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# Review of “The Heirs of St. Teresa of Avila: Defenders and Disseminators of the Founding Mother's Legacy,” ed. Christopher Wilson

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**Christopher WILSON, Editor, *The Heirs of St. Teresa of Avila: Defenders and Disseminators of the Founding Mother's Legacy.*** Washington DC: ICS Publications, 2006. 140 pp. \$12.95 pb. ISBN 0-935216-40-5.

Reviewed by Jason Paul BOURGEOIS.

This little book, the ninth in the Carmelite Studies series by ICS Publications, contains seven essays examining the lives and thought of some of the most important followers of St. Teresa of Avila.

The first essay looks at Maria de San José, who was appointed prioress of the Discalced Carmelite convent in Seville. The author shows how St. Teresa disapproved of Maria's leadership style during her many crises, but also affirms that Maria learned much from the spirituality of St. Teresa.

The second essay examines St. Teresa's complex fascination with Fr. Jerónimo Gracián, her impetuous young spiritual director to whom she took a personal vow of obedience. It suggests that she saw her relationship with him to be one of spiritual marriage, but also of spiritual motherhood.

The third essay looks at Ana de San Agustín, a Carmelite nun who had several visions during and after the death of St. Teresa. Like St. Teresa, she consented to write down her visions and in doing so verified the importance of the interior spiritual life of religious women.

The fourth and fifth essays both examine the life of Bl. Anne de St. Bartholomew, one of the foundresses of the Carmelite convents in France and the Spanish Netherlands. Fr. Kieran Kavanaugh OCD examines how Fr. Pierre de Bérulle manipulated Bl. Anne into coming to France and remaining in obedience to him rather than to the Discalced Carmelite Friars as she wished. Christopher Wilson, in a richly illustrated essay, compares the iconography of Bl. Anne and her rival Ana de Jesús, to show how each of them was depicted as the legitimate successor of St. Teresa.

The sixth essay looks at a smattering of responses to St. Teresa of Avila by women throughout the globe within two centuries of her death, while the last essay compares the style of devotion to Saint Joseph in the writings of St. Francis de Sales and St. Teresa.

In all, these short essays offer an interesting look at the many personalities influenced by St. Teresa of Avila. The essays can mostly be characterized as historical rather than theological in nature. The book will be of interest primarily to students of the early history of the Discalced Carmelite reform.

