

of all. Miracles there were in plenty, but miracles are not short cuts; they are manifestations of God: 'Great saints are God's resounding counterblasts to great sinners'.

In a large volume Father Carr elaborates these things. While he affirms strongly that 'They who are not prepared to meet the miraculous in the life of Gerard Majella have no business reading this book', he does everything possible to assure the sceptic by his historical thoroughness and honesty. The only drawback to such an exhaustive method is indigestibility: great profusion of facts with authoritative sources tempts us to focus on the trees and not the wood. One might perhaps suggest that this book provides a source for a more stimulating and less bulky work on a saint whose enthusiasm could mean so much to the twentieth century.

The style like the format is on the whole workmanlike, but there are one or two regrettable slacknesses: 'Father Giovenale . . . got a holy and happy thought' (p. 134); 'The students lost no time in organising the holy outing' (p. 271). Such things, like the occasional over-use of the cumulative device, are only Homeric nods, but they are none the less unhappy.

Finally one would welcome an even greater insistence on that which was basic in the life of the saint. It is nothing peripheral like a list of resolutions, but something more central, something that lies at the heart of his holiness, something we can find expressed in his often-repeated 'non è niente'. It is more than detachment, it is more than balance: we should call it supernatural common-sense; whatever name we give it it springs from a faithful nurturing of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and is a kind of composite Fruit—a Joy-Peace-Patience. It is the secret of Gerard's vivid flaming love of reality: his attraction lies in the fact that like many of us he had nothing, materially speaking, to stimulate him, yet his enthusiasm thrived. For him the daily miracle of his own existence was more wonderful than any miraculous increase of food or drink: Chesterton's *Orthodoxy* reads as a penetrating commentary on such a saint. Such vision is the true message of the mystics and can never be too deeply underlined by any hagiographer, because that is the first and the last gift the saints leave us.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

MONTHLY RECOLLECTION. By Rev. Father Victor, C.P. Translated from the French by Rev. Father Edmund, C.P. (Gill & Son; 1s.) THIS little book is conspicuous for its simplicity, and may be useful to many religious sisters. There is perhaps a lack of dogmatic stress, and too much self-examination. It does not appear useful as a hand-book for general spiritual reading or meditation, but rather for occasional use at days of recollection.

In writing for the many surely it is an exaggeration to say: 'Let the subject of your meditation be, by preference, the Passion of our Lord and the Sorrows of the blessed Virgin' (p. 28). We may here recall the words of St Thomas when speaking of meditation as a stimulant to

devotion: 'Matters concerning the Godhead are, in themselves, the strongest incentive to love and consequently to devotion, because God is supremely lovable. Yet such is the weakness of the human mind that it needs a guiding hand, not only to the knowledge, but also to the love of divine things by means of certain sensible objects known to us. Chief among these is the humanity of Christ, according to the Preface, *that through knowing God visibly, we may be caught up to the love of things invisible*. Wherefore matters relating to Christ's humanity are the chief incentive to devotion, leading us thither as a guiding hand, although devotion itself has for its object matters concerning the Godhead' (*Summa Theologica*, IIaIIae, 82, iii, ad 2um.)

The examen for Confession is not entirely satisfactory. Sins are the matter for self-examination here and not failures to comply with an arbitrary programme in matters of counsel.

On the remote thanksgiving after Holy Communion this misleading phrase occurs: 'When I leave the chapel, I carry our Lord with me. He accompanies me to school, to work, to the sick' (p. 43). But it must be understood that this is not a sacramental presence.

It is said that 'The Superioress cannot forbid the Sisters to go to confession outside the convent' (p. 37.) But she is not obliged to give permission to her subjects to go out of the convent whenever they like, or contrary to the rule or to the customs of the community.

The sources for spiritual reading are scanty, not even including Holy Scripture. Some more solid reading is required to save Sisters from intellectual starvation and from dwelling on themselves.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

MARITIME LITURGICAL WEEK. (Charlottetown P.E.I.; Aug. 28-31, 1945.)

The Maritime Provinces of Canada last year held their first liturgical week under the title 'Integrating Life through the Liturgy'. One cannot but be pleased to see the birth of such a new movement in Canada. The useful bibliography at the back of the book shows that the aim of the volume is the liturgical formation of its readers. Why not, then, leave out the polite formalities and why not confine the publication to extracts, at least where the talks are of less interest? The theme chosen, though it opened the way to the doctrinal bases of liturgical life, has too often tempted the speakers into generalities. We hope that in the following years the subject matter will be more limited and the talks less numerous.

NOTE: One cannot speak of worship *in* God (p. 18.)

PIERRE GY, O.P.

WALSINGHAM: THE STORY OF A FAMOUS SHRINE. By H. M. Gillett (Burns Oates; 5s.)

This is the story of Walsingham up to the sad day when, at Bishop Latimer's suggestion, 'Our great sibyll, the doll at Islington with her old syster of Walsyngham, her yonge syster of Ipswyche, with the