

The authors of these two books represent different disciplines: two are theologians and the third a biologist. The books intersect at one point, namely, the experiential component of Marian apparitions. They are jointly reviewed here as an exercise in interdisciplinary integration, for which a need is increasingly being felt among scholarly researchers.

Fr. Rene Laurentin divides his book into four major chapters and eight appendices. With his expertise in theological investigations of Marian apparitions such as those in La Rue de Bac, Lourdes, Pontmain and El Paso, he is at his reportorial best in the second and third chapters, written partly in collaboration with Fr. Rupčić. Here more than in his other chapters, his observational data are meticulously arranged in all their significant details of times, places and relevant circumstances. A careful reader can easily enter into the atmosphere in which these emotion-packed events took place and thus be provoked to reflect into the deeper meanings of these events.

Pages 42-65 of Chapter Two give an excellent record of the interviews and character profiles of the six visionaries. The book merits a high commendation as a primary source of data even if it were limited to this section alone.

Other parts however may not merit as high a commendation. Undoubtedly, Laurentin and Rupčić are sincere in giving witness to their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Is this enough? Laurentin entitles Chapter One with the question "Are There Apparitions At Medjugorje?" and Chapter Four "Are the Apparitions Authentic?" This questioning posture gives the impression of scientific objectivity. However this impression is weakened by his belligerently affirmative answers and his reductionist — albeit unintentional — misrepresentations of terms and methodologies other than his own. He hints at conflict between "Eisenberg" [sic] and Oraison, but fails to notice a more serious conflict that seriously weakens his credibility. This can be strengthened by transcending the Aristotelian presuppositions of the "faculty psychology" that medieval theologians have uncritically adopted, and by adopting instead the neo-Thomist method of "intentionality analysis" proposed in 1971 by Bernard Lonergan in "Method in Theology."

While deferring to the final judgement of the church, he gently chides Bishop Zanic on certain points, apparently forgetting for the moment that bishops are collegially tasked with administering a sacramentum mundi whose symbols must therefore evoke credibility that is not merely ecumenical but
universalist. (He shows greater appreciation of the episcopal task in his 1987 book "A Year of Grace With Mary" where he mentions apparitions at Lourdes and Fatima but not Medjugorje.)

The ideal of universalist credibility is rising in priority. To measure up to this ideal, there is need of the higher viewpoint that can rise, as discussed by Lonergan, above the limitations of particular methodologies. Such a need may be met by considering Lyall Watson's book as an attempt at intentionality analysis of a certain type of phenomena that amaze, fascinate and mystify our human minds.

Watson sees his science of life as a contemplative sees the dynamic unity of living things — as an organicistic confirmation of a Creator — with a fascination that trembles at the brink of mystery. Using four of Carl Jung's ideas and developing these in a meditative style reminiscent of Teilhard de Chardin, he divides his book into four meditations on life: how life begins to transcend space and time, how man's conscious intentionality promotes life's survival, how life's survival includes the numinosum, and how dramatic all this can be. Each of these parts is solidly based on empirical data dramatically patterned in a Teilhardian process of analogical creativity. The result is not only aesthetically moving; it also provides a systematic infrastructure for understanding mysterious apparitions such as to satisfy the demands of Lonergan's intentionality analysis.

He mentions Marian apparitions twice and only in passing, while treating of feminine archetypes emerging in mankind's collective unconscious. His treatment is open to the influx of grace, tacitly but unmistakably. To this reviewer, childishly lusting for Marian apparitions yet constrained by adult need to evoke universalist credibility. Watson's methodology is quite promising.

Watson humorously ends his book with a humble admission of his failure to communicate the ineffable, but even this failure evokes in perceptive readers an interior desire to ride with the "lifetide"; this lifetide is the principal metaphor used to portray his vision of an ineffable reality. His chosen methodology is well worth applying to the wealth of precious data to which Laurentin and Rupcic have providentially been led by popular Marian piety.

The reviewer feels grateful for the singular opportunity to read these two books — as it were — side by side. He hopes someday to see the tidal metaphor extrapolated to the wave-like growth of Marian theology. For the ebb and flows of this rhythmic process illustrate a dialectic dynamism between popular piety and systematic studies. This dynamism has potentials for stimulating theological growth.

Shifting metaphors, one can also see how theology grows as it is weaned from the infantile nourishment of popular piety. From the mouths of infants, theology learns. Further growth occurs in a self-correcting spiral of disciplined operations culminating in responsible decisions.
Social decisions that authentically respond to messages about fasting, prayer and conversion, are more important than authenticating apparitions that repeat the messages. Many of these have already been discerned by biblical and systematic theology. In many cultural situations, these can be patterned more dramatically, and hence more fruitfully, by the operations of conscious intentionality under the guidance of mature Mariology.

Vicente Marasigan, S.J.


This book was originally meant to be a revised edition of *Proclaiming Christ*, published in 1970; but the many changes that have occurred in the wake of Vatican II, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and the new Canon Law have dictated the writing of an entirely new book. Like the first book, *Evangelisation* also deals with evangelization, with special reference to Indian conditions; but it puts "more stress on the spiritual side of the Gospel proclamation and the guidance of the Holy Spirit and less on human devices and endeavours" (p. vii).

Reading through the book feels like beachcombing for beautiful shells. The principles and inspiring motivations that Fr. Le Joly presents — mainly through the first eight chapters of the book — are not really new, but convincingly presented. The rationale and motivations for missionary activity and for the proclamation of the Gospel are not ideas derived from theoretical study, but are more like résumés gathered from faithful and patient immersion in, and personal reflections on the life of a missionary and an evangelist. And the principles are usually illustrated by personal vignettes and concrete examples that serve to bring out the practical application of the principles.

The practical observations and guidelines for more effective evangelization are scattered mostly through the remaining 24 chapters. Fr. Le Joly's guidelines are quite realistic and even worldly-wise; but always the reader feels the pervasive underground stream of quiet, steady fidelity to the one thing necessary: the proclamation of Christ's saving love for the world.

Perhaps each reader will find his own precious shells from the reading. The author is quite disorderly in his approach, in spite of the seeming order of the chapters. But perhaps we can point out some of the author's attitudes and preferences that surface in the principles and guidelines he proposes. There is first of all the author's deep fidelity and trust in Jesus, who is the center and the main power of the evangelization process (e.g. pp. 1-27, 83-91). There is his trustful surrender to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, who guides and makes effective all our missionary efforts (e.g. pp. 147-49). There is the quiet but infectious optimism that buoys up the missionary's work (e.g. pp.