

Christians were arrested, regardless of their religion, and were tortured and sometimes killed in front of their Christian prisoner-relatives. Still, many prisoners endured this physical and psychological torture and refused to renounce their faith. Many prisoners died from malnutrition, exposure, and/or torture. These are the "final martyrs" of whom Endo writes. Unfortunately, they are also forgotten martyrs — I learned nothing about them in my Catholic education.

Endo's collection of stories begins with the Japanese martyrs, but other stories tell of ordinary believers, showing how their faith can be as meaningful as that of the martyrs.

Endo reveals the beauty and wonder of Catholicism. His stories are not an active effort at proselytizing; rather, they demonstrate the value of Christianity in everyday life, how it gives meaning to life and helps one endure hardship. Realizing that his readers do not need to have everything spelled out for them, Endo instead provokes introspection; his subtle writing comes from the heart and is aimed, delicately, at his readers' hearts.

Endo's stories tell not only about the nature of Christianity, but also about human nature. For example, he writes of an old man disgusted by what he sees in a mirror: wrinkles, age spots, baldness, grey hair. Endo poignantly observes: "The ugliness of old age is the inability to be free of such wretched attachments to life."

MARIA VALENCIA VREE

**Curing World Poverty: The New Role of Property.** Edited by John H. Miller. *Social Justice Review* (3835 Westminster Pl., St. Louis MO 63108). 301 pages. \$15.

This Catholic-oriented book is an interesting attempt to get beyond the impasse that afflicts most current thinking about economics. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, defenders of capitalism have been traveling the world crowing about the magnificent benefits to be gained simply by imitating the U.S. One wonders if they have spent much time in our inner cities lately, or taken a tour of our closed factories. But the authors of *Curing World Poverty*, to their credit, offer an alternative both to socialism and to capitalism as it is currently practiced.

This book is devoted to elaborating economic proposals originally advanced by Louis Kelso, well known for his promotion of Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs). The heart of Kelso's proposals is a funding method for new enterprises that in effect allows them to be self-financed out of future profits. Recognizing that existing methods of new capital ownership favor those who already own capital, because only they have the savings to lend for new businesses, Kelso proposed something new. Since over a relatively few years a well-managed new company should earn enough to pay off the debts it necessarily incurs to commence operations, if the legal title to a new firm were lodged with the poor and propertyless, then, as owners, they would possess capital and begin to receive dividends.

The way this mechanism

would work is as follows: By means of a loan, ultimately guaranteed by the government, money is provided by private lenders, such as banks, for a new corporation. The legal title, however, is held by persons who presently do not own any productive property. After the loans are repaid, all future net profits accrue to the stockholders, who are thus enabled to join the ranks of productive property owners.

This funding mechanism seems to have considerable merit. Anyone who has thought about the status of workers in a capitalist economy must have realized that *whoever holds the legal title* to a moneymaking firm stands to gain much more than those who are simply compensated for their labor. Thus if workers held the legal title and simply borrowed the money they needed from capitalists, the workers could realize the profits, and the capitalists would receive only interest on their loans.

However, Kelso and the other such authors, while laudably seeking to extend ownership, seem unconcerned about other defects of capitalism. Indeed, they think that if only their proposals for financing are put in place, everything else will follow. I have two problems with this. First, in the Catholic tradition worker ownership has been defended chiefly as a means of making workers owners of the enterprise they themselves are working in. Kelso's financing mechanism, however, is indiscriminate. Anyone not presently possessing capital would be eligible to become an owner of shares in these new corporations, regardless of whether he worked for that corporation. Indeed, to make it less likely that an economic downturn would

destroy the wealth of these new owners, Kelso advocates that their portfolios "should contain stocks selected from a number of enterprises that have been financed along similar lines." Yet later in the book, contributors do highlight the importance of enabling workers to realize that *as owners* they are working for themselves and are not cogs in an impersonal system. It would seem, then, that with a little modification, the plan could and should restrict ownership in an enterprise to those who actually work for that firm, thus retaining the crucial connection between ownership and work.

Secondly, the authors of this book do not seem to think that any other reform of the economy is needed once their method of financing is put in place. The system of free competition is assumed and even explicitly espoused. However, Catholic tradition and papal teaching have repeatedly stated that limits on free competition are necessary. The latest social encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*, follows in this tradition by stating the necessity for a "strong juridical framework" within which economic activity is to be conducted.

THOMAS STORCK

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**A Shorter Summa: The Essential Philosophical Passages of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. Edited and Explained by Peter Kreeft. Ignatius. 162 pages. \$9.95.**

"You call him a Dumb Ox. I tell you this Dumb Ox shall bellow so loud that his bellowings will fill

the world." Thus spoke St. Albert the Great in response to those who poked fun at Thomas Aquinas, his star pupil. St. Thomas attracted ridicule because of his large size and his reputation for being dull, and for conveying a dreamy manner. Yet this "Dumb Ox" was indeed to have the impact that Albert predicted, all the way up to our time.

Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson, perhaps the most prominent 20th-century Thomist philosophers, became guiding lights of the philosophical renewal in the Catholic Church begun by the exhortations of Pope Leo XIII. In *Aeterni Patris* (1879), Leo told Catholic educators to "restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas" and "clearly point out its solidity and excellence above all other teachers."

Leo was rightly concerned about the secular philosophies that were sweeping Europe and threatening the foundations of Christian civilization. The 19th century saw the birth of numerous intellectual attacks on Christian orthodoxy: The dialectical rationalism of Hegel, for instance, gave birth to the revolutionary social dogmas of Marx and Engels. Comte and Nietzsche both took a toll on the European mind, while social Darwinism contributed its share to the disintegration of the social order. The revival of Thomism among Catholics, and even non-Catholics, offered a response to the increasingly hostile intellectual environment challenging the Church and the Western philosophical tradition she nurtured through the centuries.

Peter Kreeft's *A Shorter*

*Summa* helps beginners understand the saint's philosophy, which remains as important today as it was in Leo's time. The book itself is an abbreviated version of another introduction to St. Thomas's *Summa Theologica* entitled *A Summa of the Summa*, also edited by Kreeft and published by Ignatius. *A Shorter Summa*, however, has 350 fewer pages than *A Summa of the Summa*. With an essential glossary of terms and helpful footnotes throughout, the book is one of the better introductions to St. Thomas.

As Kreeft says in his introduction, there is no better way to learn St. Thomas than to read St. Thomas.

JOHN M. VELLA

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