

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Bliain an Bhandé/Year of the Goddess by Gabriel Rosenstock

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done a great service to the non-specialist in producing a very short summary (130 pages) of the original work in the paperback, *A Brief History of Vatican II*.

There are very few scholars as qualified as Alberigo to write such a history. As a research student in the University of Bologna in the late 1950s and early 1960s he was part of a team that produced *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta* (The Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils). This work provided a summary of previous ecumenical councils for those participating in Vatican II. Alberigo does not simply write a history of Vatican II but he communicates his passionate belief, as a lay Catholic, in the goodness and grace of the Council.

There are a few limitations to this book. It is a rather rushed summary of a much larger work. It is not really possible to summarise a major five volume work in 130 pages. However, Alberigo does a fair enough job. He emphasises the originality of John XXIII and the novelty of the Vatican II documents. He does this to the detriment of due credit to Pius XII's encyclicals such as *Mediator Dei* or the pioneering theologians of the early twentieth century through to the 1950s. This limitation, however, has to do with the brevity of the book rather than to a paucity of historical facts.

MARTIN WHELAN

Maynooth

Bliain an Bhandé/Year of the Goddess. Gabriel Rosenstock. Dedalus. Pp. 91. Price €11.00.

In this provocatively pleasant little bilingual volume, the author, in a sense, finds himself back where he started some forty years ago in his first book, *Suzanne sa Seomra Folctha*, the hippie-inspired search for fulfilment in making love not war. Now, some hundred volumes later, he finds himself back in India on a devotional trip in search of an equally liberating insight. Just as *Suzanne* helped us regain our pre-Tridentine *joie de vivre*, so the present Goddess reinvigorates that pantheism that informed our earlier spirituality. West meets East here and the mystic insights of early Irish nature poetry are quickened by Indian enlightenment. The two traditions meet as Gaeilge in 'Turas' (52). The device of 'shading' used to link words, sounds and shapes points to mystical empathies and unities, prompting intimations of the divine throughout: 'Old Wall' (10), celebrates the creation and 'soul' of the structure; 'Ordinary Morning' (12), celebrates the 'extraordinary' joy of dawn; the sensuousness of 'Barefoot' (14) and of 'Were I a little bird' (13): 'Those berries on the holly / The same colour as Your lips / How birds hunger for You.' Some of these pious ejaculations work better in one language than the other: '**Ise**'/Ise/Mise/Mise/Fuist!' '**She**'/She/me/me/Shhhh!'

This celebration of life proclaims that the world is charged with the grandeur of God: 'April Gusts', 'Spring Showers', 'Summer' and 'Rain'

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are joyous hymns that celebrate the renewal of the face of the earth, not without universal biblical echoes; 'Hymn' echoes that all embracing opening of the *Book of Ecclesiastes*: 'To all things under heaven there is a season'.

There are efforts here that will find particular resonance with Irish speakers: 'Suan' (22), 'Fuath' (34), and lines the profundity of which are enriched by being in Irish: 'Ceo maidine is ea D'anáil/ Drúcht an tráth-nóna Do phaidrín' (37) and 'Asukavi' (58); some like old-Irish exemplary fables: 'Regurgitation' (43).

We have always felt the need to forge a language that voiced our finite babbling about the infinite. Rosenstock has added more sweet notes to our attempted hymn to infinity.

TADHG Ó DUSHLÁINE

Má Nuad

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