

Cardinal's insights, humor enliven memories

Memories & Hopes, translated by Elena French; Veritas Publications, (Dublin, 1992); 395 pages.

By Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

Memories & Hopes is the compelling story of Leon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens, one of this century's outstanding Catholic churchmen. The book is really more a description of episodes taken from his diary than a strict autobiography. Nonetheless, it is a fascinating book with something for everyone.

If you are looking for a scholarly exposé concerning the preparation and acceptance of Vatican II's documents, *Memories & Hopes* is the book for you. The author, an intimate of Pope John XXIII, was responsible for development of *Gaudium et Spes*.

In addition, he was one of the council's four moderators (the only survivor). He explains in a lucid fashion the basis of the thrust of the two major

documents, *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* — the former the church's looking at herself and the latter looking out on the world.

The cardinal in a few pages makes it easy for those still mystified by Vatican II to grasp the beauty and significance of the work accomplished 30 years ago.

If one is not particularly attracted by an analysis of Vatican II's theology, the reader will find interesting anecdotes rivalling anything found in *Reader's Digest*.

Cardinal Suenens is our day's pre-eminent ecumenist. He became close friends with thousands of non-Catholics and received countless accolades due to his deep concern that the Body of Christ be restored to its pristine state.

The book is filled with stories of his preaching, dialoguing and socializing with people of every belief or lack

thereof. His ecumenical journeys are interlaced with personal vignettes. He describes in detail his being hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the first Catholic prelate to have stayed overnight since Cardinal Pole was ejected by Henry VIII. As the author left the manse, he noted Cardinal Pole's portrait and a picture of the Blessed Virgin fronted by a beautiful display of flowers.

When the German commander came to Louvain during World War II to censure the rector, Cardinal Suenens, the official meeting was preceded by an hourlong ecumenical discussion. The officer, who happened to be Lutheran, was well aware of the cardinal's interest and both deplored the business which brought them together.

Cardinal Suenens is a strong advocate of the Charismatic renewal, which he also sees as an instrument of ecumenism. He must be an enigma to his critics for his lifelong advocacy of the Legion of Mary. Those who find the Legion outdated must read the author's words about a society which has had a place both in the pre-Vatican and post-Vatican era.

As an architect of Vatican II, Cardinal Suenens fears that forces are at work to reverse the historic council's many advances. The failure to advance the concept of collegiality distresses him as one example. He quotes with approval a French politician: "The decision-making process is more important than the decision itself."

His knack for presenting challenging

opinions in a spirit of charity is edifying. When Pope Paul VI rejected the suggestion for an International Theological Commission in 1967, with the words, "All our ills today were caused by theologians," Cardinal Suenens won the day when he said: "All the ills were caused by third-rate theologians; we need good theologians to counteract these."

The author's humor is evident in his reporting on Cardinal Spellman. The latter welcomed Cardinal Suenens to New York on one occasion when the media was desperate for a quote from the New York archbishop. In answering a reporter's inquiry about how well the American knew the Belgian, Cardinal Spellman answered: "We discussed all sorts of things at the Council and we never once agreed."

In a subsequent paragraph it was revealed that Cardinal Spellman refused to accompany his guest to the United Nations for the scheduled address. The reason: "As a truly patriotic American he had always refused to set a foot in that building."

This is an extremely interesting book, which I recommend without reservation. The reader cannot help but be inspired by this holy, humble person who has given his life to the church and has labored unstintingly to bring the church to the world.

He is confident of success because the Holy Spirit continues to guide the church and moreover dwells in every believer's soul. This is consistent with his earlier work, *A New Pentecost*.



The Walt Disney Company
A magical matchmaking genie looks on as his master, Aladdin, and his monkey, Abu, take Princess Jasmine on a romantic carpet ride in *Aladdin*.

Aladdin provides fun for all ages

By Gerri Pare
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — By heavily featuring Robin Williams' zany humor within a traditional fairy tale, this year's Disney animated holiday entry, *Aladdin*, is reaching for adults and children.

The result is animation operating on two levels, where kiddies can get caught up in the fanciful story of young Aladdin and his magic lamp while grown-ups follow Williams as the voice of the genie doing his non-stop celebrity impersonations that are matched to lightning-fast sight gags.

Although the centuries-old fairy tale and the crazed comic sensibilities of the 1990s don't always mesh smoothly, it's a treat either way.

Produced and directed by John Musker and Ron Clements, the Disney animation is a delight, with wonderfully inventive use of motion, camera angles and perspective.

The soundtrack includes five original songs that may not measure up to those in last year's memorable

Beauty and the Beast, but certainly are highlights in the movie. Particularly winsome is the outrageous "Friend Like Me," followed by a show-stopping number, "Prince Ali," both performed by Williams.

But, meanwhile, the Arabian Nights story of young Aladdin (voice of Scott Weinger) in love with Princess Jasmine (voice of Linda Larkin) — whom the Sultan's evil vizier (voice of Jonathan Freeman) plans to marry once he's wrested the genie away from Aladdin — zips right along.

This is a sweet fairy-tale romance with spirited adventures, the best of them set in a fearsome cave whose entrance turns into a giant monster's head. Luckily there's a flying carpet on hand ready to carry Aladdin and his mischievous monkey (voice of Frank Welker) through their perilous predicaments.

The U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-I — general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is G — general audiences.



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