

vowed religious life, but at the same time, much as he loves plainsong, he notes that ‘many people will need music with more obvious warmth and richness . . . so as to awaken a liturgical sensibility’ (p. 128), and he points a way forward in the writings of Pope Benedict XVI.

Dostoevsky famously said that “beauty will save the world”. How and why this is so, Fr Aidan explicates in this collection of essays.

LAWRENCE LEW OP

THE DOMINICAN WAY edited by Lucette Verboven, *Continuum*, London and New York, 2011, pp. x + 221, £10.99, pbk

This is a collection of interviews with 16 Dominicans: Sisters, Brothers, one Lay Dominican and Nuns. One of those interviewed is Timothy Radcliffe, who writes an Introduction and whose three interviews provide a kind of commentary on the whole exercise.

The individuals chosen for interview are remarkable and far from run-of-the-mill. Indeed the book may be described as high-class journalism, which is not to belittle it but simply to distinguish it from, say, a work of sociology or systematic theology. Each individual is given the opportunity to speak for themselves by means of a series of questions, some of which are tailored to the individual, while some have a touch of slightly wide-eyed surprise, such as ‘You are cloistered: aren’t you fleeing from the world?’, or ‘Isn’t it strange for a religious person to be involved in physics?’ (asked of Katarina Pajchel, a Sister born in Warsaw, brought up in Norway, working as a physicist in one of the teams associated with the CERN project in Geneva).

Some of those interviewed are:

- James MacMillan, the composer who is a Lay Dominican and a trenchant critic of aspects of Scottish culture. I found his interview theologically the richest in the book; there is no interview with a ‘pure’ academic theologian, though Helen Alford, as Dean of the faculty of Social Sciences at the ‘Angelicum’ (Rome), is a specialist in Catholic Social Teaching, and Timothy Radcliffe operates as a kind of theological Greek chorus throughout the book.
- Two women who live painfully conflicted lives as minority Christians in a Muslim environment: Maria Hanna in Iraq, and Faustina Jimoh in Northern Nigeria. They struggle on with amazing courage because where they are is where they belong; they would not take an optimistic view of the possibilities of fruitful Christian-Muslim dialogue, and are impressive for their perseverance in desperately bleak situations. Two men, Jean-Jacques Pérennès and Emilio Platti, work explicitly in the field of dialogue in the context of IDEO, the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies in Cairo, which is more conducive to such an exercise.
- Kim En Joong, the South Korean painter, some of whose painting is on glass, to be seen in various Dominican churches around the world. His own description of his work and vocation is: ‘Light is love. I have always wanted to create a non-polluted world, a world that hints at another life, the life of the mystery’. Like another interviewee, the Japanese Vincent Shigeto Oshida, now deceased, he sees no contradiction between Buddhism as a Way and faith in Christ.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Brian Pierce the contemplative friend of poor Latin Americans, of Henri Burin des Roziers

the fighter for the landless of Brazil, of Margaret Ormond, first co-ordinator of Dominican Sisters International, of Godfrey Nzamujo, founder of the Songhai project in ecological excellence in Benin and Nigeria, of Dominika and Natallia living necessarily hidden lives as contemplatives with a view to a foundation in Belarus, and Breda Carroll, Prioress of the only monastery of contemplative Dominican Nuns in Ireland.

Each chapter in the book is about 10 to 12 pages and gives a good insight into the particular 'style' of vocation which each of these members of the Order of Preachers lives. One would hope that any such book about a religious order would show the rich variety of possible ways of being a member, but the variety is impressive; it would be misleading if it suggested that all Dominicans live at the frontiers of apostolic life, and never have a nose to an institutional grindstone, though saying that is not to deny that even our institutions – colleges, chaplaincies, parishes – are opportunities to live at the frontiers, and to invite others to experience the beyond in their ordinary humanity.

If there is one implicit theological theme in the book it is that the gospel and the Church do not inhabit a limited space which is called religious or spiritual; the whole world is the theatre of God's creative and recreative love, so the thrust must always be towards the 'both and' of Catholic understanding, towards the affirming of creation and bodiliness, towards dialogue with the world's wisdoms and religions. Albert and Aquinas who taught Dominicans – and everyone who cares to listen – about such connectedness are mentioned several times in the book; it might have been enlightening to have an interview with someone who teaches theology and could give a simple but systematic exposition of their thought, over and above the very helpful comments of Timothy Radcliffe and some others. The chief value of the book is that it imparts wisdom through telling of praxis, in Freire's sense of thought/action; but praxis is not diluted by an appropriate systematic thought.

Overall this is a delightful book which will bring inspiration to anyone who reads it. I have now read it at least three times and find it more interesting each time.

COLIN CARR OP