

Kolping. That the Socialist, Engels, and not Adolf Kolping was the alienated person is scarcely to be doubted.

Certainly Kolping would understand better than Engels the inspiring paragraph with which Mr MacIntyre ends his work: '... this new community will be both human and Christian. For its prayer will be the classical prayer of Christendom. Paradoxically it is the contemporary study of Marxism which perhaps brings out most clearly what the classical methods of meditation have to say to us about the "dark night of the soul". It is a "dark night", an *ascesis* of poverty and questioning which must renew our politics. A community committed alike to politics and to prayer would serve in the renewal of the whole Church, for it would give to us a new understanding of the central act of the Church's life which is in humble thanksgiving to eat the body of a Lord who hungered and thirsted and to drink the blood of a Lord whom the powers of Church and state combined to crucify outside the walls of the city.' DONALD NICHOLL

CHOIR OF MUSES. By Etienne Gilson. Translated by Maisie Ward. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

M. Gilson here discusses the way in which great men, Petrarch, Baudelaire, Wagner, Comte, Maeterlinck, Goethe, were inspired in their work by women—women who for them were muse, not mistress, for if ever—as in some cases happened—the muse descended from her remote pedestal and became a mistress her power to inspire came abruptly to an end. M. Gilson writes professedly as a historian (and these historical vignettes are indeed fascinating—and the translation makes one forget that it is one, as it should); but in fact the discussion goes beyond the realm of historical statement of fact, and raises problems which it does not altogether attempt to solve. Why in fact does the Muse cease to inspire when she becomes a woman? M. Gilson glances at the idea of the *anima*, but he does not link it up with the immediately relevant remark of Baudelaire that psychologically speaking the poet is essentially bi-sexual, nor with his own insistence that in the last resort it is not the Muse herself who inspires the work, but the artist who infuses into her the inspiration to give him.

The last chapter, on 'The Artist and the Saint', raises another problem: 'the way of the artist is seldom a road to sanctity'. 'If I did not possess this marvellous gift, this strong power of creative fantasy', said Wagner, 'I could follow my clear knowledge and the élan of my heart: I should become a saint.' But why should the artist find it more difficult than other men? He idolises his art; but other men idolise a woman, or their work, or their country, or themselves; it is not only the artist who says 'I adore you' to something other than God. His absorption is deeper, the claims of art are more absolute? Yes, no doubt; but on the other hand he is already a seer, a contemplative; as M. Gilson profoundly says, 'Poetry even at its purest is not prayer; but it rises from the same depths as the need to pray.'

(And yet on reflection even that seems insufficient: can we possibly deny that there is prayer in the last quartets of Beethoven?) We certainly cannot agree with Bloy that he failed to do God's will because he became a writer when he might have become a saint: for why did God give him his gift if not to use it? It was not so that St Thomas thought about his brain, or St Louis his throne, or Fra Angelico his art, or Bl. Jordan of Saxony his love for Diana d'Andalò. Some artists, it is true, turned at last from their art in despair of reaching through it the infinite they thirsted for: so the aged Michelangelo smashed his statues, as St Thomas for his part regarded his writings as worthless as straw. But there is the 'way of affirmation' too: Handel on his knees in the composing of the *Messiah*, or Angelico at once painting and adoring his Saviour. Artists, no doubt, are often wild fellows, supplying plenty of ammunition for an *advocatus diaboli*: but if they are led through their art, through their idolatry, to a great humility and a great thirst for the Infinite, so that in what they make there are expressed a deep vision and a great longing, are we to say that they are remote from the essential stuff of holiness? In this last chapter M. Gilson does indeed dig into the problem he has raised; but we could have wished for much more: could have wished that instead of being merely a final chapter it had been expanded into a second part of the book, balancing the historical survey with a full-length analysis of the problems the survey involves.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

HOLY MASS. Approaches to the Mystery. By A.-M. Roguet, O.P. (Blackfriars; 5s.)

Père Roguet's excellent little study is the second short work on the Mass to be published by Blackfriars, the other being Père Chéry's *What is the Mass?*, and it maintains the high standard we have come to expect from French liturgical writers. The author has a great deal of experience in liturgical preaching, in the course of which he has acquired a deep knowledge of the needs and difficulties of the faithful in regard to the liturgy; this is evident in the book under review, which is designed to meet these needs.

In his introduction he indicates three kinds of approach to the Mass which he wishes to avoid: the historical, which sometimes tends to lose sight of the Mass itself in a welter of detail; the 'spiritual', which comments on the prayers, and sometimes gives the impression that the Mass is a meditation rather than an act; and lastly the theological, which offers what are often over-subtle analyses of the Mass, and which 'too frequently forget to consider the mystery in its breadth'. (p. 7.) Père Roguet's own approach is to study the Mass from its ritual acts, and his aim is 'to get a glimpse of the mystery, to present it under various lights, to bring the Christian soul into contact with it, leaving him the possibility of penetrating further by his own efforts'. (p. 8); and by this method one will