

Religious Life at the Crossroads: A School for Mystics and Prophets. By Amy Hereford, C.S.J. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013. Pp. xxiv + 206. \$20.

Religious life is dying; religious life is being born anew. These two dynamics are working simultaneously among women religious today. Hereford views this two-part reality as God's dream for religious life. In 2012 there were about 57,000 women religious in the United States, but only 3,000 (5%) were under the age of 55 (xii). The dominant cohort—those 60 to 100 years of age—have made a tremendous contribution to the church, especially to its institutions in education and hospital care, and they have been at the forefront in a faithful renewal called for by Vatican II. The challenge now is to care for these remarkable women and to celebrate their lifelong dedication. The younger cohort carries whatever future God is calling for in religious life, and they are the focus of H.'s treatise.

H. begins with a cursory history of religious life tracking the rise and fall of religious orders and congregations through the centuries, with every 400 to 500 years marking a major upheaval. We are again at such a time.

To discern the possibility of fresh initiatives, H. creatively draws on models of radical Christian community established by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (New Monasticism), Roger Schutz (Taizé), Dorothy Day (the Catholic Worker), and Jean Vanier (L'Arche). Their common threads include spirituality, community, and mission.

After a chapter creatively reimagining the future for religious life, H. concludes with a helpful chapter on mystics and prophets as two key charisms at the heart of religious life.

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The Book of Common Prayer: A Biography. By Alan Jacobs. Lives of Great Religious Books. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2013. Pp. xiii + 236. \$24.95.

The subtitle of this book—*A Biography*—gives readers an initial indication that this is not a typical study of a liturgical document. During the 450 years since the first Book of Common Prayer (BCP) was authorized in 1549, the sheer quantity of literature that it has generated is astounding. Even if we put aside the various editions that have emerged in the 30-plus provinces of the Anglican Communion, the scope of that literature has included not only commentaries but also a wide range of apologetical writings that analyze the texts and rubrics of these editions in minute detail, often from very different points of view.

By adding the subtitle, Jacobs has indicated a kind of personalization in his approach to the subject. The book does not present readers merely with data about the origins and development of the BCP, but rather places its entire story within a human framework among the people—monarchs and prelates, ordinary people, and their parish priests—whose lives shaped the context in which the prayer book developed.