

*ipso facto* be the best stylist, and so on. Reflect how frigid and inept was the art of the Catacombs. Yet did ever faith more abound?

Eric Gill, when asked why our churches are so ugly, used to retort with another question: 'Why are your drawing-rooms ugly?', implying that art is a *social phenomenon*: not a root, but a fruit. We cannot have the fruit without the tree. Forty years ago, J. M. Synge wrote: 'In these days poetry is usually a flower of evil or good; but it is the timber of poetry that wears most surely, and there is no timber that has not strong roots among the clay and worms'. What is lacking to our churches is the timber of art. And timber cannot be improvised. What afforestation is to timber, preaching the Gospel is to art. Individual piety may give us occasional religious art. Only a lived liturgy can give us sacred art. For as art is a social expression, so liturgy is social prayer.

If sacred art is to be reborn among us, we must breathe the faith; spread the Gospel; live the liturgy, ponder the rubrics; test the needful; eschew the superfluous; reject the unworthy; bear with the inadequate; discipline the useful; consecrate the good.

'L'art', wrote Maurice Denis, 'est la sanctification de la Nature' Art is the hallowing of Nature. Sacred art is the hallowing of society

DESMOND CHUTE.

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## OBITER

THE CENTENARY OF THE LONDON ORATORY is an event of much more than local or even of ecclesiastical importance. The church itself, a walk round which, it has been said, is an adequate substitute for a trip to Italy for those unable to find the fare, is an oasis in the wilderness of Kensington. But more substantial even than the marbles is the achievement of the Fathers who, in a hundred years, have enriched English Catholic life with their special grace, their lightness of touch which by no means excludes a complete firmness of grasp. Indeed of all Catholic motives of credibility offered to public view in London the Oratory remains the most manifest, and yet its secret, rooted in the exquisite spirit of St Philip Neri, escapes the casual observer. The fashionable weddings and the intricate music give place to the popular nightly services, to the exercises of the Little Oratory, to the ceaseless care for souls which makes the Oratory the most accessible of havens for awkward converts and for penitents who seek absolution out of hours. A hundred years so immensely rich in spiritual reward deserves acknowledgment, and this is now available in *The London Oratory, 1849-1949* (distributed by the C.T.S., 7s.6d.). Embellished with decorations baroque and nostalgic, this illustrated record has all the Oratorian

modesty and much of its humour. From the early days in the Strand, with Fr Faber 'walking down the street in my habit and dispelling invincible ignorance wherever I go', to our own times, less exhilarating but even in greater need of redemption, the story is one for gratitude.

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THE CHURCH AND THE WORKERS is the theme of a new number (41) of *Fetes et Saisons* (1s.0d. from Blackfriars Publications). Once more the accustomed skill of the editors is applied to an urgent theme, one whose meaning is better appreciated in France than anywhere else. Much of the French writing on the workers' apostolate is hard to come by, and in this excellently illustrated number one can find a readable summary of what the problem is, and how heroic are the efforts being made to resolve it. But England is not far behind. We can welcome the new Y.C.W. monthly paper *Young Worker* (2d.) which has the air of a professional in its layout and pictures. It sold in tens of thousands when it first appeared on May Day—a most fitting and successful 'first night'.

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BLESSED MARTIN OF PORRES is the subject of two articles in a recent number of *The Pylon*, the one by Fr Thomas McGlynn, O.P. (whose own excellent wood-carving of Blessed Martin is reproduced), the other by Fr Aelwin Tindal-Atkinson, O.P., giving an account of his recent visit with the Dominican Master General to South Africa in connection with the canonisation process. 'Devotion to Blessed Martin now forms a rallying point of union for all Catholics, since by his mixed stock he belongs to every living element in the population of South Africa. . . . His power is manifest wherever the tangled problems of racial conflict are uppermost: his healing hand is bringing favour after favour to those who call upon him, especially in cases of grave illness. He is helping thousands in South Africa today.'

At Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffordshire, a 'Blessed Martin Centre' has been set up to assist the cause of Blessed Martin's canonisation. From that address (4d. post free) may be obtained *Our Friend Martin*, a lively life of the Dominican lay-brother by Fr Giles Black, O.P. Blessed Martin is certainly a 'saint for today' and one who should have a special appeal for a nation with large responsibilities among coloured people. For the English Dominican Province, with its missions in the West Indies and in South Africa, he is a providentially appropriate patron, and one may hope that the great increase of devotion to him may be but an anticipation of his canonisation in the Holy Year of 1950.

