

BORYS, Jr., Peter N., *Transforming Heart and Mind: Learning from the Mystics* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006), pp. 208. ISBN 0-8091-4336-4 (paperback). \$19.95.

In 1921 the English writer, Evelyn Underhill, published *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today* in which she attempted to bring to bear the classic experience of the spiritual life and mysticism on the conclusions of modern psychology. It was a pioneering work in a subject area still very much in its infancy. The last half-century has seen marked developments in psychology, increased accessibility of mystical literature, and a proliferation of theological writing. It is the intent of Peter Borys, an attorney and Christian spiritual writer, to synthesize insights in these three areas and to bring them into conversation with each other. His aim is a practical one—to use these developments in order to support transformation which is at the heart of Christian life. A subordinate theme is his focus on healing, especially of childhood wounds, and its role in one's overall transformation as a Christian.

In his initial overview, Borys sets out the classic pattern of the Christian journey and its modifications by various mystical writers. He then explores the nature of the human person as articulated by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, giving particular emphasis to human wounding in early life experience, the emotions in child development, and the impact of trauma on human life. In a chapter on theology, philosophy and psychology of transformation in Christ, he relies heavily on the insights of Bonaventure, Gabriel Marcel, Edith Stein and Bernard Lonergan. In Part Two of this volume he explores how the Christian lives the faith journey of transformation in Christ especially through prayer and liturgy. He sees self-restoration and renewal through the purgative way and suffering as a pathway to union with God.

Although an earnest and wide-ranging volume, Borys' work is limited in four ways. First, in some brief two hundred pages he attempts to take on three distinct knowledge areas—mysticism, theology and psychology. His scope is so all-inclusive that the exploration of any one thinker suffers. Second, his selection of mystics, theologians, and psychologists is very eclectic and idiosyncratic. These are Borys' favorite thinkers, but he does not convince the reader they should be the reader's own. Third, the language and conceptualization of the book does not invite in the reader. This is a book about Borys' spiritual journey, and although

he tries to universalize it, I for one felt like an outsider. Finally, totally missing in this book is any indication that service to others or entering into their suffering has any meaning for the spiritual life or Christian transformation. This is the story of one good man's journey lived independently of others. The first commandment is explored in this book, but not the second.

Dana Greene

BOURGEAULT, Cynthia. *Chanting the Psalms: A Practical Guide with Instructional CD* (Boston: New Seeds Books, Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2006), pp-xv-275. ISBN-13: 978-1-59030-257-6 (hbk). ISBN-20: 1-59030-257-5. CD, Tracks 1-39, Total running time: 53:58. US\$ 18.95, CAN \$24.95.

I.

Contemplative prayer, once the prerogative of cloistered monasticism, has broken out of those confines and is now practiced worldwide by tens of thousands, through simplified methods such as Centering Prayer (furthered by, for example, the Cistercians Thomas Keating and Basil Pennington, and indeed by Bourgeault's own excellent recent investigations of the same. But **chanting** the **psalms** still seems esoteric to Christian seekers. Bourgeault wants to see this change and offers her book as a way of furthering that change.

Chanting the Psalms: A Practical Guide . . . might well have used as its sub-title the title of the author's previous book—a guide to *Inner Awakening*. [1] For the insights she offers into the role of music-making in the journey of the spiritual life are nothing less than that, i.e. a guide to using our voices to bring us into the awareness and the presence of the Numinous. This is an imminently "practical" book, both in the word's meaning of "useable" and in the sense of spiritual "*praxis*."

Bourgeault admits head-on two major problems associated with psalmody in our era: first, that of the psalms themselves as suitable Christian prayer; and second, the almost exclusive identification of psalmody with Gregorian chant, and this chant's suitability for contemporary life and worship. Her considerations take both problems seriously, are beautifully nuanced, and able both to affirm the tradition and offer fruitful alternatives.

Why are the psalms so important, she queries? Her answer, an excellent *apologia* for the psalms as prayer, spread over several