Ignatian spirituality on Rahner's theology and mysticism. Those engaged in the work of spirituality will find the book engrossing and genuinely rewarding. It may however require knowledge of philosophy to make one's reading profitable. Actually, it can also be read as a basic catechism for educated persons (again with philosophical background) because it gathers together important points of theology and spirituality and explains them meaningfully and refreshingly. Like Rahner, the reader who comes to the end of the book will perhaps need to kneel with the mind before holy Mystery with Christ in the Spirit.

Reviewed by Victor R. Salinga, S.J.

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It is the times that try men's souls which reveal the quality of a person. Until 1993, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin was a priest whose career, while successful by the standards of clerical advancement, was not very different from that of other members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Born in 1928 in Columbia, South Carolina, he lost his father to cancer in 1934. His mother was a valiant woman who sacrificed and struggled to support, and to be both father and mother to Joseph and his sister, Elaine. At 17 he won a scholarship to the University of South Carolina, and enrolled in the pre-med program. A year later, he met some young priests who challenged him to put his desire to help others at the service of Jesus Christ and his Church. Thus it was that he began his priestly formation at St. Mary's College in Kentucky. After further formation in Maryland and at Catholic University he was ordained in 1952 for the Diocese of Charleston. His ecclesiastical advancement was rapid: made auxiliary bishop of Atlanta, Georgia in 1966, he was then the youngest Catholic bishop in the US; in 1972, he

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became Archbishop of Cincinnati; and in 1982 Cardinal Archbishop of Chicago.

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin was known as a pastoral bishop, primarily concerned with the welfare of his priests, collegial in his style of government. He was a good man, and, by human standards, was notably successful in his chosen vocation. There was as yet, however, no indication of the real interior depth of this man of God. It was only when he became the focus of a national scandal in 1993 — accused by a former seminarian of sexual molestation twenty years earlier in Cincinnati — that his inner depth was revealed. The media subjected him to intense scrutiny until, several months later in February, 1994, the young man, now dying of AIDS, retracted his charges. By then, the Cardinal’s whole world and sense of values had changed forever. He eventually sought out the young man, now living in Pennsylvania, to show forgiveness and seek reconciliation. That meeting, on December 30, 1994, led to a healing of the man’s anger with God and his Church — and to his peace-filled death from AIDS several months later.

For Cardinal Bernardin the storm had passed. He returned to his daily work with a renewed sense of the importance of prayer, and a deepened concern for the people in suffering and alienated from the Church. As he tells us, he had learned to “let go” of ambition, of privilege and status, of “working for God” rather than giving the Lord free reign to work in and through him. But there was more to come. In June of 1995 he discovered that he had pancreatic cancer, and he began a course of treatment which proved successful medically and transforming spiritually. His stay in Loyola University Medical Center led to a new involvement with others suffering from cancer and other terminal illnesses, an apostolate which became more and more central in his life.

When he learned, in August of 1996, that the cancer had returned and was inoperable, he entered upon the final phase of what he saw as his “Gethsemane.” By now, however, he was a man truly transformed
in the Lord. He does not belittle the pain and anxiety, but it is clear that his life, especially the three tragedies of the last three years, had come into clear focus for him. Each of his painful struggles he now saw as a call to ministry: to Steven Cook, the AIDS patient (34); to cancer patients (70); and to those, like himself, preparing for death (136). It was clearly a ministry grounded in his own experience and deeply rooted in discerning prayer.

That, I believe, is the central message of this beautiful book, which Cardinal Bernardin resolved to complete before he died. On November 1, 1996 he put down his pen; thirteen days later death came. As I read and reread this book, I thought of Father Damien of Molokai: the day came when Damien became one with his beloved lepers in their suffering. On that day, Damien began his sermon at Mass in the leper colony, “Fellow lepers.” He had contracted leprosy. He was now truly one with his people. Cardinal Bernardin has the same message for us, his fellow “lepers.” In identifying with him, we share “the gift of peace” which transformed his life and his ministry.

Reviewed by Thomas Green, S.J.