THE HOLY YEAR is being prepared for in this country by a General Mission. In France, more specifically, the Bishops have ordered that 1949 should be a 'Marian Year', and *La Vie Spirituelle* (May) has made its contribution with a special number devoted to 'The Canticle of our Lady and the Church'. Among several articles of great interest Père Daniélou's study of 'The typology of Woman in the Old Testament' is notable. Woman is for the Bible, and for the Fathers, first of all a figure of eschatological meaning; then she is seen as a figure of the Church, and, finally, of our Lady. Père Daniélou's argument is, it need hardly be said, fortified by wide patristic quotation, and concludes:

It was left to later times to have access to the mystery of our Lady. But all the same this mystery depends on the totality of biblical and ecclesiastical tradition. And it belongs to the deepest level of the Christian mystery itself. The journey of the soul goes too by way of meditation on the great truths, from eschatology to the Church—and it is the Church that leads the soul to Mary.

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HEILAND. For a long time the editor of *Heiland* has been working in the library of Banneux, where the collection of books on our Lady ranks second only to that of Rome. Some of the results of his reading are given in the May number of *Heiland*, after a discussion of the theological and devotional questions raised by the appearances of our Lady during the last century. He provides valuable, not to say startling, information about her latest reported appearances—firstly, her appearance in Lithuania in 1943 which occurred several times during the celebration of Mass; secondly, the events in the Carmel at Lipa in the Philippines from September to November 1948; lastly, he includes a description of the tremendous devotion caused by the popularity of the Miraculous Medal in Brazil and the extraordinary happenings at Urucaína.

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HERDER KORRESPONDENZ: Particularly striking for an English reader are the articles in Herder Korrespondenz upon the position of the Evangelical Church in Germany. Works and essays by Bishop Stählin, Bishop Dibelius, Ernst Käsemann and Hans Asmussen, which have appeared recently, show how far the Evangelical Church has moved away from the traditional Protestant position and come very near to what we should call the Anglo-Catholic position in this country. A disturbing feature, however, is the regularity with which our Lady is treated as a stumbling block. All of which, taken in conjunction with Ernst's writings in *Heiland*, betokens that this is the age of Mary and that true devotion to Christ will come through true devotion to her.

ELIOT AND YOUTH. 'Je suppose que le quatrième quatuor, *Little Gidding*, porte le nom d'un petit garçon cher à T. S. Eliot. A ce petit garçon, l'auteur veut léguer trois pensées: que la vie est dure, qu'elle est composée d'échecs et qu'elle est sans cesse un recommencement. Ce qui compte, c'est le feu brûle et la rose fleurisse.' —*Etudes*, Decembre 1948.

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## CROSS OF JERUSALEM

BLACKFRIARS for May contained an eloquent appeal from Mr Victor Gollancz for the refugees, mainly Arab, of Palestine. Even before he wrote a way had been found, in the Holy Places themselves, of bringing such an appeal, under the sign of the Cross, to the attention of thousands to whom the facts are unknown and written appeals are as closed books. The Belgian Mission for the Help of Refugees in Palestine began a way of the Cross upon the *Via Dolorosa* that should be continued from Calvary to the whole Christian world. They made a great wooden Cross, with a relic inlaid of the True Cross. After its way to Calvary on Good Friday it was taken from Jerusalem to Beyrout, and then to Rome (where it received the Holy Father's blessing), to France, and to Belgium. On the fifth of this month (July) it arrives at Dover, to be carried by way of Canterbury, London, Birmingham and Lancashire, and so to Ireland: from there it goes to the United States. It will be carried as were the crosses to Walsingham last year, and set up in Church and Town Hall wherever possible. Everywhere it is to be hoped that in the shadow of this Cross Christians throughout the land will turn to prayer and penance, on behalf of that torn Holy Land which so unhappily symbolises the torn world of man's present distress; and that they will not stop at prayer and penance, but that these will be the means for sanctifying and making divine the practical help of almsgiving for the refugees.

The Holy Father has not ceased to appeal to our Christian conscience in this matter. Two encyclical letters have been issued. He wrote in the first, last October, of 'the sorrow which is kept alive in our soul by the thought that in the land in which our Lord Jesus Christ shed his blood to bring redemption and salvation to all mankind, the blood of man continues to flow; and that . . . men continue to fight and to increase the distress of the unfortunate and the fear of the terrorised, while thousands of refugees, homeless and driven, wander far from their fatherland in search of shelter and food'. There is no easy solution to the problem of Palestine. We in this country know that well enough. But the Pope reminds us of what all can do. 'Convinced of the insufficiency