

Introduction

This book is the second in a series of volumes presenting the journals of Brother Roger, the founder of the Taizé Community in eastern France, an ecumenical community of brothers rooted in the monastic tradition. Today it numbers over eighty brothers, from over twenty-five different countries and from different Christian traditions, Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican and Catholic, who commit themselves for life to an existence made up of common prayer, work, and hospitality. Each year, tens of thousands of young and not-so-young seekers come to Taizé to spend a week of prayer and reflection in the context of a community life.

Brother Roger was born on May 12, 1915 in French-speaking Switzerland. His father, Charles Schutz, was a pastor in the Swiss Reformed Church, and his mother, Amélie Marsauche, came from a family whose roots were in France. Following his return to the faith after an adolescent religious crisis and a long bout with tuberculosis, he decided to study theology. Convinced that people needed living signs of the gospel to complement the proclamation of the Christian message, he became interested in what today are known as intentional communities.

When the Second World War broke out and the north of France was occupied by the Nazi armies, Roger felt called to leave neutral Switzerland and settle in France. He wanted to be close to the victims of the war, as well as continuing to reflect on the possible creation of a community. In August 1940 he found an abandoned house for sale in the small, isolated hamlet of Taizé, in

Burgundy, and purchased it. After the war, Taizé became the home of the community which Brother Roger founded and of which he served as prior until his tragic death on August 16, 2005 at the hand of a demented person, during evening prayer in the church.

Throughout his life, the founder of Taizé was in the habit of jotting down thoughts and reflecting on daily events in notebooks used for that purpose or on small bits of paper. Beginning in 1972, Brother Roger began publishing his diaries. The entries contained in this volume come from two books, *Que ta fête soit sans fin* (Festival without End), published in 1971, and *Lutte et contemplation* (Struggle and Contemplation), published in 1973. Since these texts were selected and sometimes written with a view to publication, they present a more continuous and accessible picture of the personal reflections of the founder of Taizé and the life of the community than the first volume, while still maintaining the freshness of a day-to-day contemplation of persons and events.