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The Book Reviewer

ST. MARY'S PARISH LIBRARY

NOV 2008

Evolution and Eden by Jerry D. Korsemeier (Theology)

The question of how the Church finally and squarely faces the scientific evidence of evolution is a critical one. Until now the official position of the Church has been ambivalent, due to "some serious doctrinal problems." The Catholic issues involved are the understanding of revelation and Scripture, and the dogma of original sin. Not infrequently clergy and lay people are fundamentalist and anti-evolution. The author quotes St. Augustine, to whom we owe the doctrine of original sin, as also having written, "Now it is disgraceful and dangerous for an infidel to hear a Christian, supposedly giving

the meaning of Holy Scripture, and also talking nonsense on these topics." These topics are all branches of science, as known in the 5th century.

The author of this well researched call for clarity is a trained theologian and a physicist. "An attempt to determine the official Catholic position on the subject uncovers only a few tentative statements of partial approval, and deep concerns." Dr. Korsemeier states as his goal: "We need a worldview that calls upon a God who creates in an evolutionary fashion. This theology needs to coincide with Scripture's

portrayal of a loving God, and also needs to assure us that a world filled with excessive natural evil is consistent with the all-pervading presence of a God worthy of worship." He manages to achieve his goal in this always interesting book, in which he concludes that there is not and never should be any real opposition between religion and science. "Creation reveals the Creator." He sees in the rise and extinction of millions of different species the hand of the Creator. "Perhaps divinity is luring the universe toward its own likeness." And that is certainly what St. Paul has already told us in Romans 8.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno

Anam Cara by John O'Donohue (Spirituality)

Irish poet, scholar and philosopher, the late John O'Donohue, launches his lyrical exploration of Celtic spirituality with the ancient idea of the *Anam Cara* or soul friend, that person to whom one can reveal the depths and truth of oneself. Through the use of poetry, gathered wisdom, and sometimes meandering and mystical observations the author opens our minds and hearts to the imperative of

seeking out our authentic selves with passion, so as to fully live the life that has been given to us by a loving creator who made us for a purpose which only our unique self can fulfill.

O'Donohue continually calls upon the traditional Celtic understanding of the nature of the world to reveal the depth and delight in life that is possible when our soul is engaged and directing our decisions.

Readers will find that most sections, and at times single sentences, invite and even require repeated readings and savoring to fully digest the nurturing wisdom packed within.

Read this book and you will be lead by the poet/guide out of the chaos of daily life and over the threshold into your soul which is found only in the silence and space of solitude.

Reviewed by Susan Triplett



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Life is Beautiful

From Image to Likeness by W. Harold Grant, Magdala Thompson & Thomas E. Clarke (Psychology)

The subtitle of this interesting book is *A Jungian Path in the Gospel Journey*, which does well explain the theme. The three authors, two psychologists and a theologian, work together on a personality typology to explain how we may grow as individuals in our relation to God. Beginning with the premise that we are created in the image of God, we grow into likeness only to the extent that we grow at all. Inevitably growth and potential are stunted or warped in many individuals due to physi-

cal, environmental, or personality flaws. Yet we are all called to grow towards that likeness, whose image is implanted in our very being, diverse personalities though we are.

Based upon the theory of personality types as introverted/extroverted; intuiting/sensing; thinking/feeling; judging/perceiving, a pattern of inner growth is developed. For instance, dominant thinkers need to develop their feeling side—while dominant feelers need to develop their less

avored thinking side. “Ultimately and ironically the person who clings rigidly to thinking is being irrational. The basic Gospel law of losing one’s life in order to find it is verified in the lives of thinkers when they make room for the feeling side of their personality.” In this way the significance of the Bible, and especially of the life and death of Jesus, is related to the individual’s life journey towards death and God; towards fulfillment or frustration.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno

Edith Stein by Joanne Mosley (People of the Church)

Edith Stein was born into a Jewish family in 1891 and was martyred in a German concentration camp in August of 1942. In the intervening years she had been many things: a philosopher and writer, a convert to Catholicism, and a teacher in a Dominican school before finding her true vocation as a Carmelite nun in 1922. Through her early years of intense study and a search for truth, she briefly lost her faith in God, and found it again when she read the biography of Saint Teresa of Avila, and was converted by her reading. Both St. Teresa and Edith Stein were intense women, who never did anything by

halves. Edith’s Jewish mother was unhappy about Edith’s conversion, but she was never shunned by any of her relatives, and some of them even joined her in her spiritual journey. Edith’s Jewishness became a major part of her Christian journey, as she closely identified with Jesus and Mary, and the Jewish prophet Elisha, and Queen Esther. Esther had offered her life to save her people, the Jews in exile in Persia; Edith actively sought martyrdom for herself to save her people and as an offering to God. Her offering was accepted in full, although the King of Persia had allowed Esther to live.

Shortly after Kristelnacht in November 1938, when the German intentions to settle “the Jewish question” became clear, Edith wrote to her mother, “And I also trust in the Lord having accepted my life for all of them. I keep thinking of Queen Esther who was taken from among her people precisely that she might represent them to the king. I am a very poor and powerless little Esther, but the King who chose me is infinitely powerful and merciful.” She spent the next four years in prayer and suffering for her people before that final day when she was taken to the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno