

FEATURE

Notre Dame head shares 'A View from the Dome'

Monk's Reflections: A View from the Dome by Reverend Edward A. Malloy, C.S.C. Andrews McMeel Publishing (Kansas City, Mo., 1999, 2002). 216 pp., \$14.95.

By E. Leo McMannus
Contributing writer

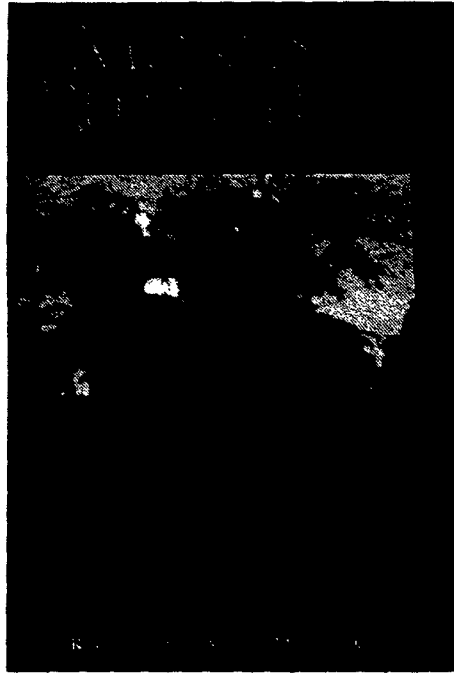
Unaccustomed as most of us are to while the time with a college or university president, confabulating with him or her easily, comfortably and familiarly, we are content to experience vicariously what it's like to face the many challenges that confront such a responsible person only by reading what he or she has written. For most of us, it is not a *viva voce* relationship, if it exists at all, but a literary one.

So, for those of us with an interest in literature, perhaps our first awareness of some of the challenges of the university itself came by reading the limpid prose of the celebrated university lectures of an English priest-convert who, 152 years ago this November, was appointed president of the Catholic University of Ireland.

John Henry Newman, the Catholic priest imported from what he called euphemistically the "sister island" into Ireland at the critical post-famine period, had an almost insurmountable task of rallying contentious Irish bishops, who had their own ideas of what an education for the Catholic laity should be, and of contending with an impoverished Irish economy.

Father Edward Malloy, affectionately known as "Monk," the author of *Monk's Reflections: A View from the Dome*, follows a distinguished list of presidents at Notre Dame University. Founded in 1842, the university today is, in the not immodest words of the *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, "the most famous Catholic university in the world."

Monk Malloy, of course, makes no such



claim, although he is rightfully proud of the development of his university. This slender volume of his ruminations is addressed to a wide audience of "other university administrators, who may face challenges similar to mine, and to students, parents, and alumni, both of Notre Dame and other institutions."

Because the "subway alumni" of Notre Dame, attracted by the "Fighting Irish," are very extensive, the potential audience, unlike that for Newman's celebrated lectures, is almost incalculable.

Father Malloy makes no pretense for this work. It is not intended as a scholarly publication, with the usual apparatus of a bibliography, index and impressive footnotes or endnotes. It is, simply, what he entitles it — his own thoughts and reflections, well

meditated upon, honest and widely varied, richly disparate, presented in a style that is friendly, familiar and even chatty for a university president. It is unpretentious Monk: What you see is what you get.

The volume consists of eight interesting chapters, following the briefest acknowledgments and a succinct four-page introduction, that are divided into three parts: "The University President," "Academia and the Life of the Mind" and "The Collegiate World."

His very first sentence expresses his appreciation of the "opportunity to share some of my experiences and considered reflections about the state of, and issues facing, American higher education. I draw upon my firsthand involvement as student, teacher, dorm person, pastor and administrator. In particular I hope to provide some sense of what the world looks like from my desk as president of the University of Notre Dame," where he has presided since he was elected the 16th president in 1986.

His world, like Newman's, is much changed since Father Edward Sorin, with a group of Holy Cross brothers, founded a "university" that was primarily a high school in its beginning, with a few college courses thrown in. Unlike Newman's uni-

versity that was built in the heart of fashionable Dublin, Sorin's was located in the hinterland of developing Indiana.

Today, Newman's Catholic University, by that name, is gone; Sorin's Notre Dame, however, from its original location in the boondocks, "enjoys the largest endowment of any Catholic institution in the country, and a degree of academic prominence and financial stability that qualifies it as one of America's great universities."

