

from the many different occasions they use for that purpose. Thus in 1947, the year of the *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII had something to say about the priesthood in an exhortation to the clergy on the occasion of the canonization of St Joseph Cafasso and again in a discourse for the canonization of St Louis-Marie Grignon as well as in a radio message to the Eucharistic Congress at Nantes. Again, in 1951, the discourse to the parish priests and Lenten preachers of Rome, the Encyclical *Evangelii praecones*, discourses to the Carmelite Order and to the first world congress of the lay apostolate have valuable teaching on the priesthood. In season and out of season, the modern Popes have explained what the priesthood is and exhorted priests, those who wish to be priests and those who choose and train the priests to be, to live up to this teaching.

Canon Masure's *The Diocesan Priest*, recently reviewed in THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, is, of its nature, a book written about the priesthood from one angle (though it also contains much of universal application). Other books of recent years have dealt with the same subject in a more universal way, but without the authority that inevitably belongs to any written or spoken statement of the Popes. Here, in *The Catholic Priesthood*, is to be found the loving care and watchfulness of successive Vicars of Christ for the priests under their charge. It is to be found, thanks to the compiler and translators, in a most manageable form and it is to be hoped that the book is given the welcome and the study that it deserves.

J. CONNELLY

FISHERS OF MEN. By Maxence van der Meersch. (Geoffrey Chapman, 5s. 6d.)

*Fishers of Men* has now been produced in a cheap edition. It is a novel about the struggling establishment of the Jocist movement as seen through the eyes of Peter Mardyck, a young worker in Roubeaux in the north of France, near the Belgian border.

It is described as a tribute to the Young Christian Worker movement. From the last chapter it appears also that the hero is to be seen almost as an exemplar to the movement, an ideal figure.

The novel describes graphically the typical industrial malaise which existed before World War II. It describes well the sufferings and trials of a young worker trying to be guided by Christ and set in the middle of gross physical industrial dirt and gross moral industrial depravity. The evils of employers and workers, and the ineffectiveness of a moribund Christianity in face of them, are well portrayed. They parallel to a great extent the conditions in England and the conditions which explain, as a background, much of modern industrial strife. They are the things which are looked back to and which are salient even to the minds of workers who are too young to have experienced

them. They are the type of experiences handed down to us; the things the worker culturally remembers. They are not entirely gone, as can be seen, for instance, in personal experiences found sometimes in *New Life*, the review of the Y.C.W.

The inevitable loneliness of the Christian leader in such a context, the perplexity involved in judging what is right in a criss-cross of conflicting forces of employers, unions, political forces, etc., when alliance with any one group is liable to be wrong or wrongly interpreted, is well portrayed.

What, though, of young Peter Mardyck in such conditions? In the first part of the novel he is ready to admit his faults and incapacities in the face of such immense difficulties. But his Christian perception of the situation grows: he becomes good. We can be very happy that he has become good, but could we not have been left to guess it for ourselves from the portrayal of his character without him telling us so himself? It is true that he attributes his goodness to Christ. In the last chapter we are told that his Christian ideals have given him strength and made a man of him. He is not hardened, seared or narrowed. Need he have told us this so explicitly? All he expects from life is struggles, betrayal, loneliness, hypocrisy, etc. Surely there are other aspects to his life, too: he is a happily married man.

The edificational and anagogical elements seem to be too bluntly put into the mouth of the main character. Perhaps it is necessary for the ideal to be so sharply put for youth to understand it. The founder of Scouting seemed to find it necessary to make a sharp distinction between his characters: the boy who smoked and the boy who did not smoke, etc.

Nevertheless, Peter Mardyck's ideals are true ideals and ones which must be captured. They were applicable in the thirties and they are applicable today. Any criticism of one aspect of the book cannot obscure the fact that what the back cover says is true. This is a story told with realism and intensity: it involves the reader in the struggle for justice and humanity. It is a moving and very readable book.

F.J.F.

WEDDING SERMONS. By M. A. Couturier, O.P. (Blackfriars; 5s. 6d.)

Originally published in French by Les Editions du Cerf under the title *Discours de Mariage*, this book looks expensive at first glance—sixty pages for 5s. 6d., and only paper covers—but it is a treasure and worth any amount of money. Père Couturier speaks to ten couples, real ones, and speaks from his head as well as his heart. In a variety of ways he tells them much the same thing, essentially, each time. It is a thing worth saying—that love is the only worth-while reality and that love's blindness is a blinding light. He does not use those exact words,