

are much more meditative and broad, 'Christian Humanism', 'Sacral and Lay Civilization', and ending up suitably with 'Confession of Faith'.

For anyone who wants to form some notion of M. Maritain's position about the human person, freedom, democracy, pluralist society, Christian humanism, etc., this book will be a welcome and moderately brief introduction.

F.J.F.

ARTIST, LAYBROTHER, AND SAINT. By Jerome Wilms, O.P. Translated from the German by Sister M. Fulgence, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 12s.)

'As a youth he is described as well built, handsome, and dignified in bearing; his clear blue eyes reflected the modesty and simplicity of his character, as the tender red of his cheeks expressed his youthful freshness and gentle shyness. He was possessed of genuine kindness of heart, nobility of soul, and firmness of will.' And the biographer adds: 'His noble personality was more than the development of happy propensities . . . in early childhood James had learned to join his little hands in prayer . . .'

Such is the hero of this little study, Blessed James of Ulm, and very nice he sounds. The sources are various *Vitae*: that of Fra Ambrogino, who worked under him; that of Flaminio, in the Annals of Baronius, and an unspecified *Vita* published in Rome in 1827. Detailed sources, it would seem. We are given all the 'mute surprise', 'solemn wonder' and 'overpowering emotion' with which he arrived in the eternal city, and much else. And Father Wilms deftly makes up for any inadequacies in his source material. Thus: 'Many a young girl's admiring gaze may have followed him (Blessed James): but any that looked into his eyes would have seen that her hopes were in vain. The light in those eyes was that of a child, or rather, of an angel.'

Later in the book Father Wilms is at pains to point out that though James became a laybrother, 'his education and his father's social standing would have entitled him to the rank of cleric . . . for he was generally conversant with persons of the upper classes'.

Perhaps only the humourless will be angered by this book. But very few are going to find their spiritual lives notably enriched for reading it. And some will think that the laybrothers deserve very much more respect than to be served up with this sort of thing.

Surely, too, the words 'Blackfriars Publication' ought to mean something a good deal better.

C.D.