



Vol. 90  
No. 3

# Catholic Library World

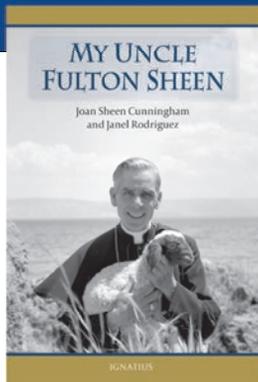
A stylized white icon of an open book with curved pages, positioned below the word 'Library' in the title.

*The Official Publication of the Catholic Library Association*

*March 2020*



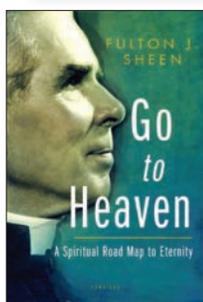
# THE BEST OF BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN



## ◆ My Uncle Fulton Sheen **NEW!**

Joan Sheen Cunningham and Janel Rodriguez

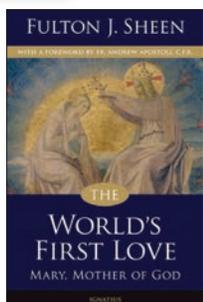
A touching, personal memoir by the niece of Bishop Sheen who moved to New York to be under his close guidance while attending a private school. He became a second father, a role model, and a lifelong friend to Joan, who warmly describes many formative experiences with Sheen. She fondly recollects how her uncle helped raise and educate her, guided her courtship, found her an apartment, baptized their children, and much more. *Includes rare photos.* MUFSP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$15.95



## ◆ Go To Heaven

Sheen breathes new meaning into truths about heaven and hell, faith and suffering, life and death. And shows us how to get to heaven. A must read!

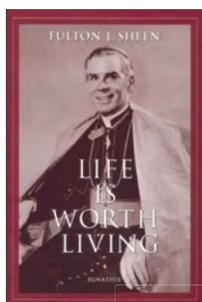
GTHP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95



## ◆ The World's First Love

With his characteristic brilliance, Sheen presents a moving portrayal of the Blessed Virgin Mary that combines deep spirituality with history, philosophy and theology. Sheen's personal favorite book of all his works.

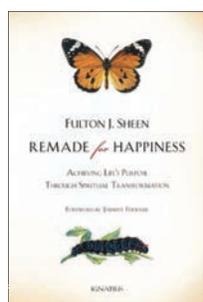
WFL2P . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95



## ◆ Through the Year with Fulton Sheen

Sheen offers inspirational words of encouragement, counsel, direction and practical advice for each day of the year!

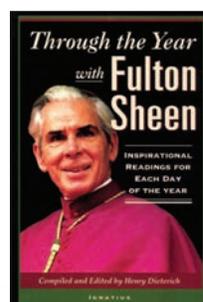
TYFSP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$16.95



## ◆ The Priest Is Not His Own

The beloved Archbishop presents a profound and deeply spiritual look at the meaning of the priesthood and relationship of the priest with Christ as an "alter Christus". A book every priest should read!

PNHOP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95



## ◆ Servant of All **FILM** Archbishop Fulton Sheen

This special double DVD includes an acclaimed new film, *Servant of All*, along with five episodes of his famous *Life is Worth Living* television series. *Servant of All* introduces the beloved Archbishop to a new generation that greatly needs his inspiring example of love for God and neighbor, and as a powerful evangelist.

