

Jan O'DOGHERTY, *Rekolekcje ze św. Josemaría Escrivá*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo M, 2006, 178 pp.

“A spiritual retreat with...” is a collection of books from Wydawnictwo M that collects texts from a great, recent spiritual master. In one volume readers can use these texts to have a retreat. It is not surprising that amongst the authors chosen for this collection, Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer is included. The message of his preaching had a great impact upon the teachings of the Church and in the spiritual life of thousands of Christians; and the retreats were one of his most important means of developing his pastoral activity.

Saint Josemaría never published a book with the preaching he would give during his retreats. However, his works provide abundant material to create a book of this type. Fr. Jan O'Dogherty explains that he tried to give the chosen texts in an order similar to the one followed by Saint Josemaría during the spiritual exercises he preached. The book contains fifteen chapters divided into five topics, and each chapter corresponds to a specific meditation. The topics could very well correspond to a five days retreat. In each chapter, O'Dogherty includes Saint Josemaría's preaching upon Jesus' hidden life so that the reader might come to know the characteristic elements of the teachings of the founder of Opus Dei.

The “meditations” are made out of fragments of Saint Josemaría's published texts. Although the meditations, by their nature, have no specific, rigid structure, making a coherent compilation without adding one sentence is no easy task. Fr. O'Dogherty, however, succeeds in this task. Each meditation is preceded by a commentary by O'Dogherty that summarizes Saint Josemaría's teachings on the subject at hand. It

often includes references to recent papal teachings, a technique which allows readers to see the impact on Saint Escrivá de Balaguer's work.

In the introduction to the book, O'Dogherty presents Saint Josemaria as a preacher. In the preface, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, Archbishop Emeritus of Krakow, briefly describes the apostolic work of the members of Opus Dei as a result of the preaching of its founder. This book is a good way to introduce oneself to the writings of Saint Josemaria.

Michal Kwitlinski