

This collection of essays examines the state of the Catholic Church in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Poland, during the eighteenth century: in addition, there is an introduction attempting a synthesis of the various national analyses, and a concluding historiographical essay on the study of popular religion. On the whole, the essays are helpful summaries of the state of research in the history of the different national churches, with special emphasis on the relationship between the church and the society within which it operated. Each of the essays combines a wealth of detailed information on the material and political position of the church with some attempt to assess developments within the structures of the national churches. They follow a broad pattern in examining the organisation of the episcopacy, the formation and condition of the secular clergy, the state of the religious orders, rural missionary activity and the development of specific devotions.

What conclusions emerge from the essays? The European Catholic episcopacy in this period was characterised by its aristocratic/noble composition. The French hierarchy was perhaps the most clearly aristocratic in character, but all hierarchies were largely composed of nobles. In Austria, for example, sixteen quarters of nobility were required for election as a canon in a cathedral chapter. Only in Poland, was the hierarchy slightly more egalitarian in its recruitment. Throughout Europe, the wealth of the church was largely concentrated in the hands of the hierarchy, and this meant that paradoxically, a church oriented to the service of an overwhelmingly rural society, concentrated most of its wealth in the urban areas. By contrast, most secular parish clergy were poorly endowed and had to try to serve their parishes with barely adequate material resources. The parish clergy were faced with depredations from both the church hierarchy and the local nobility – thus, in Bohemia in the early 18th century, 20% of all parishes lacked priests: the local

nobility had usurped the property, tithes and lands necessary to support the priest. The parish priest was also a servant of the state. In the absence of any force (except the army) capable of maintaining order outside the towns, the priest's role as an agent of social order was often as significant as his more strictly religious functions. It is in the light of this fact, that the attempts made for example by the Austrian monarchs in the later eighteenth century to improve the standard of clerical education should be seen.

On the whole, it seems, the active religious fared better in terms of vocations than the strictly contemplative orders, though both faced falling vocations after 1750. The Jesuits, particularly in Eastern Europe, were an especially potent force. Moreover, the religious seem to have had a more secure material base than the parish clergy. In the 1780s, when dissolving the religious orders in the Austrian empire, Joseph II appropriated the material resources of the religious to distribute them amongst the parish clergy. Everywhere in Europe, but particularly in Poland and Austria-Hungary, the religious played an important role in the maintenance of higher education and the relief of poverty (though apparently with declining success in the latter field of activity after about 1750). The orders were also a major force in the rural missionary activity which characterised the eighteenth century. If the wealth of the church was overwhelmingly concentrated in urban areas, eighteenth century bishops were in no doubt as to the ignorance of the rural population about all but the most fundamental aspects of Catholicism, and the strong remnants of paganism in popular religious culture, which rural missions were intended to combat. Thus, in Austria, the Jesuits succeeded in recapturing the country from Protestantism in the century after 1650, and in imposing their own brand of Baroque Catholicism on it. Connected with rural missionary activity was the increasing popularity of special devotions and cults, typically concentrating precisely

on those aspects of Catholicism which Protestants had denied – Marianism, the Real Presence, etc.

The collection of essays also deals with the changing relationship between Church and State, in particular the rise of state control over the Church in, for example, the appointment of bishops. The essay on Austria by Jean Berenger is particularly interesting in this context. The historiographical problems associated with the study of popular religion are sketched by Marc Venard in a stimulating (but awkwardly translated) essay. Taken as a whole, this collection of essays goes a long way to filling a considerable historiographical gap. The emphasis on the church in society, rather than the usual emphasis on theological disputes or the changing relationship between the church and state conceived of in narrowly defined terms, is particularly pleasing. The essay on France (by Olwen Hufton) and Poland (by Jerzy

Kloczowski) are outstanding. On the other hand, the essay on the German *Reichskirche* (by Gerhard Benecke) fits awkwardly into the collection, and does not tackle the problems dealt with by the other essays. This difference in approach may well be attributable to problems with source materials – a problem historians of France in this period have gone a long way towards solving. Some readers might be puzzled by the description of John Hus as a Protestant (p. 104). Specialists might also be frustrated by the absence of footnotes which prevents any following-up of the source material used by the authors.

Equipped with a helpful index, this collection of essays will be very useful to all historians of the eighteenth century. It is to be hoped that a paperback edition, which would be financially more accessible to the majority of students, will soon appear.

STEPHEN SALTER

**PRAYING by Robert Faricy S.J. *Villa Books* 1979 pp. 121 £1.95**

Anybody named Faricy must be taking a chance writing about prayer. But the author, who is Professor of Spiritual Theology at the Gregorian University, pulls it off, not because he is saying anything new but because he presents his subject in a concise and attractive style. His style of writing is probably due more to the fact that he used to be a marine engineer than that he is a Jesuit and a prominent speaker and writer in the Charismatic movement. A more cynical reviewer might say that the book reads like a technical report rather than a theological work, but it is refreshing to read an author who has the ability to think and write clearly.

This book has probably been written for people who are involved with the charismatic renewal and who are familiar with terms like 'discernment' and 'baptism in the spirit'. Nevertheless, the average christian who isn't put off by this sort of language will find *Praying* a useful introduction to the christian theology and practice of prayer.

From the basis of an exposition of Trinitarian doctrine Fr Faricy moves to a discussion of the Holy Spirit in the New

Testament, and to prayer as an effect of God's Gift, the Spirit. The effect of the Spirit in our lives is then treated in the next few chapters. Firstly, the way in which the spirit guides man towards the truth, then the way in which man grows in prayer and in union with God as a result of grace. The first section is concluded with a chapter on spiritual and physical healing. In the next section the author looks at prayer in the works of three men of our time. He begins with Thomas Merton, the contemplative monk seeking solitude to be alone with God, goes on with Teilhard de Chardin, the scientist looking for the resolution of the spiritual and material progress of the world in the Risen Christ, and finishes the survey by using the writings of Henry de Lubac on the spiritual and literal interpretations of Scripture to consider Scripture's meaning for prayer. In the last section of the book the author discusses ways of praying; asking, thanking, praising and abiding in God.

It is a pity that Fr Faricy doesn't include a chapter on the relationship between prayer and the sacraments. Traditional catholics find difficulty with a con-