**Book Review**

**‘Rebel Saints for 21st Century Girls’**

**Written by Joanna Moorhead and illustrated by Clare Kormoczy**

The vibrantly coloured cover of this book will be an immediate attraction to its young readers. The hardback ‘annual’ size is also an inviting feature. Inside, the rebel saints of the title, all women, are each presented with a bold and original illustration alongside a short biography.

The most striking quality of the stories told by Moorhead is their honesty. The women she writes about are not romanticised ideals of saintliness. They are not the sweet-faced, obedient and passive individuals of Catholic tradition. These are women of strength, intelligence and resourcefulness. They are reformers and trail-blazers who challenged authority and went to enormous lengths to achieve their vision for the church. Many suffered personal tragedy and debilitating illness. Yet the depth of their spirituality is evident as they endured and overcame these obstacles.

In describing their lives Moorhead makes clear the similarities between the issues faced by these women and the issues which still beset us today – war, poverty, prejudice and the oppression of women. Her decision to include women who have more recently helped to make a difference in the Catholic Church, and some from the past who have been routinely misrepresented, adds an energy to the purpose of the book. The stories do not try to gloss over the brutal reality of the times in which they lived but instead emphasise their remarkable achievements.

This is very much a girl’s book of saints with a difference – rebel women saints in an age which is calling again for women to lead the rebellion.