

crucial Marian motif of virginal fruitfulness, and the locating of the Mother of God in terms of three polarities: paradise and fallenness, Old Covenant and New, time and the eternal. What they will find more surprising—but, in these pages, persuasively argued—are two wider theses about this choice of themes and its handling.

Balthasar, Steinbauer argues, intended his Mariological work as a response to the shortcomings of both the prevailing 'maximalism' of pre-Conciliar Mariology and the equally striking minimalist character of many of its post-Conciliar successors. (She shows, for instance, his very mixed feelings about the key Mariological passage in the documents of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* VIII). She also maintains that his theology as a whole has the Marian as its single most 'comprehensive dimension'. The reason is that, without occupying the space opened up by the Mother of the Lord, a Trinitarian theology of the Cross (of the kind Balthasar offers) becomes inaccessible, and solidarity with the redeemed in the community of the Cross (as Balthasar understands this) an impossibility. If this second thesis is true, it is surely owing to the influence on Balthasar of Adrienne von Speyr, his co-worker and mystical counsellor. From that point of view it is a pity—albeit from the angle of literary manageability an understandable one—that Steinbauer laid down a self-denying ordinance: she would not look into Speyr's work. What she *has* given us is, however, of extraordinary doctrinal richness and density.

AIDAN NICHOLS OP

A JOURNEY WITH JONAH: The Spirituality of Bewilderment, by Paul Murray OP, *Columba Press, Blackrock 2002, Pp. 69, £4.99, pbk.*

Among the characteristics that can be identified as typical of the dove (as depicted in the Hebrew Scriptures), two in particular stand out. When put to flight it seeks secure refuge in the high ridges, and, secondly, it moans and carries on a sustained lament when it finds itself in distress. No wonder that Paul Murray makes capital out of the fact that the Hebrew word for dove is *jona*!

One might wish to sit-in on a retreat conference given by Paul Murray; or yearn possibly to overhear what a contemporary Catholic preacher makes of the Book of Jonah; then again curiosity might get the better of you when you hear that Murray calls this short biblical text 'the most Irish' page in the Scriptures! If so, this slim book is for you. It is short and witty. But Paul addresses some of modern man's groping about for meaning and for compassion, and helps to direct that search along a Christian path.

A Journey with Jonah is not, of course, a scholarly work of biblical interpretation. (Had it been, the undersigned would certainly

not have been asked to review it!) The biblical text is used rather to support an argument that begins some distance from this intriguing page of the Hebrew Scriptures, and it is not Murray's point to assist the strictly scholarly understanding of this most absorbing of prophetic pages.

These reflections occupy fifty-four small-sized pages and are divided into three sections, as follows. (i) Obedience to the Word: the lesson of the wild storm; (ii) In the Belly of Paradox: the lesson of the great whale; and (iii) Compassion without Limit: the lesson of the wondrous plant. The author calls on literary and artistic references to Jonah and shapes the evidence of what is a kind of anecdotal card index into a pleasant yet challenging attempt to identify humanity's bewilderment and seek a spiritual path through it, not around it. This 'fishy' story, redolent of Mediterranean folklore, is used by Murray to thread a path through many contemporary concerns and 'spiritualities'. The path indicated by Murray is deeply Christian, and offers hope to the reader's searching soul. Helpful also is the inclusion at the back of the book of the entire text of the Book of Jonah, in the New American Bible version.

Modern questions are raised here, or rather are shown not to be that modern after all. Jonah is still alive and somewhere about... and so is the great fish... with an ocean of meanings and adaptations at the ready. Murray does not indicate whether this material has been tried in the context of a retreat – but I believe hearing it would leave other retreat masters green with envy at how spiritual profundity is worn so lightly, and with Irish humour. The precise attention to and care for words, so noted in Murray's poetry, is not less evident in his prose.

In conclusion, let me signal also a more recent gem from Paul Murray: his *Preachers at Prayer*, published in Dublin this year by Dominican Publications. This beautifully produced slim volume brings to a wider audience an address delivered by Murray at the General Chapter of the Order of Preachers in Providence, Rhode Island, USA, in 2001. The theme is contemplation, as practised by Dominicans down the centuries, and how their understanding of it has shaped their preaching ministry.

THOMAS McCARTHY OP

FAITH SEEKING by Denys Turner, *SCM Press, London 2002, Pp. xiii + 146, £9.95 pbk.*

The tantalisingly ambiguous and perhaps incomplete title draws us to a collection of lectures and sermons by the current Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity in Cambridge which in turn fascinate, entertain and occasionally frustrate but which, more often than not, take us a step towards the understanding that Anselm himself prayed for. The