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# Suggestions for Lenten Reading

[Six authorities offer their selections of recently published books]

Selected and annotated  
by Peter Thomas Rohrbach, O.C.D.  
Editor, *Spiritual Life*

## Notes for Mystel

By Marie Noël (Cornell U. Press. \$10). Lent, coming as it does in those last, long days of winter, provides an excellent season for serious and reflective reading. This first book, basically a religious diary, is a sensitive and charming portrayal of the interior life of a truly remarkable person. Marie Noël (a pseudonym for Marie Rouget) was a modern French poet who died in 1967 at the age of 84. Her *notes intimes*, at which the French are so particularly adept, cover the last 40 years of her life. She started the diary in 1920 when she was undergoing a religious crisis, and continued the book through the years of her spiritual development. Incisive, often witty, sometimes unconventional, her recollections make fascinating reading.

## The Church

By Hans Küng (Sheed. \$6.95). The role and the function of the Church in modern society are pressing questions today, and Hans Küng in his new book offers some penetrating insights to help us in this dialogue. A book of enormous scholarship, it analyzes Scripture and history, and takes as its thesis that the Church is capable of major adaptations to contemporary situations throughout history while remaining faithful to its essential mission. A demanding reading experience, but an extremely worthwhile one for those who are concerned about the role of the Church today.

## The Prayer of a Modern Man

By Louis Evely (Dimension. \$3.75). The prolific Louis Evely here offers one of his better books in recent years. In a series of short and penetrating essays,

he addresses himself to the situation of modern man, who is beset with fear, uncertainty and a certain amount of "unbelief." Evely contends that the spirituality of past epochs is inadequate today, and that it must be rethought in terms of good psychology and the fundamental Christian message in the Scriptures. For example, he says: "Prayer becomes nothing more than a shameful alibi when it is used for unloading onto God what one ought to be doing oneself." A thoroughly modern and sound and practicable approach to spirituality.

## The Catholic Revolution

By Douglas J. Roche (McKay. \$6.50). Recent years have seen an avalanche of books and articles reporting the current crisis of the Catholic Church. But here is one of the more responsible of them. Douglas Roche, a distinguished Catholic journalist, has done the research, travel and interviewing necessary to fashion a good reporter's account of the present ecclesiastical situation. Though the book is crammed with facts and data, it reads easily and convincingly, as any competent reporter's work should.

## The Revolution of Hope

By Erich Fromm (Harper. \$6.95). Erich Fromm, author of the celebrated *The Art of Loving*, discusses in his new book the problem of human depersonalization in the face of an increasingly technological society. His concern is that the human is being sacrificed at the altar of the technological, and that there is an inverse ratio between our amount of scientific and industrial progress and our development as human beings. "We are getting more and more dehumanized," Fromm argues. An important and persuasive plea by a skillful writer and a fine mind.

Selected and annotated  
by Thomas P. McDonnell  
Book Editor, *The Pilot*

## Why Be a Christian?

By Rosemary Haughton (Lippincott. \$3.95). As Mrs. Haughton says—that is, of the Christian living in the modern world—you have to be "either very thick-skinned and very stupid, or perhaps very saintly indeed, if sooner or later you don't ask yourself: "Why am I a Christian?" It is a properly unsettling question, I think, to ask at the beginning of Lent.

## The New Man

By Thomas Merton (Farrar, Straus, Cloth, \$3.50. New Am. Lib. Paper, 60¢). This Lent, it seems to me, is an especially good time to read something of one's own choice from the writings of Thomas Merton. I select *The New Man* here, because of the Lenten quality, so to speak, contained in its closing chapters—"Called Out of Darkness" and "Sacramental Illumination." But the point is that we still very much need the continuing influence of this remarkable Christian—monk, man and writer.

## Love, Love at the End

By Daniel Berrigan, S. J. (Macmillan. \$4.95). Fr. Berrigan has been so much involved at the center of controversial news these days—that is, as a Christian militant—that no one has taken critical note of his astonishing growth as a writer. It is as if he had experienced a spiritual mutation from the literally "lovely" insularity of his early poetry, etc. to these authentic meditations on the Christian commitment in the modern world.

## Hymn of the Universe

By Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (Harper. \$3.50). There are few books of