



New York—(RNS)—At least eight biographies of Pope John XXIII are scheduled for publication this spring and two more will be released in the fall. Shown here are those by the New York publishing firms of Herder & Herder, P. J. Kennedy, and Thomas Nelson. Among other books to be published soon are those by Farrar, Straus & Cudahy; McBride, Summitt, Studio; Macmillan and Hawthorn.

BOOK SHELF

Before The Trappists

By SISTER MARGARET TERESA
Nazareth College

"The Secular Journal of Thomas Merton," 1946-41. Farrar, Straus '59, 270 pp., illustrated. \$3.75.

This volume is available to readers at the Catholic Evidence Library, Columbus Civic Center.

The bright jacket, the various snapshots of the author cheerfully posed as "the thinker," the free right-hand margin of every page, all cry out youth.

A tissue shadow-photo of the monk of today falls lightly against the opening pages, like the touch of grace so often recorded in this journal, the love of Mary just flowering, the intimations of priesthood that glint in racing sympathies and irrespressible one-line sermons.

But these young chapters, though the priest-to-be is evident in them, are not really sermons. They are informal essays, spontaneous and flowing richly out of a background of travel and reading, yet often of a surprising point and finish.

Thomas Merton battles entertainingly with himself about theater, charity, ignorance, Thomas Mann, war, Wordsworth, haste, holiness, Dylan Thomas and Dante and Hell and other things.

He plunges deep, from any handily philosophical springboard he dives delightfully, and comes up splashing off bright opinions.

True cities, he says, "in the real sense that Mediterranean, and Levantine and perhaps Oriental cities are cities" ("There it is not the buildings that are important but the life in them, and they are... crammed with it...") are places where "proximate satisfaction for almost every order of need is immediately to be had for the asking—you chip your hands, whistle, beckon to the proper person." "Each man there can supply someone else with at least one thing he might want."

A Trappist Abbey, he decides, is an earthly paradise because work there is a form of play—"Even the strictest form of penance is a form of play, and especially the liturgy is play," because here one does things "not because they are strictly necessary but freely, and out of love"—there is a "complete metaphysical freedom from physical necessity."

His chapters on Cuba are the most apropos and the most exciting of the objective sketches. Every sense is alerted; he approaches the country and the city from the facts least conventionalized.

In this way he takes to heart both the glow and the inwardness of Spanish Catholicism, and can translate the lovely image of the Senora del Carmen, visible from afar on its cathedral tower, as any happy Cuban would translate it: he rejoices in his Mother.

Thomas Merton catches decided differences of view—this on Mother's Day, for instance: "(In) the usual North American version Mother is wrinkled and frail but brave enough to bake an apple pie at the drop

Rich Moslem Rajah Honors Our Lady

Hyderabad — (NC) — The Nizam of Hyderabad, long-time Moslem ruler here and reportedly one of the richest men in the world, broke a self-imposed retirement vow in order to pay homage to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Nizam, who was ruler of Hyderabad from 1911 until the state was merged into others in November, 1956, came out of seclusion to open a church in honor of Our Lady.

The opening ceremony was followed by the dedication, at which Archbishop Joseph Mark Gopu of Hyderabad officiated.

An admirer of Our Lady whose devotion stems from the mention of her in the Koran, the Nizam once composed a poem in her honor in Urdu, the language of most Indian Moslems. Until his retirement he used to go to the Hyderabad cathedral every year to attend the midnight Pontifical Mass on Christmas.

LENT—Daily Mass, Stations on Friday.

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Benedictine Says Sputniks Prove God Exists

Manchester, N. H. — (NC) — Russia's sputnik experts deny the existence of God, actually prove by their successful experiments that God must exist.

Benedictine Father Francis J. Steimmetz, physicist and head of St. Anselm College's physics department, said here.

Father Steimmetz disputed the widely publicized remarks by Y. T. Padever, head of Moscow's scientific-theistic section of the communist journal, "Science and Life."

"The Russian claimed that because Soviet satellites 'have neither encountered angels nor discovered a Supreme Being,' the existence of God as a religious dogma had been disproved."

"Every single experiment," Father Steimmetz declared, "has followed all the ancient and recognizable rules-of-God-physical laws for the ordinance of this universe."

"The so-called natural law, which the Creator has established for the governance of his every created object, from the tiniest subatomic particle to the largest star, has in no instance failed to operate, nor

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Methodist Bishop Says Unity, Key To Survival

Miami — (RNS) — Methodist Bishop Ivan Lee Holt of St. Louis, Mo., said here the convening of an Ecumenical Council by Pope John XXIII was prompted by the Pontiff's desire to unite all Christian bodies against the threat of world Communism.

"Apparently the Pope feels, as many of us do, that the only chance Christianity has to survive in Communist countries is to unite the strength of all the churches," he declared.

The bishop, a leader in the Protestant ecumenical movement, was in Miami for a Lenten preaching mission. He spoke at the South Miami First Methodist church.

Bishop Holt noted that Pope John's decision to call the council followed the latest Communist offensives against the Catholic Church in China and Poland.

"Indications are that the Communists aim to wipe out the Roman Church," he said, adding that the Reds also are seeking to organize all Eastern Orthodox Churches under the Moscow Patriarchate, similar to the organization of the Catholic Church under the Vatican.

The Methodist leader said Catholics and Protestants are already extending their cooperation in India, where Hinduism, instead of Communism, is a major threat to the churches.

He reported that a Catholic bishop and his two assistants sat on the platform of a large Methodist evangelistic rally in an Indian city he visited recently.

The antidote to Communism, Bishop Holt continued, must be some sort of spiritual counterforce which at the same time offers material hope for the people of underdeveloped countries coming into a period of nationalization.

He asserted that spiritual values have decreased in this country with the rise of prosperity and suggested that Americans have lost ground to the Reds because "we are as materialistic as they are."

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