

Book Review

The IMPACT of GOD.

About the Author: Fr Iain Matthew is a priest who joined the Discalced Carmelites in Oxford in 1978. He has worked in parish and youth ministry, and has given retreats and courses in Europe and Australia. He is at present a chaplain at The London School of Economics.

The book is separated into five sections covering 20 chapters.

Part 1: ENTRY

Chapter1- Impact. Chapter2 - Echoing the Impact.

Chapter3 - Picking Up the Echo.

Part 2: GIFT

Chapter4 - a Quiet Man Speaks. Chapter5 - The Gospel Has Eyes

Part 3: SPACE

Chapter6 - The Right Kind of Emptiness. Chapter7 - Blockages.

Chapter8 - Some Kind of Remedy

Part 4: HEALING

Chapter9 - 'Night'. Chapter10- There is Somewhere to go.

Chapter11 - It Has to be God.

Chapter12 - Healing Darkness (I). Chapter13 - Healing Darkness (II).

Chapter14 - Beyond Sympathy.

Part 5: ENCOUNTER

Chapter15 - The Experience of God (I) Chapter16 - The Experience of God (II)

Chapter17 - A Question About Jesus.

Chapter18 - Jesus, the Experience of God.

Chapter19 - Prayer: Should we? Can we? Chapter20 - Prayer, a 'Being With'

Fr Iain Matthew beautifully surrenders us in to the mystery of Saint John of the Cross in this in-depth picture of a soul deeply in love with God. This book tells of the story of the radiance, expanse and depth of God's love for his creation. This is the God of Saint John of the Cross and it references his love poetry between God and his interaction with humanity.

This book is for those seeking a greater understanding of the writings of Saint John of the Cross. It is challenging and will make you see the importance of acquiring knowledge of God and the necessity of this search in order to grow. For instance Fr Iain analyses John's reference '*to acquire the facility for*' and asks the reader to look at challenges almost as rites of passage, "*there will be challenges in life on which depend our growing as people....the offer comes, and passes, and is gone, and we are still sitting, glued to ourselves....it keeps Christianity polite and well meaning, but neutralises its power to change the world... In order to remain supple for the moment of challenge that will one day come, get used. John says, to going beyond yourself. Make a point of not always doing just what comes most comfortably. Do not keep running but do keep fit. This is 'acquiring the facility'*"¹

You will find in the pages of this books love notes to a God who consumed Saint John's heart and mind. At each page I needed to pause, reflect and contemplate the wording and beauty of understanding. Fr Iain has an ability to see beyond the poetry stanzas of Saint John and to give us the reader a new insight and way of understanding the prose for example when he unpacks the theological meaning of the stanzas of Saint John when he wrote 'Living Flame.'

*"Flame, alive, compelling, yet tender past all telling, reaching the secret centre of my soul! Since now evasion's over, finish your work, my Lover, break the last thread, wound me."*² God who is constantly initiating a relationship with us whether we feel it, see it or respond to it.



Book Reviewed:

The IMPACT of GOD.

Author: Fr Iain Matthew

Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.

ISBN 978-0-340-61257-6

References:

¹P.47.

²P.24.

Upcoming Books

- ◆ Catholic for a Reason II, Scripture and the Mystery of the Mother of God.