

John Davis, Don McMonigle, Lynne Muir
The Gift of St. Francis
ISBN 0 85244 616 0
Gracewing, 2003, £7.99

David H. Williams
The Five Wounds of Jesus
ISBN 0 85244 620 9
Gracewing, 2004, £6.99

When I looked at the little book on *The Gift of St. Francis*, I thought that it was just another small book on Francis. I was pleasantly surprised. The contributors have had an eye for the essential, and have summarised things in a way that is very congenial (to me) in chapters entitled: *The World of Francis, A Call to Community, The Spirit of Francis, His Later Life, and His Legacy*. It is full of useful facts for someone planning a visit to Assisi, the sections are short and readable, and seem to me to have captured the central points of the background, the story of Francis' life and the developments since. It is up-to-date and includes the effects of the earthquake and the meetings for prayer for peace and for the environment which have united people of many religions there.

The second of these two books is on a theme which obviously resonates with Franciscans. The five wounds of Jesus are approached through the Old Testament background, leading on to the New Testament, to the symbolism used in the early Christian and medieval writers and the devotion as seen in liturgy and art. The chapter on Modern Times includes anything since the Reformation. The fifth chapter deals with the devotion as an expression of Christian Unity, including the Orthodox, various Anglican traditions, the early Non-conformists in Wales and others. The last three chapters are on *The Sacred Heart, the Gift of Tears, and The Stigmata*. There is much information on examples in this country of artistic work and of writings, but the connections with the rest of the Christian tradition are brought out including Franciscan examples from St. Clare and St. Bonaventure. It should be an informative book for anyone who is led in this direction.

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