

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

Sir,—In your issue of September 1947 I published an article suggesting that the new form of organisation called the 'Secular Institute' might be adapted to contemplative or semi-eremitical life in the world cannot be classified as a Secular Institute, but is rather a articles in your review, I received many private letters. I must, however, excuse myself to the writers of these for not having any practical programme for when, where and how to carry out my suggestions. They were rather in the nature of a general idea for others to build upon, from someone engaged in very different work at the tip of Africa.

I must now make an amendment. On March 12th of this year a *Motu Proprio* of the present Holy Father was issued clarifying considerably the meaning of 'Secular Institute'. Their proper characteristic is the *secular* character; and this means that the whole of normal life, only excepting what is incompatible, is to be taken up and consecrated. They are essentially apostolic, and their apostolate is not only *in* the world but *of* the world.

It is therefore clear that the suggestion of a contemplative life in the world cannot be classified as a Secular Institute, but is rather a form of *religious* life in the world but not of it, however modified a form of religious life it may be. It might, however, be possible to relate such a group of contemplatives to the Secular Life of Perfection in somewhat the same way as the enclosed nuns of the Mendicant Orders are related to the Friars.—Yours sincerely,
Stellenbosch, 29/9/48.

OSWIN MAGRATH, O.P.

MORE CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS CARDS

Miss Brenda Rutherford, who has done good work for C.A.G.O's drives for Christian Christmas Cards as well as for Mr Westbrook, has now her own set available. Her best work is in small silhouettes which have a great vitality; but some of her larger cards show a special liveliness in the Holy Child. This liveliness is not always matched by the animals or even by St Joseph, but perhaps that is the purpose of the drawings—that the life of the Child may stand out above all creatures. Naturally the hand-painted cards are the most attractive though they seem expensive to those who cling to pre-war standards of cost. (Write to Miss Rutherford, Chilcompton, Somerset).

C.A.G.O., too, presents its selection of Christian Christmas Cards with some new items, among which we would particularly recommend those of Margaret Burdess. Two of the latter have a very fresh style, which by means of wash and line convey the impression of some of the modern Belgian and Swiss cards, and a third makes a simple crib. A complete set of samples of these cards may be had for 4s. post free from Catholic Action Girls' Organisation, 22, Bramham Gardens, London, S.W.5.

REVIEWS

THE FACE OF THE SAINTS. By Wilhelm Schamoni. Translated by Anne Fremantle (Sheed & Ward; 21s.)

A BEDSIDE BOOK OF ENGLISH SAINTS AFTER 1066. By Aloysius Roche. (Burns Oates; 6s.)

Here are two books that delineate saints: Father Roche's their lives and characters, Mr Schamoni their physical appearance.

A collection of reproductions of saints' likenesses, whether authentic, probable or possible, was a good idea, and so far as this reviewer remembers it has not been done before, at any rate on this scale (120 pictures of 100 persons). Mr Schamoni's book accordingly shows traces of uncertainty in handling a new job: there is little reason to suppose that the mosaics, etc., of his earliest examples are meant to be likenesses; a few are unnecessarily obscure (e.g., Ecclesius and Maximian of Ravenna, Homobonus); to allot one saint seven pictures, when most have one, is a bit disproportionate, especially when there are some notable omissions; and we could have done with more portraits and photographs of the more recent saints and beati. On the other hand, full use is made of death-masks and other hitherto unpublished material, of which an example here and there is on the macabre or grotesque side. But the general result is a very impressive collection of human faces, of which one of the finest is surely that of St Frances Cabrini, who died in 1917 in Chicago. Some of them, e.g., St Teresa of Lisieux, should be compared with the soft caricatures that are generally current.

Father Roche writes discursively of English holy ones from the Norman conquest to the Reformation martyrs, and there is really no need to commend work already so well known and appreciated. Like its predecessors, his latest book is full of unhackneyed observations and things that need repetition. He emphasises, for example, that, calendars to the contrary notwithstanding, sanctity is not a monopoly of the clergy-house and the cloister: 'There is only one fundamental holiness, namely the holiness of the Christian'. He reminds us that 'the Church has never favoured the taking of life of *any kind* by ministers of religion' (*italics mine*). He says of our Reformation martyrs, 'Protestants generally might be willing enough