

eremetical and apostolic and missionary life which St Thomas praises as the highest vocation because it approximates nearest to the life of our Lord. Brigid is the spiritual mother of that world-wide type and phenomenon—the Irish nun, one of whose characteristics is (like Brigid's) to make a recreation of hospitality. Miss Curtayne creates a real atmosphere and enables us to admire her great subject through a golden haze of poetry and legend.

BROTHER ANDRE. By Katherine Burton. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 7s. 6d.)

The story of a Canadian lay-brother of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, door-keeper for a religious community and college in Montreal, who by his own zeal and energy built a basilica in honour of St Joseph, acquired the reputation for working miracles and died over ninety years of age and was given the funeral honours of a saint. Brother Andre has become a popular figure in the memories of Canadians and this book will contribute to the spread of his growing cultus.

EIGHT LITTLE OFFICES FOR TERTIARIES OF ST DOMINIC. Published by Third Order of St Dominic. (141 E. 65th Street, New York; 1 dollar.)

Dominican Tertiaries may, for serious reasons, adopt any one of these little offices in place of their usual obligation. For many this could be an admirable way of by-passing staleness in prayer. For all they are an admirable book of Dominican devotion, in as good a version as can anywhere be had. The hymn versions are taken from Hymns of the Dominican Missal and Breviary by Aquinas Byrnes, O.P.; the Psalms and Canticles are from the Confraternity version. But a book of this quality and practical usefulness should surely be bound by something better than staples.



EXTRACTS

COPIES of the *American Benedictine Review*, published quarterly by the American Benedictine Academy, Newark, New Jersey (\$5.00 per annum), have recently reached the Editor's table for the first time. Each copy costs in English money about 10 shillings, and the 128 well-printed pages are certainly worth the money. The Spring 1955 number includes a happy and spirited article by Abbot Justin McCann on 'Private Revelations'. The example he takes is that of the efficacy of the Nine First Fridays revealed to St Margaret Mary, and the problem raised is that of the decision of the Council of Trent which declared that

If anyone shall say that he will assuredly have, with absolute and infallible certainty, that great gift of Final Perseverance, unless he have learnt this by special revelation, let him be anathema.

Abbot McCann shows that people are free to accept or reject the devout belief in the 'first Fridays' by outlining the attitude of three priests. He concludes his study by explaining the reaction of these three fictitious characters:

Father Albert disapproves of fostering frequent Communion by promising Final Perseverance. It is not said in so many words, but it rather looks as though he would refrain from preaching the devotion. Fr Albert would be on very strong ground if the Great Promise implied infallible certainty. . . . However, I find that the modern exponents of the Great Promise, taking note of Trent's anathema, explain that what is promised is not infallible certainty but moral certainty. . . . Must we allow for a failure on the Nine Fridays service, some accident or other which will upset the whole programme? If this be a correct account of the situation, I would agree that it is a reasonable one, yet I cannot help feeling that it much reduces the impressiveness of the Great Promise.

Father Anthony is an unsophisticated sort of person, troubled by none of the questions that we have raised. He takes the revelation at its face value. He does not distinguish between public and private revelations, nor between kinds of certainty. He believes simply that God has promised the gift of Final Perseverance to all who make the Nine Fridays. He would have no difficulty in preaching an effective sermon.

Father Andrew, on the other hand, would not be so effective. He is not, of course, obliged to believe the revelation and its promise, so that his course of action is quite legitimate. We cannot fairly construe his 'prudent silence' as any sort of disrespect or contempt. But I fear that it would disappoint the people and detract from the effectiveness of his preaching. There is a distinct warning for him in the sad history of the Ten Tuesdays. When I was young . . . if you liked it, there was the devotion of the Ten Tuesdays, invented by an Italian nun of the seventeenth century. The idea was a pious one, and the prayers quite suitable; but two things were lacking: (1) the devotion was not supported by any revelation; (2) no special benefits were promised, least of all Final Perseverance. You got nothing out of it beyond the ordinary rewards of prayer. The Ten Tuesdays languished and died.

These devotions and revelations are often of great value to the devout, but their efficacy remains subjective and not universal. The universal and objective sources of grace must always be given precedence.