

Rule specifies any spiritual works of mercy either. The Dominican penitents are told to be zealous for the faith, as good children of St Dominic, but that hardly amounts to "spiritual works of mercy". Caro expects his penitents too to be zealous for the faith, though he puts it specifically in terms of handing people over to the inquisition. Surely the truth of the matter is that both Caro and Munio intended their rules to cover a lot of different situations, and so took it for granted that their penitents would perform charitable works, at least by providing financial aid to the poor, and did not consider it appropriate in a general rule to be more specific than that..

An interesting point that emerges from a comparison of the two texts is that the Dominicans do not impose a full year's noviciate on their penitents before profession. Meersseman does not comment on this, but it is surely valuable evidence for our assessment of the significance of the long battle slightly earlier on in the century between the Order and the Holy See about precisely the issue of whether or not people might be admitted to vows (either general vows of religion or specific vows to the Order) without first doing a year of probation.

One small point on which I would take issue with Meersseman is that on p. 283 he asserts that voluntary penitents were obliged to wear distinctive dress, "easily recognized (*notabilis*)". So far as I know, in ecclesiastical documents *notabilis*, in connexion with dress, is always pejorative, and the text quoted by Meersseman seems in fact to be no exception, if the sentence is construed in the most obvious way.

There will no doubt, be many points of detail which scholars will want to take up and quarrel about; but in general this is a publication warmly to be welcomed. Even if much of the material is not completely new, it is presented here in a convenient form, which will be of value for many years to come. It leaves a lot of problems unsolved, some of them almost completely untouched, and it leaves a lot of texts still to be edited critically and made available in printed editions. But the material assembled here represents an important advance in our knowledge of medieval religious practice, and particularly highlights some of the ways in which lay people responded to the example and inspiration of the Dominicans and other friars.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

BISHOPS AND WRITERS: ASPECTS OF THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN ENGLISH CATHOLICISM. Edited by Adrian Hastings. Anthony Clarke 1977 pp. 263 £3.00

John Bossy's masterly work, *The English Catholic Community*, stopped with the year 1850 on the grounds that from then on Roman centralisation ('Ultramonotanism') put paid to any serious hopes of a truly independent national church. Though you wouldn't think so from its unarresting title, *Bishops and Writers* takes the story on from 1850 to the present. By what it has to record, it largely supports a pessimistic view of the last hundred years; but by its very existence it shows that a critical approach to the past is possible and therefore that a new phase can begin.

It is a collective work but it is animated by a common spirit. It is at the same time a *Festschrift* (the editors omit the capital letter) designed to honour Mgr

Garrett Sweeney, for twelve years Master of St Edmund's House, Cambridge, and now a parish priest in the diocese of Nottingham. Four of his own essays are included. His gently acerbic style is perhaps best conveyed in the chapter on St Edmund's House. Well aware that after *Humanae Vitae* Cambridge had been described by a well-known archbishop as 'the theological dustbin', he counters this with the remark that 'universities have at least the virtue of providing somewhere where fools can be suffered gladly'.

Of course they are much more than that, and this volume proves that St Edmund's House had come of age and can make an important contribution towards our self-understanding. The conflicts of

the post-Vatican II period have their roots deep in the nineteenth century. J. Derek Holmes on Newman and Hugh MacDougall on Acton both show that the tradition of 'liberal Catholicism' was real enough but lonely too. It collapsed before the ultramontanist imposed during the long period of Manning's rule. Priests wore buckles on their shoes to demonstrate their *Romanità*. Anti-intellectualism became *de rigueur* and claimed evangelical support: it was a way of expressing the Church's mission to the poorest. The touchstone for catholicity was support for the temporal power of the papacy. By 1921, writes R. J. Lahey, the policy of the English Catholic Church could be summed up under three heads: 'the strengthening and expansion of its own structures, the securing of an increased measure of recognition in English Catholic life, and the attraction of new members to its ranks, primarily from the Church of England'.

Yet all along there were stirrings of new life. Nicholas Lash attempts to show that the 'Modernist crisis' was not an unmitigated disaster, but that it marked the start of a 'rich and fruitful renaissance of Catholic life, thought and spirituality, which came near to fruition in the 1960s'. Lahey shows that Cardinal Bourne, contrary to popular belief, was not wholly opposed to the Malines conversations, and even proposed that they be continued on English soil. Adrian (*In Filial Disobedience*) Hastings takes one on a terrifying

journey through the 1930s when to be a Catholic writer was to be a Catholic apologist, but when, nevertheless, an articulate laity began to emerge.

But how fragile and blighted it was. 'No sane and instructed man', thundered *The Tablet* as late as February 1939, 'would hesitate to prefer Fascism to Communism' (not a point brought up in the obituaries of Douglas Woodruff), and Catholics were exhorted 'not to join or encourage this anti-Fascist crusade'. Bernard Sharratt reminds us of what happened—at least as reflected in the pages of *Herder Correspondence*—in the 1960s, and thus one reaches the safe haven of the present when all is anti-ultramontane sweetness and liberal light. At least among the denizens of St Edmund's House.

Throughout the book there hovers the shade of Newman. One quotation from him unifies the whole enterprise. Contrasting his own situation with that of medieval theologians who would be challenged by their peers, Newman wrote:

'Now if I a private priest, put anything into print, Propaganda answers me at once. How can I fight with such a chain on my arm? It is like the Persians driven to fight under the lash'.

Mgr Sweeney at St Edmund's House substituted the long leash for the lash, and this volume is evidence of the success of his method.

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

THE VEDIC EXPERIENCE, by Raimundo Panikkar. *DLT*. 1977. pp. xxxviii + 937 £20

This massive anthology of the Vedas is intended, as the subtitle warns us, "for modern man and contemporary celebration". That is to say, it is not presented as an academic introduction to a body of classical Sanskrit literature, but as a monument of the human spirit, interpreted as an authentic and abiding expression of something that modern man can make his own and use as an aid and inspiration in his own contemporary exploration of and celebration of the mystery of life. Indologists must judge how far Panikkar's presentation is fair to the sources and how accurate his translation of the texts are, but a merely academic response to this

book would be unfair to its declared purpose. Speaking simply for myself, with no professional competence in Indology, I found that the pre-Upanishadic Vedic texts were beginning to make sense and to appeal to me in a way I have not found them do in previous anthologies and introductions. Panikkar very deliberately does not follow the main road of neo-Vedantism, and his selection of texts is biased away from the Upanishads and the Gita in favour of the older texts, and this allows him to present a far more complex and convincing picture of Indian religious thought and experience than is to be met with in most books on the subject. He