

PREFACE

Two streams led me to writing this book. The first was Catholic mystical theology, and the second was Trinitarian theology. This preface will chart these two streams and how they came together for me in the Trinitarian mysticism of Adrienne von Speyr.

My undergraduate work at the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, was in Catholic Studies. Under Fr. J. Michael Joncas, I learned that the Catholic vision tries to reach out centrifugally to the whole in order to draw everything centripetally back into the one. He told me early on that I needed to read Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Seeing the Form*, which is the first volume of *The Glory of the Lord*. I was not yet prepared for that volume, but I always remembered his urgency when he recommended it.

During my undergraduate work, I had the opportunity to study at the Angelicum in Rome, where I met Fr. Paul Murray, OP. He introduced me to the poets and mystical theology, especially T. S. Eliot. Additionally, Dr. Michael Mikolajczak and Dr. Michael Jordan introduced me to the fertile relationship between literature and theology. For them, beauty points to holiness, and holiness points to beauty. The fruitfulness of Catholic theology was lived out for me in both Dr. Don Briel and Dr. Chris Thompson.

My first class at Marquette University was Introduction to Systematic Theology with Dr. Ralph Del Colle, from whom I learned that Trinitarian theology is our ultimate concern. Under him, I finally read von Balthasar's *Seeing the Form*. In this work and through Del Colle's teaching, I found the fruitful commingling of theology and mysticism that I knew was possible. The more I studied, the more I saw the Bible at the heart of theology and mysticism. Fr. William Kurz, SJ, showed me how this is possible with his theological, narrative interpretation, particularly in relation to the Gospel of John. Dr. Patrick Carey gave me the opportunity to explore early-twentieth-century mysticism in order to provide the necessary background to von Balthasar and

von Speyr's significantly different approach. Fr. David Coffey presented me with the opportunity to study the full image of the love theology of the Trinity, especially in Augustinian thought.

During my graduate studies, I went on retreat to the Benedictine monastery in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. I had thought about Adrienne von Speyr a lot and wondered if a study of her work was even possible. The retreat was guided by Fr. Justin Matro, OSB, who had recently completed his dissertation on her. He gave me a copy, and with great fervor I stayed up all night reading it. As the sun was rising that morning, I knew that I could fruitfully integrate mystical theology and Trinitarian theology by using the work of Adrienne von Speyr. My final class at Marquette was fittingly on Hans Urs von Balthasar with Fr. Raymond Gawronski, SJ. He guided me in understanding the theologically fruitful relationship between von Speyr and von Balthasar. He taught our class the urgent necessity of bringing sitting and kneeling theology together.

With the generous help of the Smith Family Traveling Fellowship, I was able to visit the Casa Balthasar in Rome, Italy, and the Hans Urs von Balthasar and Adrienne von Speyr Archives in Basel, Switzerland. I was also able to speak with Frau Cornelia Capol, who is one of the first members of the secular institute the Johannesgemeinschaft, which was cofounded by von Speyr and von Balthasar. I learned much from her, for which I am grateful. With the generous support of the Faculty Writing Initiative at St. John's University, New York, my book has come to life.

Under the guidance of my teachers, I have been able to see the fruitful integration of mystical theology and Trinitarian theology in the writings of Adrienne von Speyr. If there is anything of value here, it comes from my teachers.