

## REVIEW

Thomas Michel, S.J., ed.

*Friends on the Way: Jesuits Encounter Contemporary Judaism*

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*Friends on the Way: Jesuits Encounter Contemporary Judaism* presents a number of the papers that were delivered at the Third International Colloquium of Jesuits in Jewish-Christian dialogue held in Zug, Switzerland in 2005. The contributors were asked to present research on famous Jews: rabbis, philosophers, biblical exegetes, and one literary critic. Most of the authors are Jesuits (or former Jesuits) who are actively engaged in Jewish-Christian dialogue. This is a valuable contribution to the dialogue of Christians and their Jewish interlocutors, who are truly friends on the way.

Some of the articles in the volume take up a conversation with recognized spiritual giants within the modern Jewish community: Joseph Dov Soloveitchik and Abraham Joshua Heschel. The basic thrust of these Jesuit writers is to compare the Jewish theology and spirituality with Ignatian spirituality. The two articles, written by Donald Moore and Stanislaw Obirek, that are focused on the spirituality of Heschel testify to his own aim of dialogue with his Christian partners: that it be based on mutual reverence, "that without denying profound differences, Jews and Christians will seek to help each other in understanding one's respective commitment and in deepening appreciation of what God means" (pp. 78-79).

For those interested in a contemporary Jesuit critique of modern Jewish biblical scholarship, Jean-Pierre Sonnet offers two articles on Robert Alter, Michael Fishbane, B. M. Levinson, and other scholars. These articles show to Christians that there is much to learn about Jewish approaches to the Hebrew Scriptures that is helpful for a Christian appreciation for the same texts. We learn about the role of inner biblical exegesis, hermeneutics of innovation, and contemporary narrative exegesis.

Two very interesting articles are testimonies to the literary work of Harold Bloom and the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt. The first contribution, by Peter Du Brul, is a very poignant testimony to what he describes as the "Canon, the Genius, and Wisdom of Bloom." He describes how the work of this author "swept him away" and remains such an inspirational literary figure in his life. Included in the article are letters that were exchanged between the two authors and a complete list of Harold Bloom's works. James Bernauer's critique of Hannah Arendt is a very notable response to her critique of Christianity, which serves as an example of how Jews and Christians should be able to challenge each other about the role of the Jewish and Christian traditions in our contemporary world.

A very interesting and original article is Donald Neuhaus' contribution concerning the Yad Vashem museum in Jerusalem. He asks the reader to consider approaching the Holocaust museum at Yad Vashem as a contemporary Jewish text and provides a very good analysis of the contents of it. He believes that more balance is needed in presenting the role of Christianity in Nazi Germany and the controversial issue of Pope Pius XII and the Jews during the Holocaust period.

Two articles do not seem to belong in a volume that is dedicated to contemporary Jesuit-Jewish relations: one on the early *conversos* (converted Jews) in the Society of Jesus and the other on the dialogue between Jew and non-Jew in the Bible and in rabbinic literature. These articles are very good in their overall content, but one questions why they appear in this volume. A couple of other articles would help balance the entire book, which is primarily contemporary in terms of content. For example, what would help justify the first article on Jesuit conversos would be to add another article on the early Jesuits and the Jewish community of Rome, which has been treated in the past (James W. Reites, "St Ignatius of Loyola and the Jews," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, Vol. 13, No. 4., September 1981), but should receive a new treatment.

*Friends on the Way* is a valuable collection of articles that show how one particular religious community within the Roman Catholic tradition is taking seriously the call of the 1965 Vatican document, *Nostra Aetate*, to engage in serious dialogue with our Jewish brothers and sisters: "Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues."