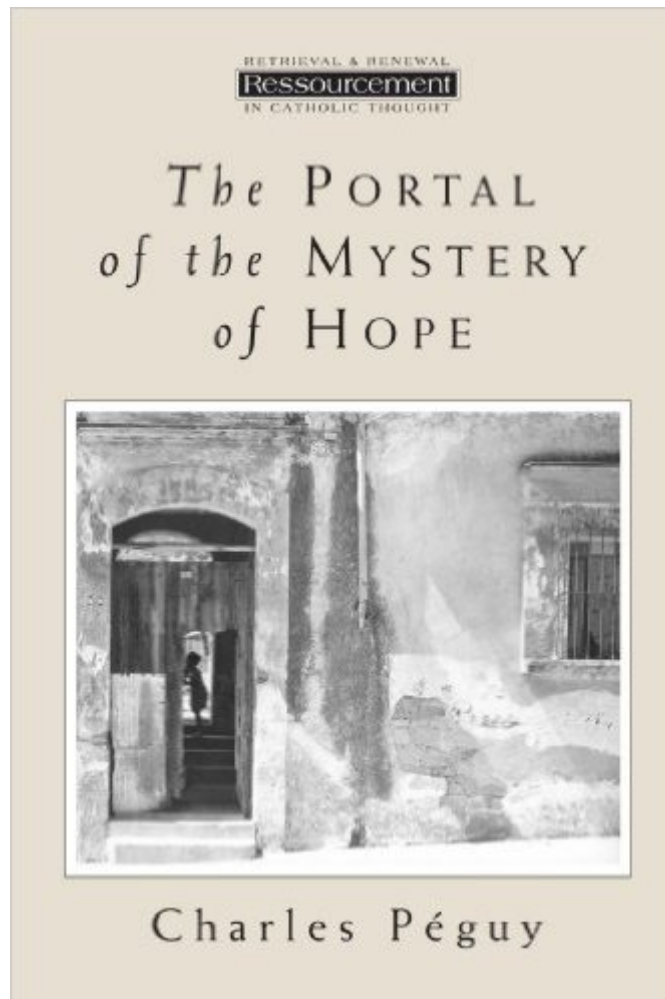


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The Portal Of The Mystery Of Hope (Ressourcement: Retrieval & Renewal In Catholic Thought)



Synopsis

The first critical edition of Peguy's poetry to appear in English, this volume offers a comprehensive theology ordered around the often-neglected second theological virtue, which is incarnated in his celebrated image of the "little girl Hope". This is a title in the Ressourcement: Retrieval and Renewal in Catholic Thought series.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Supernatural hope is one thing that this world desperately needs. Few writers who can teach us true hope better than the French poet, Charles Peguy. In his dramatic poem, *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*, Peguy has us listen in as Madame Gervaise, a 25-year-old Franciscan nun, teaches the young Joan of Arc her catechism beneath one of the great doorways of a cathedral. In fact, Madame Gervais's monologue is the whole poem, the mode of God's speaking to the young Joan of Arc and calling her to sainthood, and a way that God would speak to us through the poet and his drama. And how does God speak? In theological definitions? In the categories of philosophy? If this were so, Joan could have neatly deflected the attacks of the inquisitorial court. No, for Peguy, God speaks from the heart with the simplicity of a peasant father, in language that is permeated with the Psalms and the common language of the Gospels. He repeats himself often, not because he is a doddering old man, or because he is lecturing us, but because he is revealing still further dimensions to mysteries that we may regard as trite. And though the words repeat, the

meanings modulate and take on nuances previously inconceivable. In Peguy, God repeats himself because he would have us appreciate the depths of his creation, particularly hope: What surprises me, says God, is hope. And I can't get over it. This little hope who seems like nothing at all. This little girl hope. Immortal. (7) The translator, David Louis Schindler, Jr., has done very well in turning the French idiom of Peguy into English idiom. The lover of poetry will find this book very accessible, and the student of poetry will find avenues for further exploration.

A prefatory Note: This review is a little unusual. I wrote it years ago for a weblog, wherein I was discussing New Age texts and New Age ideology. And the need for a Christian response. I also wrote it very spontaneously. For it had HIT me with incredible power ... Rather than rewriting it now and lose the spontaneous quality, I am only going to shorten it somewhat, with the most minimal revision, leaving the original, unusual style and many New Age references intact: "Hardly more than 24 hours ago, as I write these words, I started to read *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*. Started to read, knowing almost nothing about the book or its author, the French Catholic poet Charles Péguy. Now having finished it, a day later, I am reeling ... What can I say? This is perhaps a book that should not be 'reviewed' at all, till one has read it ten or even twenty times ... One senses that much, so very much resides within ... The work of years, perhaps to excavate and that one cannot competently comment on, until much more is fathomed. But still my heart wants to record my first impressions ... My heart wants to proclaim, however inadequate my proclamation ... What do I say of your work, Charles Péguy? A work of profound, profound, profound and noble heart. A work by a man I know almost nothing about, save that he was evidently so very, very human ... A work covering so many varied themes ... from the glories of nature to the wisdom of children to the esoteric healing Power of the Night. Of the Mystery of Mary, Mother of God ... Of the Mystery of France, 'the eldest daughter of the Church' ...

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