

SEEK GOD EVERYWHERE: REFLECTIONS ON THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS. By Anthony de Mello, S.J. Edited by Gerald O'Collins, Daniel Kendall, and Jeffrey LaBelle. New York: Doubleday, 2010. Pp. xix + 199. \$14.

This book, highly recommended to anyone interested in the *Exercises*, contains deeply welcome reflections on the *Exercises* by de Mello from July to November 1975 to a Sadhana (“Way to God”) Group of seven Jesuit priests and seven religious sisters training to become spiritual guides and directors of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The text, recorded and transcribed (with carbon copies) by the members, was made available 30 years later by one member: a bundle of faded papers requiring many hours of careful rehabilitation by the editors. The text comes not as a dry and scholarly analysis of the *Exercises*, but as personal reflections on the riches of all four weeks by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher and trained psychotherapist who in the process reveals his own interior.

Readers of deM.’s earlier works will be unsurprised by the unexpected. To those discouraged by sin in the First Week, deM. stresses that God loves us just as we are (sinners), concluding, therefore, that God finds us lovely and loveable. DeM. also finds the positive in the negative: “Without sin we would not feel the ecstasy, the agony of God’s love” (32). “The happy fool carries his cross and dances” (57). Without fear and without wandering astray, deM. introduces sacred passages from other Asian religions that give us new insights into Christianity.

DeM. boldly asserts that, for Ignatius, saving one’s soul means spiritual growth and development, not salvation from hell. In various ways deM. states that God calls us personally, commanding us to give ourselves freely and solely to God for his glory, to desire solely what Christ desires, to choose solely what Christ chooses. God does not call in general but “grips us and wants us. Our vocation is never for ourselves but always for others. . . . We have got to hear that voice and follow God, wherever he leads” (91). Searching the depths of the third degree of humility, deM. comments, “‘mortification’ comes from the word *mors*, which is not mutilation but death, a death achieved in love. . . . Mortification built not on love but on self-mutilation is very dangerous” (92–93).

DeM. enthusiastically explains the Ignatian “application of the senses,” a method of prayer freeing the mind by setting aside the intellect, letting the senses run free, letting seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling encounter the mystery, feeling the experiences of body and heart.

Regarding desolation, deM. asserts that God does not cause desolations, which are “evil and to be avoided” (118), but allows them for their possible good effects. I would say rather that when God withdraws God’s felt presence and one feels separated from God, the loudest voice to be heard comes from the evil spirit, but God, silent, remains in charge, and desolation

surfaces as gift, an invitation from God to share God's life more deeply. Ignatius says that "desolation is meant to give us true recognition and understanding," and that we cannot on our own achieve consolation (*Spiritual Exercises* no. 322). Sin consists in separation from God, desolation in feeling separated from God. In consolation one should acknowledge the gift; in desolation one should seek out desolation's gift of pointing out the way not to go.

DeM. speaks eloquently of the Three Degrees of Humility, of being so much in love with Christ as to be totally indifferent, yet insisting that the third degree goes deeper than indifference. We need to "unself" ourselves and become new persons in Christ, asking for sorrow with Christ in sorrow, joy with Christ in joy, in loving self-identification with Jesus. "Do not try to unself the self through crucifixion: unself the self through mystical identification and love" (146).

Sharing the life of Jesus means sharing crucifixion and resurrection simultaneously. "It is a dangerous thing to participate in Holy Communion. . . . We allow ourselves to be broken and poured out" (149). "To live the Crucifixion is to live crucifixionally, but joyfully. . . . Crucifixion people are resurrection people" (151). "There is no substantial difference between the weeks. . . . Total death and new life belong in every week" (154). "In short, the fruit of these four weeks is 'it is no longer I who live but it is Christ who lives in me'" (155).

DeM. mildly points out that the Contemplation for Attaining Love does not mention Christ. After all, the Father is the Beginning and the End; the Son the Way to the Father. We give ourselves back in all things to the Father, through the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The book ends with a reflection on three levels of loving and serving God: (1) in all things—proper to a hermit, (2) in all actions—proper to a cloistered contemplative, and (3) in apostolic action—proper to Jesuits and other "apostolic" groups. In reality, does not each group have to live on each level according to their calling?

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COMMUNICATING FAITH. Edited by John Sullivan. Washington: Catholic University, 2011. Pp xxvi + 405. \$34.95.

Sullivan's compendium is a valuable theological, pastoral, and practical contribution to the Catholic Church's mission of evangelization and catechesis. For theologians, it is an excellent resource as it brings theology and pastoral practice into dialogue in terms that open up wide horizons for theologians' reflection on their primary work. For practitioners, the perspectives of an impressive variety of contributors expert in the field of