Enrico Impalà

Vita del Cardinal Martini. Il Bosco e il Mendicante. Rome: San Paolo Edizioni, 2014.

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When Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini passed away in 2012, a storm of (mostly Italian) newspaper articles appeared in honor of the archbishop, who had been both a scholar and a socially-conscious man of God. In him, it seemed that the Ambrosian tradition had found a great exponent, in the tradition of Carlo Borromeo in the sixteenth century.

Unfortunately, the discussion in the media focused on only two aspects of Martini's wide interests: namely, the dialogue between faith and atheism, and his societal involvement. Above all, this was due to his prolific journalistic activity, as a columnist for a national newspaper in Italy. With few exceptions, Martini's portrait, as rendered by these journalists, hardly resembled a Jesuit. Furthermore, the political categories so often used to describe his position with the college of cardinals impeded a nuanced understanding of his spiritual path.

Enrico Impalà's *Il Bosco e il Mendicante* [The Woods and the Beggar] aims to fill this gap. Among the many biographies that appeared after the cardinal's death, this well-written, anecdotal account deserves special attention, because its author was one of Martini's colleagues during his tenure in Milan. The book's curious title echoes a Hindu proverb that Martini was fond of quoting during his last years of pastoral work in Milan, to the effect that life has four stages: the first, when one learns from others; the second, when one teaches others; the third, when the time comes to enter the woods and meditate; and the last, when one becomes a beggar, since one requires help from everyone, for everything.

This "mantra"—as the author puts it—so pervades Martini's last speeches in public that it justifiably structures his biography. The book is divided into four parts, following the proverb, although the author has replaced the second stage, "Teaching," with the more comprehensive concept of "Serving."

The parts form something of a patchwork, as they differ in their approach to Martini's life. The first two parts follow a chronological order, while the last two are organized by the central themes and images of Martini's adulthood. Despite this heterogeneous structure, the book maintains a consistent style, punctuated by Martini's puns, wits, and insights, which renders it accessible and enjoyable to a broad audience. In particular, the diaries of Martini's secretary, Don Gregorio Valerio, impart an insider's perspective, so often lacking in literary treatments of Martini.

Martini's life was linked to the two great cities of northern Italy: Turin and Milan. Born in Turin, he was educated by the Jesuits, an order he was eventually to join, despite his parents' misgivings. Impalà also stresses Martini's enduring connection to Jerusalem, which was to influence some of the most important moments of his life.

Martini loved reading and reflecting upon Scripture, to such an extent that his engagement with the Bible was the primary influence on his intellectual life. While he was preparing his doctoral dissertation in Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute at Rome, the renowned exegete Henry Jenny urged him to work on the reconstruction of papyrus codices. This challenging philological endeavor proved a deeply enriching experience for Martini; he believed he had found not simply an avenue of intellectual inquiry, but even a key to living his life.

Impalà depicts Martini's years as rector of the Biblical Institute as the necessary outcome of that "revelation." The chapter entitled "Rector" also offers a vivid picture of Roman academic life in the aftermath of the II Vatican Council.

The abrupt departure from the rectorate of the Gregorian University is one of the clearest examples of Cardinal Martini's paradigmatically 'Jesuit' personality. In keeping with the prohibition on members of the Society holding positions in the Catholic hierarchy (unless directly commanded by the pope), the book presents a Jesuit with no expectation of becoming archbishop of Milan. Yet, the pope commanded, and he obeyed—even though he considered his shyness a major obstacle to discharging the office. He felt himself far more at ease in his studies than amid the social and administrative obligations of a bishop, to say nothing of archbishop of Milan.

It is here that Impalà develops the cultural and psychological connections between Martini and the Society of Jesus in more detail. The Jesuit spirit in which Martini undertook his duties in Milan was demonstrated in the very first words he addressed to his colleagues, on the subject of the qualities he required of his collaborators: "Wise discernment, amplitude of vision, ecclesial passion, sense of humor, brave testimony, interior freedom, evangelical *parrhesia* [speaking candidly], and dispassionate pursuit of truth" (81).

The reader acquainted with the history and spirituality of the Society will recognize its presence in Martini's spiritual profile as it emerges from this book (though this seems not to have been the author's conscious intention): a humble man, a scholar ready to alter his life radically in obedience to the pope, a citizen of the world in dialogue with diverse cultures, but with his heart always

directed towards Jerusalem—"the place," as he used to say, "where everyone was born."

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