

and knowledge infused by grace. Thus Aquinas learned more through prayer than through human study.

In terms of the influence on Catherine of the Dominican milieu in particular, attention should be paid to Domenico Cavalca's *The Mirror of the Cross*, a small book written in the vernacular and with a wide dissemination. Mangano Ragazzi maintains, however, that Cavalca could not have been more than a minor source of Catherine's exposition of discretion. Something Kenelm Foster wrote in his insightful introduction to *I, Catherine* (1980, in collaboration with Mary John Ronayne) is apposite; in a certain sense, all theology worthy of the name is in tendency 'mystical'. As for mystics in the more usual sense of the term, whether their contact with God will give rise to clearly articulated doctrine will depend, humanly speaking, on their natural gifts and circumstances. For Mangano Ragazzi, Catherine's thought seems to depend on a unique form of inspiration, expressed in all her writings and giving them a unified character.

According to Giuliana Cavallini, and how great a debt is owed to her scholarship, there is perhaps no virtue which is so characteristic of Catherine as discretion. It is a characteristic feature of Catherine because of the prominence she attributes to it and the great extent to which she practised it. Mangano Ragazzi has now enabled us to see this. One can only conclude that, in Catherine, Christian mysticism, doctrinal truth and sustained action interpenetrated to an extraordinary and saintly degree.

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THE FRIARS IN IRELAND 1224–1540 by Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB, *Four Courts Press*, Dublin, 2012, pp. xxv + 389, € 29.95, pbk

It is somewhat unfortunate that the most popular image of friars associated with medieval Ireland is the quartet beset by devils in a copy of an anti-mendicant tract by Richard Fitzralph, archbishop of Armagh, now in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. These representatives of the four orders feature on the cover of this book. But they are put in their place by Colmán Ó Clabaigh, who demonstrates that the mendicants made an invaluable contribution to the religious vitality of late medieval Ireland. The depth of Dom Colmán's knowledge and the sensible and measured tone of his observations make this, the first general survey of the friars in medieval Ireland, a valuable contribution to mendicant studies.

Unlike the friars in England, who with the exception of the Austin Friars, have clear foundation narratives, the coming of the friars to Ireland is beset with obscurity. Although post-medieval accounts claimed independent links between Ireland and SS. Francis and Dominic themselves, contemporary evidence points to prominent Anglo-Irish families as the chief promoters of the friars. Very often they were continuing connections first established in England. For example, William Marshal, the most likely founder of the first Dominican house in Ireland, at Dublin in 1224, was already a benefactor to the London Blackfriars. He was certainly the founder of the Black Abbey, Kilkenny, which remarkably survives to serve as a Dominican church. Similarly, the Carmelites in Kildare were founded by William de Vesey, a member of a family which had established one of the earliest English Carmelite houses. The spread of the friars in Ireland, well illustrated by a series of maps in the book, is remarkable. Houses were even being founded in the difficult years immediately after the Black Death. Later foundations are mainly in the West, and are typically associated for mutual protection with the strongholds of

local chieftains. An interesting example of the moderating effect of the mendicant presence is provided in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, which records that the Donegal chieftain Tuathal Balbh O'Gallagher (d. 1541) never killed anyone in his military career, having been influenced by a sermon on the sanctity of life preached by a Donegal Franciscan. Another notable feature of the development of the mendicant orders in Ireland is the way in which observant movements within all four orders took firm root in the country.

A good measure of the importance of the mendicants in Irish ecclesiastical life is the high proportion of friars who were appointed to Irish sees from the thirteenth century onwards. These bishops are often to be found in England, performing essential episcopal functions in lieu of English diocesan bishops busy in royal service. The friars were significant conduits of continental scholarship, in particular, as Aisling Byrne has demonstrated recently, by translating such works into Gaelic. An interesting episode, first studied by Aubrey Gwynn, was Archbishop Alexander Bicknor's foundation of a university at Dublin in 1320, with staff drawn from the Dominican and Franciscan *studia* in the city. This came to nothing, as did Pope Sixtus IV's approval in 1475 of the foundation of a university at the request of the superiors of the four mendicant orders in Ireland.

With a few glorious exceptions such as the Norwich Blackfriars, the physical presence of English medieval friaries has often been reduced to a street name, a featureless fragment of walling, or foundations revealed during the construction of a shopping centre. Ireland, on the other hand, is rich in mendicant architecture. Apart from the Black Abbey at Kilkenny and the Augustinian friary church at Adare, now in the hands of the Church of Ireland, there are numerous friaries which, though roofless, survive in such good state that their function can be studied with ease, as Dom Colmán demonstrates in his well-illustrated account of the friars' lifestyle. Particularly fine examples are the Dominican friary at Sligo, which retains its high altar and cloister, and the Franciscan friary at Quin. Despite the tribulations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several remarkable treasures survive, often still in fraternal care. One of the most moving is Our Lady of Graces, a thirteenth-century French ivory devotional image, worn with kisses, which was originally in the Dominican friary at Youghal and is now in the care of their *confrères* at Cork. Liturgical manuscripts have fared badly, but there are exceptions, such as the Kilcormac Missal and Breviary. The former, although written in 1458, has been shown to have been copied from a pre-1339 exemplar. More up-to-date was the library of the Youghal Franciscans, of which we possess a 1523 catalogue. Of the 150 books, among which works of use to preachers predominate, there are several recent printed works, including a *Summa vocabulorum cum expositione in lingua teutonica*, presumably picked up by friars during their continental studies.

