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Touched By God
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If you like reading autobiographies, you will certainly enjoy this book. It is a collection of ten life stories, all of which are told with openness and frankness. The one common theme is that each of the authors was called by God to live the Benedictine life in the Roman Catholic Church.

The six men and four women who contributed come from very different backgrounds, and they are all sufficiently honest to write about their struggles both before and after entering the cloister.

One chapter begins with the words: "The last thing I wanted to do with my life was to become a nun." Most of the writers tell us a great deal about their childhood and formative years, sometimes with very intimate and personal details. Some were 'cradle catholics'. Others came from Anglican families, and they tell us of the steps that led to their conversion to Roman Catholicism. One of the writers was married and divorced, and after being granted a Canonical Dispensation was professed as a Benedictine nun at the age of 74.

For most of them it would appear that their struggles did not cease when they became members of the Order. They continued to face difficulties and temptations, and one of them almost reached the point of renouncing his vows in order to marry someone whom he had met in the course of his work. These 'ups and downs' show the very human side of those called to the cloister, and it is precisely this that makes the book particularly interesting.

This book makes fascinating reading, and it is the sort of book which is difficult to put down. However, this is only part of the story. Underlying all the ten chapters we can see lives of total commitment, despite all the difficulties on the path. In this way the book is inspirational.

Martin SSF