

## OTHER WORKS

LA VIE DU PETIT ST PLACIDE (Desclée de Brouwer; 60 belg. francs) is told in 104 delightful charcoal drawings, somewhat reminiscent of the work of Thomas Derrick, by a Benedictine nun, Soeur Geneviève Gallois, O.S.B. The saint is seen to enter the order as a child under St Benedict himself, but before he dies he visits an exhibition of abstract art. 'When God who is Master of Arts', he says, 'and the Father of good sense wishes to reveal to us something of the ineffable Abstract, he begins by putting on the Concrete, and that is the Incarnation.' There is much to please the eye and the mind in this concrete book, which Marcelle Auclair in the preface calls 'un traité d'oraison par l'image'.

Miss Elizabeth C. Fenn had the fruitful thought to translate selections from the *Meditations and Devotions* of Fénelon (Mowbrays; 3s. 6d.), and though the thought is clothed in different garments from those of St Bernard and St Albert the Great who are listed in the same *Fleur de Lys* series of the publishers, it retains the same essential simplicity of a saintly author. The majority of these selections is in the form of meditated prayers, but they can well be used also for brief spiritual reading.

THE NEWLY CANONIZED ST PIUS X had already found an English biographer as long ago as 1918. There must be a large number of people who know Pius X principally through that straightforward account by F. A. Forbes. It is now republished in a revised form to herald the Canonization: *Pope St Pius X* by F. A. Forbes. (Burns Oates; 5s.)

PÈRE LAURENTIN, Professor of Theology at Angers, has written a well documented and profound little book on our Lady and the Mass. This is not merely a work of devotion, for the author discusses Mary's part in the redemption with calm theological insight. Moreover, the book is written as a contribution to the Peace of the World—a refreshing book to come across, as there are so few of its kind in these days when aggression and war remain uppermost in our minds: *Notre Dame et La Messe au service de la Paix du Christ*, by René Laurentin. (Desclée; 36 belg. francs.)

## EXTRACTS

AN International Theological Congress was held in Salamanca from the 29th of April to the 8th of May, to celebrate the seventh centenary of the University. To facilitate the working of the extensive programme the Congress was divided into four main sections: Scripture, Philosophy and Theology, Spirituality and Canon Law.

The section on spirituality had for its main theme the present state of spiritual studies in the world, and the conferences included discussions

on methodology in the study of ascetics and mystics, the use of and definition of terms, the principles of the spiritual life and their development together with its various forms. The psychological aspects of the religious life were also discussed, together with the history of Spanish spirituality from the Middle Ages to the present day. Papers were also read on the state of spiritual studies in other countries and also among the various religious orders. The whole idea of this section of the Congress was informative, i.e. to get a general picture of the present state of spiritual studies as a preliminary to further investigation and discussion. In this sense it was a great success, and the volume containing the various papers which is due for publication this year should be of great value for the mass of detailed information it contains.

Perhaps one of the most important results of the Congress was the obvious need it revealed of clear definitions of the terms most commonly used in ascetical and mystical theology. Obviously, it would be difficult—if not impossible—to reach agreement at the moment on what scholastics call the 'real' definitions of such terms, but a start could be made with nominal definitions, both from the etymological aspect and also the historical. The work implied would be very great, but it should be possible, given the co-operation of individuals, societies, religious orders and the frequent reunion of international Congresses on this point. Some members suggested the formation of an international society for the study and co-ordination of information on matters pertaining to spiritual theology.

The programme of the spirituality section was a heavy one, which limited somewhat the time given to discussion. This was a defect which might have been remedied by omitting the reading of the papers concerned with the work done by the religious orders. Such papers, of incalculable value for the published work, had to be given in the form of a summary in half an hour—clearly an impossible task.

The papers on the psychology of religious experience and on the adaptation of the seminary course in experimental psychology to pastoral work were extremely interesting. So, too, was the final paper on the scientific plan of an ideal spiritual theology.

DAVID GREENSTOCK, D.D.

AT THE SAME time and place the Dominican editors of 'Reviews of Spirituality' met for the fourth time. As at the previous meeting, their agreement centred on two main points:

- (a) Each Review must be adapted to the needs of its own public; it must with the grace of God and under the authority of the editor's superiors determine freely its own 'politics'.
- (b) All the Reviews share the same ideals especially regarding the

doctrinal and thomist teaching applied to the spiritual life, and the Dominican and yet *catholic* direction of their aims; that is, they call on contributors and address readers of all 'the spiritual families'. The Editors took occasion of their meeting on Spanish soil to speak of the great work and saintly life of Padre Arinterro, O.P., founder of the Spanish spiritual review *La Vida Sobrenatural*, and engaged to make his great contribution to mystical theology better known and to advance his 'cause' for beatification.

## RELIGIOUS SCORE-CARD

THE Swiss review *Orienteirung* (January, 1954) gives an interesting list of members of Religious Orders and Congregations of men, from which we draw a selection.

|                                   | 1940   | 1952   | % Increase |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|------------|
| Jesuits ... ..                    | 24,198 | 30,014 | 24.7       |
| Franciscans ... ..                | 22,788 | 24,993 | 9.6        |
| Capuchins ... ..                  | 12,828 | 14,185 | 10.1       |
| Benedictines ... ..               | 9,249  | 10,500 | 13.6       |
| Dominicans ... ..                 | 6,074  | 8,543  | 40.5       |
| Conventuals ... ..                | 2,422  | 3,650  | 51.2       |
| Discalced Carmelites ... ..       | 2,748  | 3,433  | 25.4       |
| Trappists ... ..                  | 2,877  | 3,420  | 18.7       |
| Carmelites ... ..                 | 1,710  | 2,134  | 24.9       |
| Salesians ... ..                  | 10,656 | 16,910 | 58.7       |
| Redemptorists ... ..              | 6,277  | 7,850  | 19.2       |
| Brothers of Christian Schools ... | 14,353 | 14,747 | 2.7        |

With two exceptions there was an increase in those twelve years ranging from 2.7 per cent to 799.1 per cent. The total number of men in Religious Orders in 1952 was 114,508, showing an increase of 19.13 per cent since 1940. Similarly of men in Congregations, 81,013 with an increase of 33.54 per cent, and in Religious Institutes, 31,986 with an increase of 15.73 per cent. Progress, therefore, seems to have been assisted by the war years.

IN MAY we received by the same post two issues of *Vita Cristiana* (Florence), being the January-February and the March-April numbers, with a message from the Editor to the readers.

With this issue *Vita Cristiana* comes once more into the hands of all its old subscribers, with the hope of being well received and made known to other friends.

A review with such a happy and contemplative indifference to time and able to exercise the second of the theological virtues with such equanimity deserves every success in the kingdom of spiritual reviews. May it long continue to ride above the mad rush of contemporaneity.