The friars' reaction to the Reformation and the Dissolution was as varied in Ireland as in England. There were some sympathizers with Lutheranism, most notably the Augustinian Richard Nangle, who worked in concert with the English Augustinian George Browne, archbishop of Dublin and chief agent of the Crown in the official dissolution of the Irish friaries. But more significant was the part played by Irish friars in organizing resistance to the Reformation. Friars gave their support to the religiously-motivated Kildare rebellion, and an Irish Dominican, Ulick de Burgh, was hanged in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace. It may well be that the strong presence of the friars was one of the reasons for the survival of Catholicism in Ireland. Wedded to poverty rather than property they were able to relocate where necessary to Gaelic territories beyond the Pale. Some communities managed to survive thanks to local patrons. The Dominicans remained at Limerick, Kilmallock, Tralee and Youghal for much of the sixteenth century under the protection of the earls of Desmond. Most remarkable of all is the case of Quin, in MacNamara territory, where the Franciscans retained some

sort of presence until 1820. When the Franciscan Donatus Mooney reflected on the reasons for the survival of the friars, the most potent reason he gave was divine providence. His words deserve to be considered by present-day Irish clergy: 'Nor have we any doubt that God will sustain us, and give us increase from day to day as long as we shall be useful labourers in his vineyard of Ireland, living purely and devoutly according to our state'.

NICHOLAS ROGERS

ERIC GILL: WORK IS SACRED edited by Martin John Broadley, *Catholic Archives Society*, in association with Koinonia Press, Manchester, 2013, pp. ix + 92, £15.00, pbk

Since the publication of Fiona MacCarthy's biography in 1989, any discussion of the work of Eric Gill inevitably falls under the shadow of the sexual revelations disclosed there by the author's close examination of his private diaries. As Conrad Pepler OP (son of Hilary Pepler, co-founder with Gill of the community at Ditchling) remarked in a review of MacCarthy's book in this journal in April 1989, the life revealed poses a 'glaring challenge to what society even in the second half of the twentieth century takes for granted as established human and religious behaviour'.

The occasion for the present short but engaging volume of essays is the recent centenary in 2013 of Gill's conversion to Catholicism. As such, it is faced at the outset by that challenge and by the apparent tension between what an earlier biographer (Malcolm Yorke, *Eric Gill Man of Flesh and Spirit*, 1981) identified as the 'two great moving forces' in Gill's life, namely, religion and sex.

Yet as the editor Martin Broadley explains in his comprehensive Introduction, the intention is to limit the present exploration to 'the significance of Gill's faith and how it influenced and fashioned his work and thought'. Analysis of Gill's 'sexual antinomianism' lies beyond its scope. The response to the challenge here is, in other words, one of apparent evasion, the separation of the life from the work, the sex from the religion. Yet the eight tantalising essays that follow, of varying length and ambition, arranged in chronological order and interspersed with more than thirty illustrations, nonetheless captivate.

The chronological span ranges from Gill's early years in Chichester between 1897 and 1899, up to his design of the church of St Peter's Goresdon, Norfolk shortly before his death in 1940. As befits a publication of the Catholic Archives Society, each essay is firmly, and admirably, rooted in primary archival sources, notably those held by West Sussex Record Office, the newly re-opened Ditchling Museum of Art+Craft, the University of Notre Dame in the USA, Westminster Cathedral and the Clark Memorial Library at the University of Los Angeles, including some 'hitherto unknown or unexplored'.

The first two essays effectively set the scene. Timothy McCann's essay on Chichester, although dealing with the period before Gill's conversion to Catholicism in 1913, nevertheless evokes the importance for Gill of Chichester as a model of humane urban environment, reflecting the 'beauty and order of a Roman city'. Joe Cribb (Co-ordinator of the Eric Gill Society) then offers a reflection on a single letter from Gill to Everard Meynell (dated 18 January 1912) seeking 'information, instruction and enlightenment' on Catholicism.

As Cribb points out, it was about the same time that Gill, briefly working in association with Jacob Epstein, carved a large relief, *Ecstasy*, which was to be the model and inspiration for his *Divine Lovers*. The latter visualizes Christ as husband of the Church his bride, and so represents the concept which Cribb recognises as central to Gill's Catholic faith and which reveals 'the religious thought behind his otherwise startling sculptures and engravings'.