

While Madsen's training in philosophy is evident in the chapter on light, the philosophical theory is enlightening and not overwhelming. In the chapter on human anguish and divine love, Madsen guides readers through the philosophical theories of good and evil and leaves them with a greater understanding of the mortal experience.

Madsen's insight into the purposes of gospel principles inspires a respect for his testimony, his ability to teach, and his knowledge of the gospel. He serves as an example of a radiant life.

—Jennifer Hurlbut

Crossing the Threshold of Hope,
by His Holiness John Paul II
(Alfred A. Knopf, 1994)

A happy combination of question and answer, this book has been a best seller. We get a sense of informality as Vittorio Messori—chosen because of his previous writing and because he is a believer—asks the questions and John Paul II answers in words intended to be understood.

Always articulate, the Pope responds to questions one by one: How does the Pope pray? If God exists, why is he hiding? Why so many religions? The Pope often refers to the declarations of Vatican II, which he defends as “*a great gift to the Church*, to all those who took part in it, to the entire human family, and to each of us individually” (157).

A spirit of reaching out, of dialogue, breathes through these pages.

Muslims are respected for their devotion to monotheism. Other Christians are not disparaged. Catholicism, we are told, rejects nothing that is good and true. But the Pope does not agree that everything is equal—not for him the fashionable relativism of the 1990s. Buddhism, for example, he pronounces essentially escapist and atheistic. The Pope's duty, he says, is to proclaim Christ.

Some Catholic feminist and proabortion groups, to judge from their public pronouncements and demands, cannot be happy with his emphatic answer to questions about abortion. Legalization of abortion is

none other than the authorization given to an adult, with the approval of an established law, to take the lives of children yet unborn and thus incapable of defending themselves. . . . *It is not possible to speak of the right to choose when a clear moral evil is involved*, when what is at stake is the commandment *Do not kill!* (205)

The conclusion, which provides the title for the book, is a discussion of the biblical expression “Be not afraid”: “*The power of Christ's Cross and Resurrection is greater than any evil which man could or should fear*” (219). The gospel is demanding, but Christ “reveals that *His demands never exceed man's abilities*” (223).

Although Latter-day Saints will naturally sift and recognize where their answers would agree and where they might vary, those not of the Catholic faith can find inspiration in the Pope's words.

—Davis Bitton