raphical notices and the index in this more usual fashion. In the Middle Ages, especially the second element of a name is not necessarily a surname. Only in the case of *Johannes* would this bring together an inordinate number of names.

The abbreviated reference, *Carmel en France* (p. 372) is not identified with Antoine Maria de la Présentation, O.C.D., *Le Carmel* (misspelled) *en France*, Toulouse, 1936-1939, listed in the bibliography (p. 415). The often-used abbreviation RBFTh (Register of the Beadle of the Faculty of Theology) does not appear in the list of abbreviations at the beginning of the book (pp. xi-xii).

A sturdy cover is fortunately given to this splendid work, because it will be often consulted.

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## Vita Spiritualis

EDWARD HOWELLS. *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowing and Selfhood*. Crossroads, 481 Eight Avenue, N. Y. 10001. 2002, xi, 212 p. ISBN 0-8245-1943-4. $ 39.95.

Using Carmel's two greatest mystical authors as its primary sources, this brief but masterful study deals with "the type of self and the anthropological transformation required for mystical experience to become known" (p. 1). The question Howells poses at the outset is this: Given the sharp distinction that John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila draw between the "natural" and the "spiritual", to the point of seeming to establish two parallel epistemological processes (one of the ordinary natural knowledge of created things and the other for the mystical experience of God "in the center of the soul"), how can the fundamental unity of the human person be maintained? The question is a crucial one, not just for the interpretation of John and Teresa, but for contemporary mystical studies. All too often current authors (including some theologians and philosophers of religion) still proceed as if mysticis were simply a matter of unusual states of consciousness enjoyed by the same familiar post-Cartesian autonomous subject, largely ignoring (at leat for their analytic purposes) what the mystcis themselves say about how the knowing human subject itself is fundamentally transformed in its being and operations during the process of growth toward mystical union.

After a helpful introduction, outlining his main arguments, and a short preliminary chapter on the complexities surrounding John of the Cross's use of the vocabulary of "experience", Howells devotes "two main chapters" apiece to John and Teresa: "the first on the structure of the soul, and the second on

the dynamics of transformation" according to each one's teaching (p. 4). There follows a summary chapter, correlating what has been learned from each author and drawing further conclusions. The book ends with an epilogue on some remaining differences between the two Carmelites, and an appendix on the succession of spiritual stages according to John of the Cross.

Howells argues that John's and Teresa's talk of a "division" between the natural and spiritual (or exterior and interior) "parts" of the soul rests on a fundamentally different understanding of human selfhood than the modern one. Here he refers to Maritain's contention that "the mind is not first of all aware of its thought, as in Descrates' *cogito*, but is constituted first in relation to the objects that it desires and seeks to know" (p. 42). That is to say, the human self is essentially *relational*, initially establishing itself in a subject-object relationship to created realities perceivable and knowable to the external senses. Yet of necessity the "esterior" self cannot relate itself primarily to God on this "natural" level, since God is not an object among other objects to be perceived. At the same time, according to Teresa and John human beings bear the image of God and are capable of being raised by grace in a divine unione "without intermediary" in the deepest "part" or "center" of the soul. Both authors attempt to clarify how this happens in terms of the development of the image of the Trinity found in the triune spiritual faculties of memory, intellect, and will. "But for both writers", says Howells, "the important point is not the 'static' analogy for the Trinity in the rational faculties but the *dynamic* relations between the faculties and their objects of knowledge, and beyond that, the raising of this dynamism to the level of the Trinity, as the faculties become spiritual and participate immediately in the inner relations of the Trinity in unione" (p. 121). That is to say, if I understand Howells correctly, that the mystic in deepest union knows God not primarily as an intentional *object* standing over against oneself as the knowing subject, but through a kind of felt "pre-conceptual" participation in Trinitarian life and love, in the mutual exchange among the distinct but united divine persons. Likewise, "the soul can now see its own humanity united to the divine Word within its inter-Trinitarian relationship" (p. 122) on the analogy of the hypostatic union, and thus even the humanity of Christ is included in the soul's deepest mystical experience. Moreover, the interior Trinitarian participation increasingly "overflows" in the "esterior" part of the soul, not only causing sensory delight but giving rise to external works of charity in full accord with dhe divine will, so that "the entire operation of the soul is unified" (p. 124). Howells concludes that "for Teresa and John, mystical union is to be understood as the interiorization of the divine life of the Trinity into a Christ-like self", and that "the mystical self is a human Trinitarian intentional structure possessing God's inner dynamism" (pp. 125-126). The "distinction" between the "exterior" and "interior" self is preserved within a more fundamental unity of the human person in God.