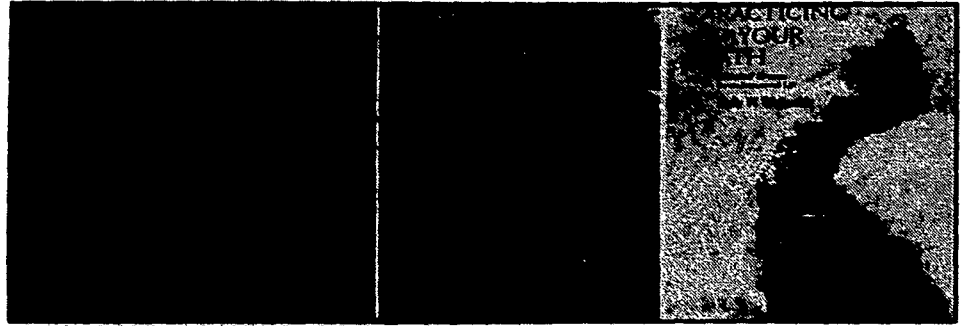
One of the challenges that Newman faced in his relationship with his sponsors, the Irish hierarchy, Monk enunciates in his final chapter, "Religious Mission and Identity."

"The university," writes Father Malloy, "must be preserved as a place where unpopular opinions can be expressed, where inquiry can take surprising directions, and where the opportunity for more appropriate articulation of the life of faith can be pursued with vigor and integrity."

After all, the Catholic institution is not a super-seminary, but a university. "Yet it must also be a full-fledged Catholic university." Preserving that creative tension is not always easy.

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Books for spiritual growth

By Sister Mona Castelazo, CSJ
Catholic News Service

What Brings You to Life?, *Practicing Your Path* and *The Sacred Art of Listening* are designed for individual meditation, retreat and spiritual growth. The first two, also appropriate for groups, contain suggested activities and points for reflection.

What Brings You to Life? by Beverly Eanes, Lee Richmond and Jean Link attempts to answer the title question through accounts of their personal experiences and statements of other women engaged in connecting to the "trueself."

The authors use quotations from Madeleine L'Engle, Kathleen Norris, Annie Dillard, Robert Wicks, Ray Bradbury and others to illustrate their points. For example, on the importance of responding flexibly to the rhythm of life, a character from the film "The Next Karate Kid" said: "Never trust the spiritual master who cannot dance." On women's gifts and innate abilities, Ann Richards said: "Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did. She just did it backwards and in high heels."

The authors emphasize soul play, dance, touch, love, prayers, hope and healing for women of all ages who will find helpful material for realizing what is personally life-giving and practical suggestions of ways to "choose life" for themselves.

Practicing Your Path is a series of seven one-day retreats. Author Holly Whitcomb believes that the spiritual life calls for continual practice. The retreats focus on Sabbath practices, hospitality, intercession, fasting, stewardship, vocation and accountability. "Unflinching uselessness" directed toward "transforming human doing into human being" characterizes the Sabbath retreat. The day on fasting emphasizes that we do not confine fasting to food and drink but to TV, shopping, busyness — "anything that makes us crazy, driven or obsessed."

Themes, readings, prayers, songs and

optional activities are supplied for morning, afternoon and closing sessions. In addition to Scripture readings, she includes a meditation of her own for each retreat, sharing her own experiences and insights. In the meditation for the accountability retreat she advocates the practice of consulting a regular spiritual director, one who "is a midwife or stagehand ushering in an awareness of God's activity and guidance."

The Sacred Art of Listening offers 40 short chapters on "deep listening," a spiritual practice which Kay Lindahl believes strengthens our relationship with God, our souls and others. Each includes a page of mandala-like artwork to contemplate. The chapters' brevity and variety make the book suitable for daily reading and reflection.

Lindahl believes that listening extends beyond words to "a way of being in the world." She includes facts gleaned from her work as founder of the Listening Center in California. One example: The average person speaks at the rate of 120 to 150 words a minute, but the brain can process more than 500 in the same minute. Therefore, it takes great patience to remain present and responsive in listening to another.

Listening topics include awareness, appreciation, understanding, change, vision, openness and creativity. Some forms of listening — to music, chanting or reading — lead to the deeper silence of contemplation: "The word is born in silence, and silence is the deepest response to the word." (Henri J.M. Nouwen) Other forms lead to insight, perhaps speech, as evidenced by a Quaker saying, "It is a sin to speak, if you're not moved to speak. It is also a sin not to speak, if you're moved to speak." In any case, Lindahl believes that listening comes first since it cultivates an "inner harmony" without which we cannot give others our presence and undivided attention.

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