**DVD VIDEO** SOAM . . . 2 discs, 200 min, \$24.95

## ◆ Life Is Worth Living

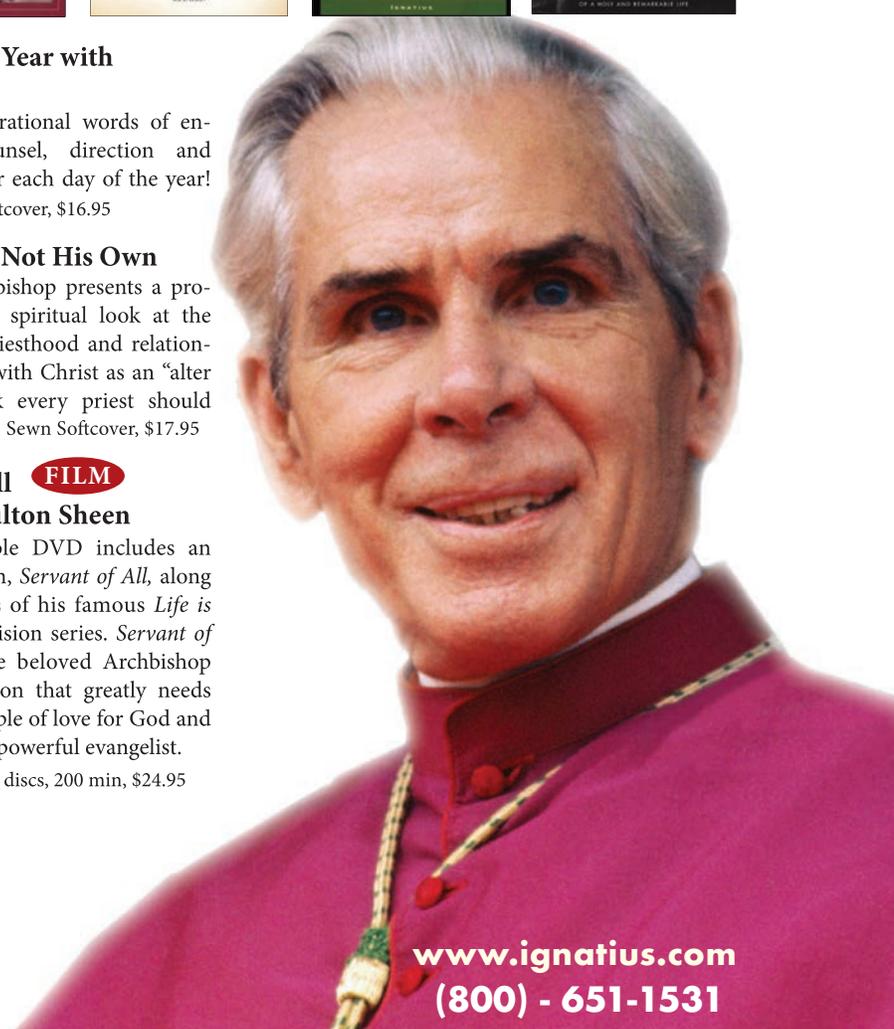
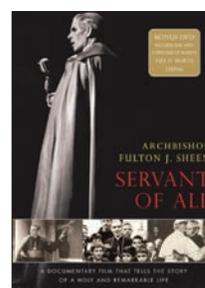
This book contains the full-length scripts of forty-four most popular episodes of Sheen's hit television series of the same name that covers a wide variety of important topics for living well.

LWLP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95

## ◆ Remade for Happiness

In this classic work Sheen explains the secret of authentic happiness: being spiritually remade through Christ, and how to make that happen.

RMFHP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$16.95



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# Catholic Library World

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March 2020

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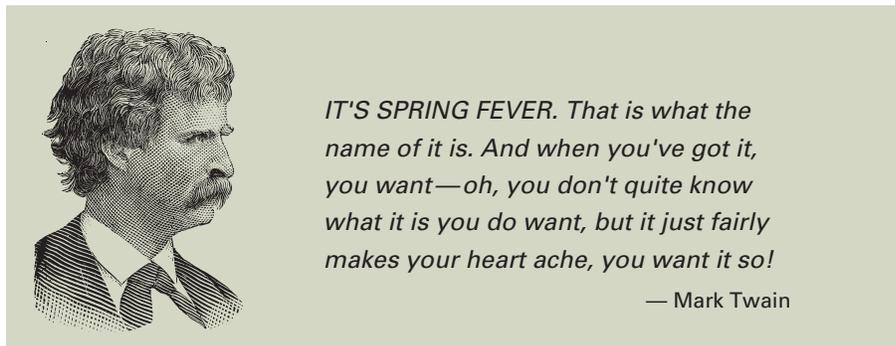
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# DEAR FRIENDS

A Letter from the CLA President



## Spring Brings New Energy



*IT'S SPRING FEVER. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want—oh, you don't quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!*

— Mark Twain

This seems to be a good definition for spring—a time of new growth, new interests, new activities after a long winter. Of course, depending on where you are, your winter may have been nearly nonexistent or unbearably harsh, but either way, the onset of spring does lend a new energy.

