

REVIEW OF *MYSTIC STREET*. Reviewed by Renée Branigan, OSB
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There is a place called Mystic Street; it's where the truly mindful walk in grace. S. T. Georgiou's *Mystic Street: Meditations on a Spiritual Path* (Ottawa, Can.: Novalis, 2007, ISBN 978-2-89507-902-6, 319 pp., \$24.95) is a fitting follow through to his *The Way of the Dreamcatcher* on the poet-sage Robert Lax. He is still learning from the man whom Thomas Merton, since his college days, called both his friend and his spiritual superior.

As Brother Patrick Hart, OCSO, writes in the Foreword: "This delightful work progressively imparts a young Christian's interior journey; it is a wonderful, innovative blend of theocentric tradition and modern revelation. Positive and inspirational, these meditations demonstrate the power of grace in our everyday lives." Georgiou easily insists "Every street is 'Mystic Street'" and sets about to prove it in a series of meditations spoken simply but with vivid detail.

What unfold are experiences of grace in his life in the years of his earning his Ph.D. in theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. For his dissertation he chose to do a spiritual analysis of the poetry of his mentor Robert Lax (no small feat considering he was a minimalist poet!) who had always in their conversations told him to "go with the flow." Grace is the flow.

Grace is also the thread that Georgiou finds in his daily experiences and weaves into the tapestry of his life. There are 65 main chapters that teach by, for want of a better term, the "gentle awakening" method: Grace is there; you just need to open your senses to perceive it. Of course over the several-year span, some experiences are of greater significance than others, but the flow of grace is continuous and the chapters reveal how he awakened to the many discoveries.

The book is not only a good, gentle read with short chapters making it easy to pause for reflection, but the chapters themselves help you develop the habit of wakefulness to grace. It does not set out to be a how-to book, but the desire to be aware of grace alive in the moment (aka, to take a sensuous stroll on Mystic Street) becomes rather overwhelming.

The chapters have plenty I-wish-I-could-have-been-there moments. For example, one for me was when three teenage girls boarded the midnight subway laughing and shouting, disturbing the tired, dozing, zombie passengers who just wanted to be left unbothered. After a while, the girls quieted and began singing a stirring Gospel tune in harmony, praising the Lord. The tired were restored, the dozing were awakened, the zombies were enlivened and the wanting-to-be-left-alone were connected! When two rough looking thugs boarded the car there was a momentary lapse into tension and fear, but the girls not only kept on singing, they sang louder. Soon other passengers joined in the refrain. The chapter meditation was on music's impact on our body and spirit, but what a marvelous sparking moment in time!