While such a study of either Teresa or John alone would have had its own value, Howells is to be commended for his careful effort to handle both

together and to harmonize the doctrine of those two great Carmelites, while recognizing where they differ, a task rarely attempted in recent times. Along the way, he utilizes and comments judiciously on the best of contemporary Teresian and Sanjuanist scholarship. Experts will no doubt debate some details of his claims, especially since the presentation is so condensed that Howells rarely has time to argue at any lenght for his own interpretation of ambiguous passages. (He may read too much, for example, into Teresa's intentionally humorous and exaggerated critique of John in her *Vejamen*). Yet even if other readings are possible, Howells's interpretation seems persuasive, in part simply because of its thoroughness, plausibility, and theological fruitfulness.

This book grew out of Howells's 1999 doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago, perhaps wisely omitting its extensive comparisons with Bernard Lonergan and thereby making the present volume more accessible to a broader readership. Yet especially given its cost, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowing and Selfhood* now seems, if anything, too brief, with roughly a quarter of the book devoted to endnotes and bibliography and less than 150 pages given to developing the main arguments. One wishes Howells had been allowed more space to explore certain difficult points further. The writing is lucid and engaging, but some of the particularly dense passages and hard-to-grasp notions could have used additional unpacking. I would have appreciated further clarification, for example, of what this mystical "sharing in Trinitarian relations" actually feels like, though perhaps this is expecting too much, since both Teresa and John declare the experience to be beyond words, and John himself writes that "no knowledge or power can describe how this happens, unless by explaining how the Son of God attained and merited such a high state for us, the power to be children of God, as St. John says" (*Canticle* B, 39.5). In any case, this is a book that requires slow and repeated reading to uncover all its treasures.

Oddly, the leat successful part of the book is the appendix on "the order of stages of transformation according to John of the Cross", a section not really essential to Howells's main presentation. The chart given on page 140, for example, associates the *Subida*, Books II and III, with the "passive night of sense" and *Noche* I and II with the "active and passive night of spirit", clearly a mistake and clearly a contradiction of Howell's own explanation on the preceding page. Again, to claim that "the illuminative way", according to the *Noche*, "only begins in the final stage of the passive night of the spirit" (p. 140) seems misleading at best, as *Dark Night* 1.14.1 clearly shows. Here Howells seems to have confused John's traditional use of the three "ways" terminology with his comment that toward the end of the passive night of spirit "dark contemplation ceases to assail the soul in a purgative way mode and shines upon it illuminatively and lovingly" (*Night*, 2.7.4). For John, "illumination" by itself does not necessarily mark the beginning of the so-called "illuminative way", and more than "purgation" is limited to the "purgative way". "Illuminations" of various sorts can occur all along the spiritual path.

Howells joins a small but growing number of authors for whom mystical texts are not simply reliable guides to personal holiness but also significant theological sources. This book is an important contribution both to Carmelite studies and to current scholarship in the fields of Christian anthropology, Trinitarian theology, and Christology.

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## Mariologia

"La Madre Ágreda y la Mariologia española del siglo XVII", in *Estudios Marianos*, 69 (2003), 430 p. ISBN 84-607-7232-2. Eur. 35,00.
ENRIQUE LLAMAS, O.C.D. *La Madre Ágreda y la mariología del Vaticano II*. 2003, 121 p. Kadmos, Salamanca. ISBN 84-607-8014-7.

The anniversary of the birth of Sor María de Jesú de Ágreda (1602-1665) stimulated a resurgence of interest in this remarkable Poor Clare (a.d.a. Conceptionist Franciscan), of Spain's Marian "Golden Age", famous for her widely disseminated *Mistica Ciudad de Dios* (=MCD). The Mother of Jesus, Son of God, is the "mystical city", temple, tabernacle, shrine of the divinity. The initial threevolume edition was published in Madrid, 1670. The current edition, edited by C. Solaguren, O.F.M., Madrid, 1992, runs to 1509 pages. Composed between 1655 and 1660, MCD is an extended life of the Blessed Virgin, in its own fashion a complete Mariology. Very fanciful, relying on insights experienced in prayer, the book has had a rocky career. The Spanish Inquisition censured it in 1681, but under royal pressure the prohibition was lifted. The Sorbonne (University of Paris) did so again in 1696, scathingly.

Born in Ágreda (Soria) in 1602, María entered with her mother and sister in the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, becoming superior / abbess of the Poor Clares at the age of twenty-five. Among her achievements were twenty-two years of letters to King Philip IV. The cause of Ágreda never progressed beyond "venerable", though in recent years there was hope of reviving it, exemplified especially by the Spanish Mariological Society, which met in September, 2002, at Osma-Soria under the title, *La Madre Ágreda y la Mariología española del siglo XVII*, papers making up *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 69.

In his *Presentación* and major paper ("Mary's collaboration in the work of redemption and 17th century Spanish Mariology"), the president of the Spanish Society, the distinguished Discalced Carmelite theologian, Esteve Llamas, puts the study week in a perspective in a vigorous defence of the venerable author and her baroque masterpiece. In the long list of ill-informed denigrators of Ágreda, E. Llamas singles aout Hilda Graef's well-known history of Mariology (original German edition, 1964).