

importance of listening to, and of engaging in dialogue with patients who are facing the end of their lives as well as with those who argue for euthanasia, by claiming that it is a needed right for themselves and the whole society (226, 230). Such a theological stance promotes accompaniment (144 ff) and solidarity, both in the case of those who are dying as well as in the social fabric (232). When we accompany someone, we recognize one another and trust can be experienced. We are not alone, anymore. We are together, supporting one another in whatever will happen, and caring for those who are in greater need among us (149). Hence, relationships shaped by mutuality and reciprocity characterize this accompaniment, while avoiding any patronizing and paternalistic attitude nor abandoning anyone to one's destiny (164).

Pastorally, besides affirming the importance of emphatic and compassionate prayer with those who are at the end of their lives, even when they might ask for euthanasia in those countries where it is legally regulated, the author reflects on possible requests to receive the sacrament of the sick and, in that case, what solidarity, accompaniment, and pastoral sensitivity would entail. His sacramental concern is important and needed. As a priest, Joachin is rightly attentive to this dimension (239-241). However, in social and ecclesial contexts across the globe, where it is lay ministers—women and men—who accompany the sick, their pastoral service further stresses how relevant and meaningful is their being with those who are dying and accompanying them in their struggles and suffering.

Accompaniment, solicitude, and solidarity shape Joachin's contributions and proposal (160). These virtues concern both individuals and society (166). They are essential to humanize death in the social fabric and in ecclesial contexts. They foster supportive attitudes that are beneficial for individual citizens and for the whole society. While advocates of euthanasia will continue to ask for its legalization or depenalization, Joachin provides his readers with a balanced critical reflection that aims at fostering greater social cohesion in today's global pluralist context.

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**Sebastian Elavathingal, CMI, *Handiworks of God: Art of Spiritual Life and Religious Formation***, Bengaluru: Dharmaram Publications, 2020. Pages: xxxiv+198. ISBN: 978-81-946576-5-1.

As it is said 'the touch of the master makes all the difference.' The new arrival on the bookshelf, *Handiworks of God: Art of Spiritual Life and Religious Formation* by Sebastian Elavathingal, CMI is an

accomplished work on the theme of human, religious and priestly formation, a *vade mecum*, to be treasured by all involved in the art of imparting and receiving spiritual formation. The book is an outcome of the author's study and experience of Christian religious art and acquaintance with religious formation. It is deemed to fill the vacuum of literature regarding creativity in religious formation and religious life. It is equally useful for those who follow Jesus Christ in discipleship as well as those who are involved in preparing people to religious life.

The book is in the series of Dharmaram Publications and brought out at the behest of Vinayasadhana Institute of DVK, Bengaluru as a source book. It evolved as a series of the 'Canisius Endowment Lectures' delivered by Dr Sebastian Elavathingal at Dharmaram Pontifical Athenaeum in August 2019.

The book is adorned with a befitting Foreword by the renowned artist and theologian, Sri Jyoti Sahi. According to Jyoti Sahi, "it is an exclusive book that reveals the amazing complementarity of artistic creativity and spiritual formation in priestly and religious life."

The theme of the book is creativity in spiritual life, considering religious formation as an art in which a person is transformed and conformed to the Image of Christ. The author has looked into the fine details of the subject treated in the different chapters of the book, concluding it with a strong, positive aspiration that it is the unfolding of the Christ-image that takes place in every instance of formation, effected in every disciple of Christ. This transformation is extended to the entire creation with the cosmic manifestation of the Image of Christ.

The exposition, spread over eleven chapters, summarily overviews the challenges to religious life today and shows the hindrances to a creative life in communities where religious life is destined to be joyful and beautiful (Chapter 1). In the subsequent chapters the author delves into the meaning of creativity (Chapter 2) and shows how human life can be changed by a creative attitude towards life (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 describes the possibility and scope of a creative religious life, by affirming the values of the Incarnation and the visibility and tangibility of God in Jesus Christ. The 'seeing' of Jesus kindles in a disciple of Christ the fire of the Holy Spirit, which inspires and enthuses him/her to imitate Jesus (Chapter 5). The transformation of the material realities into spiritual experiences takes place according to the vision of the Image of God (Chapter 6). The creative methods are illustrated by examples of their applications

in various kinds of art, citing some of the celebrated artists and sculptors of all times and their masterpieces. All formation is aimed at conformation to the Christ-image, the ultimate of all human perfection as revealed in the person of Christ and presented to us by God the Father for 'model.' It is the basis of a Christian imagination and Christian imitation (Chapter 7).

