain French dioceses encourage the custom of giving to the priest after Baptism an offering 'qui ne saurait consister uniquement dans le cadeau . . . d'une boîte de dragées'.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

LE MYSTÈRE DE LA DIVINE CHARITÉ. Par Dom Georges Léfèbvre. (Editions du Cerf.)

This is a new volume in the collection 'L'Eau Vive' which already includes works by the late Abbot Vonier and Caryll Houselander translated into French. Dom Georges Léfèbvre has previously written *La grace de la prière* and this volume might well be read as a sequel which seeks to penetrate nearer to the heart of the Christian life. The central truth of Christianity is that God is love and that he invites us to enter into the mystery of his love; this book examines how we may do that by prayer. Prayer is both a free gift of God's love and the result of our efforts and sacrifices; and so it is attended by both pain and happiness. It is a great mistake to imagine that those who reach a high state of prayer—the way of union, or illumination—have no further need of mortification. Perhaps the best thing about this book is that it makes that point clear and emphasizes the mystery of the cross which lies at the heart of the highest state of prayer.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

LA MESSE. By Romano Guardini. (Editions du Cerf.)

This volume, translated from the German by Pie Duployé, follows immediately in the series *Lex Orandi* on Father Boyer's *La Vie de la Liturgie*; it is less massive but no less learned or perceptive. Nor is it less welcome, since the subject matter is what we have heard before from Dr Guardini. The chapters of this book were compiled from instructions given to the faithful before Mass with a view to helping