

study, should become a feature. We need to go back to our sources for new vitality: Scripture, liturgy, the Fathers.

If guests participated in prayer, study, work, meals, for periods, it could act as a real time of renewal; and in addition the house could be used by priests as a place for preached retreats. But the backbone of any such venture would have to be a spirited group of people who avoided activism on the one hand and crankiness on the other. There would be many pitfalls, but the need is great.

REVIEWS

THE DIVINE PITY. By Gerald Vann, O.P. (Sheed & Ward; 8s. 6d.)

The truths of spiritual teaching remain the same, but the world and the needs of the world change from one generation to another. The ancient truths must appear in a new dress. Not the least of Fr. Vann's gifts is his deep understanding of the contemporary mind, of both Catholic and non-Catholic, and his ability to express the ancient truths in language that will appeal to it. Everything in this book is real, in touch with reality, dealing with the real needs of real people. God is not an abstraction, prayer is not a mental drug, and the spiritual life is not "a self-regarding soul-culture." Here are no faded clichés, no pious jargon, no trace of the state rhetoric of a by-gone age. With penetrating vision, Fr. Vann goes to the heart of *things*: detachment and attachment, "to care and not to care"; being before doing, "to love is to *be* something", "worship is not a part of the Christian life: it is the Christian life"; the eternal present of God in which the fleeting moments of beauty can endure, humility, docility, joy in God; consciousness of our brother's needs, a thirst for justice and transfusing all, the Divine Pity, of which the author possesses so large a share. These are some of the themes of his deeply human yet wholly Christian book. Fr. Vann, and this is his second great merit, has made a synthesis of spiritual teaching in which he finds room for the values of the newer, individualist piety which is given depth and breadth by its union with the more ancient tradition, at once spiritual and liturgical, which has led so many souls to Christ.

At the same time, it is not a comfortable book. The author gets at you and won't leave you alone. Indeed, at times he batters at one a little too long with his abundant vocabulary—certainly the effect on the poor reviewer who has to read on, is a little overwhelming—and perhaps the style could be a little simplified in the interests of shorn lambs. For I am convinced of one thing, that all Catholics ought to be given this doctrine and will profit enormously from reading this book. If it were practised—!

J. D. CRICHTON.