Our human life provides all the raw materials needed to undergo transformation by the creative touch of the hands of God and His inspired and purposeful strokes. He is the divine Artist at whose hands the materials are transformed into fine pieces of art. Thus, every disciple participates in the beauty and holiness of Christ. This process entails the paradox of beauty in the Christian sense. The holy Cross is the symbol of this paradox of humiliation and glory manifested in the cosmic Image of Christ (Chapter 8). Here the author borrows substantially from the Pauline theology of the liberation of the whole creation effected in and through the person of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 9 elaborates the creative dimension of the vows. The vowed life of the religious consists in weaving the fabric of a religious community, celebrating communion. Chapter 10 establishes that the religious community is a creative space for communion. The book concludes with an illustration of the beauty of holiness, as exemplified in the lives of Saint Chavara Kuriakose Elias and the Servant of God, Fr Canisius, CMI, showing how these masters achieved beauty and joy in the pursuit of Christian spirituality. The author analytically exposes how these two holy men subjected themselves to the will of God, underwent transformation and how their art of life became masterpieces of holiness and beauty (Chapter 11).

The book is very lucidly written and can be used by all 'formators and formees' as a guide-book. The perception of spiritual transformation from an artist-theologian's point of view is a novel approach to religious formation and spiritual life.

The handiwork of the Creator reveals the purpose and will and the exemplary craftsmanship of the Creator. It is the Spirit of God who guides history to its fulfilment. Call it evolution or salvation, the whole creation is in travail, yearning for perfection in its form, existence and purposefulness. Human formation is not untouched by these historical upheavals; humanity too undergoes significant transformation as testified by civilizations past and present.

Pauline vision of the salvation of all creation, in its manifestation of the Christ-person as the Art of God, is manifested at the centre of the

universe in the Christ-Image. The author elucidates every articulation by profusely quoting St Paul, St John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. The recent papal teachings on art and beauty form the backbone of the work. The author can unequivocally claim the assertions he makes based on his vast experience in art and religious formation. I believe that the book will get a wide circulation and adulatory readership.

Professor Dr Anto Amarnad unveils the *Handiworks of God* in the Introduction and presents the book to the readers with an exclamatory note the work rightly deserves. Dharmaram Publications has brought out this book of more than 200 pages in attractive layout and readable print.

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**Dr Varghese Pathikulangara, CMI, ed., *The Word in Celebration*, Vols 1, 2 & 3, Kottayam, Vidya Nagar, Manganam: Denha Services Publications, 2020. ISBN 978-81-905799-9-5; ISBN 978-93-81207-06-2; ISBN 978-93-81207-07-9. denhaservices@gmail.com**

*The Word in Celebration* is a three-volume work on the homily or reflection on the biblical readings in the Sacred Liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church of the East Syriac Tradition. Along with the title of the volume, the second and the third volumes carry separate subtitles, namely, *Word in the World* and *Word in Transfiguration*, respectively.

*The Word in Celebration* articulates the *marga* (way) and *shabda* (sound) for the celebration of life in the world in tune with the faith in Christ as unfolded in the liturgical year of the Syro-Malabar Church.

The first volume, *The Word in Celebration*, is dedicated to the study and reflection on the biblical readings in the Sacred Liturgy of the Passion Week and the Great Sunday of Resurrection. The logic behind the focusing of the first volume on the Passion and Resurrection is traceable in the Preface of the book, "The whole Christian life moves around and longs for Resurrection. It begins, moves on and culminates in Resurrection, namely, the Christian life is the celebration of Resurrection" (vol. 1, 9).

The second and the third volumes present reflections on the entire liturgical cycle and the feasts of the sanctoral cycle of the Syro-Malabar Church. They are set in the rhythm and the order of the seasons of the Liturgical calendar, starting with Subara (Annunciation), Denha (Manifestation), Sawma Ramba (Great Fast),