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Francis Bacon famously wrote in 1625 that some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few chewed and digested. He went on to allow that “some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others.” *Alone and on Foot: Ignatius of Loyola* (Dufour/Veritas, \$22.95) by Brian Grogan SJ is such an “extract.” It is only a third as long as the well-received biography *Ignacio de Loyola: Solo y a Pie* written by José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras and published more than twenty years ago in Spain. That book was translated into English by Cornelius M. Buckley SJ and published by Loyola Press in 1994 as *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*. Those who have read, and others who have not read, Buckley’s translation will appreciate Grogan’s well-designed book, which of course gains and loses in the abridgment. Readers may choose, and perhaps be led from either book to the other. What Tellechea, a Basque diocesan priest and historian, added notably to Ignatian biography in the first place is a wealth of historical, literary, and sociocultural detail—in a word, background, which while not all-important was and is a distinct contribution.

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Joel M. Hoffman’s *And God Said* (St. Martin’s Press, \$25.99), focusing on the Old Testament, lets readers go back and forth too. It is much smaller than its predecessor. Its purpose is to help readers see and understand the values of good Bible translation, accurate background information, and good words and images in their praying and their religious thinking.

People, like reality in general, involve us in paradox, sometimes bewildering and benumbing, sometimes wide-eyed fun. Megan McKenna pursues both kinds in her book *We Live Inside a Story* (New City Press, \$16.95). For her, “inside” refers to the layered, onion-like nesting of Russian matryoshka or babushka dolls, each one inside the previous one—and one of them, our own self, deep down inside God’s grand creation story. We are made in God’s image. If you can thoroughly imagine all this, you can write your own book. But many will profit from hers, a paradoxical combination of bewilderment and joyful enlightenment.

The right little book at the right time is sometimes worth volumes. *Priests Today* (New City Press, \$9.95), edited by Brendan Leahy and Michael Mulvey, offers 123 small passages from saints, popes, and high- or low-profile others—a good variety of passages that ordained priests and others can read once or twice or thrice in a day or in a year and sometimes benefit a hundredfold from. *Born of the Eucharist* (Ave Maria Press, \$15.95), edited by Stephen J. Rossetti, presents the convictions, observations, and feelings of more than two dozen (mostly U.S.A. diocesan) priests and bishops about their priesthood. Some are well known, some not. What they say—often in two pages, sometimes in about ten—is humble and encouraging, definitely not highfalutin. Priests and their people, people and their priests, will benefit from books like these.

Whether we read or browse, we find what we find, and not necessarily what others find and treasure. Mary Reuter OSB’s *Running with Expanding Heart* (Liturgical Press, \$14.95) gently walks readers through many providential occasions of “meeting God in everyday life,” invoking the Benedictine Rule, other sources, and especially her own experience. For my part, I happily found a pivotal point of Benedictine hospitality that got blurred slightly. On page 31 Reuter cites the Rule (RB 53.7): At the arrival or departure of guests, “Christ is to be adored in them, even as he is welcome in them, by a bow of the head or by a complete prostration of the body.” The last fourteen words are omitted for an obvious reason: Western customs have changed. But it is spiritually enlivening to note the change and also to marvel (interreligiously, and enviously

too) at the actual bowing still current among peoples of the East. In a more formal style, Esther de Waal also walks readers through Benedict's Rule. Look for her *Seeking Life: The Baptismal Invitation to the Rule of St. Benedict* (Liturgical Press, hardback, \$19.95). Both books deserve appreciative readers.

From her personal presence amid various of our world's problems, the British Methodist minister Barbara Glasson has written *A Spirituality of Survival: Enabling a Response to Trauma and Abuse* (Continuum, \$24.95). She enables greater earnest awareness of wars, social problems, natural disasters, individual crises. Her "response" is aware that there are more questions than answers. She asks "Why are we called to live our questions?" and replies "Because of the God who is listening to us, the eternally attentive Creator" (p. 102). Late in her last chapter (p. 160) she says, "I can make some kind of theological attempt at a response here, but . . . words just will not do. What is required [is] is that we all listen, each of us in our own way, that we begin to live these hard, hard questions . . . not simply 'for poor survivors' but for everyone."

Twenty-two essays from Ireland raise questions too. Each one, averaging seven pages, expresses *What Being Catholic Means to Me* (Dufour/Columba, \$27.95). Personal experience vies for position with each one's more or less settled convictions, passive and active ones, so to say. They have a broad array of experience and conviction. In various ways, these people are lovable and inspire and disconcert. They are us. They express confusion, disappointment, and sometimes anger. They express needs and desires and possibilities that exist among us. All of them, of course, know altogether more about themselves than you or I do (God bless them individually), and perhaps they know some things that are not so (God bless them again). You and I can benefit from their words as hints of untold variety and mystery in ourselves and among the people of our own neighborhood.

Not every good thing can be emphasized, but Bernard Dullier's *Fifteen Days with Saint Eugene de Mazenod* (New City Press, \$12.95) at least deserves mention. A French priest and bishop, Mazenod, canonized in 1995, lived from 1782 to 1861, founded the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and seems quite relevant in our troubled times as he was in his own.

Three years ago this column saw several books as only seemingly "remote, impractical, anachronistic." Such a book is *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550-1625*

(Saint Joseph's University Press, outsize, 440 pp., \$90) by Walter S. Melion. There are many etchings and much text here to ponder or humbly make do without, after spending an awed hour or two in a library glimpsing a few of the book's undreamed-of relevances. The introduction is titled: "Christ as subject and source of meditative image-making." In chapter 8 (p. 337) are quoted these words—addressed to God the Father—to go with an elaborate etching of the cross-carrying Christ circled by images of the artist himself painting himself in relation to various other images of Christ: "Contemplate the face of Your Christ, whether He displays the face of a sinner afflicted and perplexed, in which He has received and sanctified our misery, or the face conferred on us by His grace. And so, gaze at whichever face of Your Christ and have mercy on us."

Another fascinating book from off the beaten path is *On Time, Punctuality, and Discipline in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge University Press, hardcover, \$90) by Max Engammare. It too stimulates intuitions as it discusses aspects of Calvinism in early modern Europe. One does not often advert to matters like the advent of more and better timepieces in the 16th and 17th centuries. The book brings in people like Erasmus, Ignatius Loyola, and Francis de Sales. You may wish to stretch your sense of history and your moral and spiritual imagination along these lines. The author sees the Catholic ethos in that era as emphasizing *place* more than *time*, the Calvinist emphasis.

In our lives, actual evangelization remains important. The late Cardinal Avery Dulles spent his last days actualizing, with editorial assistance, a volume of his own essays on a topic dear to his heart, evangelization. It manifests his usual balanced thoroughness. I wonder if he himself chose the title, for his faith-filled scholarly aim seems much less grandiose, much more immediate and humble, than *Evangelization for the Third Millennium* (Paulist Press, \$15.95). Even more immediate is Martin Pable OFMCap's level-headed and earnest *Reclaiming the Fire: A Parish Guide to Evangelization* (ACTA Publications, \$12.95). The theme of these books is something like this: We cling to our faith in our own troubles—why not hope to extend to others in their troubles or sorrows—or their ordinary times—the deep joy we find in our faith?

—Philip C. Fischer SJ