For the Catholic Library Association, spring has another meaning. It's time for our semi-annual gathering to celebrate each other and our association through the spring conference and awards events. As you will see in this issue of *Catholic Library World*, there are many causes for celebration. This issue highlights the CLA awards that will be presented during our spring conference on April 2. The recipients of these awards make up the majority of the conference program, and I am sure that each will have some interesting thoughts and ideas to share with us. We are also going to try something new during the mid-day break. We are planning to invite some guests to join us for a different kind of conversation.

By the time you receive this issue, conference registration will have opened. Remember that member registration is free, so please try to set aside some time on April 2 to join us. Of course, there is always a little price to pay—in this case I strongly encourage you to stay into the afternoon to attend our annual business meeting (we will try to keep it short). This will be your chance to catch up on the organizational activities of CLA over the past year and to weigh in on some of our ongoing plans. We do need your input to ensure that CLA is working to meet your needs, and this meeting is one way to share your ideas.

There are other ways to share and opportunities for involvement. You can always contact the CLA office at CLA Assistant (cla2@cathla.org) with questions or concerns. You are also invited to consider deepening your involvement by volunteering to serve on one of our committees. We can always find a place for one more. Kathryn Shaughnessy, our vice-president/president-elect, will be reviewing committee assignments and making appointments over the next few months.

So, happy spring, happy anticipation, and a happy season to you all. I look forward to hearing from you this spring.

*Jack Fritts, President*



## From the Editor

Editing every March issue of *Catholic Library World (CLW)* is exciting work because I learn about the Association award winners as they are decided, and conference planning as it takes shape. Of course the editing work also always provides me with a large number of titles to add to my “to read” list of books. More than one hundred book reviews, articles, and interviews in *CLW* suggest excellent reading material. This issue has prompted me to add three titles in particular to my list of books to read.

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* (Delacorte Press, 1995) is an award-winning book by this year’s Regina Medal recipient, Christopher Paul Curtis. Curtis has written a number of award-winning books, and this one has received twenty-five.

*The Virgin of Prince Street* (University of Nebraska Press, 2019) by Sonja Livingston is another title that I have added to my list. *CLW* readers have requested more author interviews and longer book reviews, as well as the inclusion of more books published by university presses. Jen Cullerton Johnson provides both an interview and an introduction to a book from a university press in this issue, introducing an author worthy of reading.

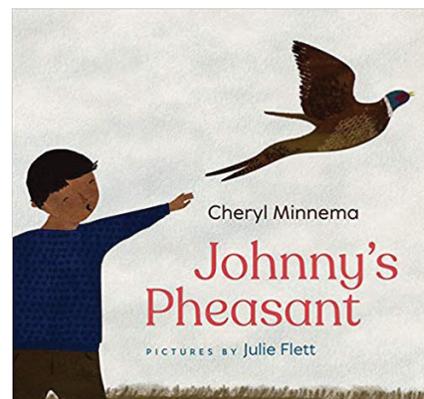
*Mercy in the City* is the third book I plan to read, and it was written by Kerry Weber Lynch, who gave the keynote address during the fall 2019 CLA conference. Her keynote address can be read on page 182. In it, and in her book, she writes about mercy, and reminds us that we can carry out corporal works of mercy in our everyday vocation as librarians.

In addition to book recommendations, this issue is full of awards. The Charlotte Zolotow Award, the Sophie Brody Medal, and the Jewish Fiction Award have been named as well as the ALA Youth Media Awards on pages 165-170. The Catholic Library Association’s own awards are announced as part of the schedule for the Spring 2020 Virtual Conference on pages 171-172. I look forward to joining other CLA members at our virtual conference on April 2.

I hope this March issue gives every reader a list of books to read, to buy for a library, and to recommend to other readers.

*Sigrid Kelsey, CLW General Editor*

## Library/ Publishing/ Archives World



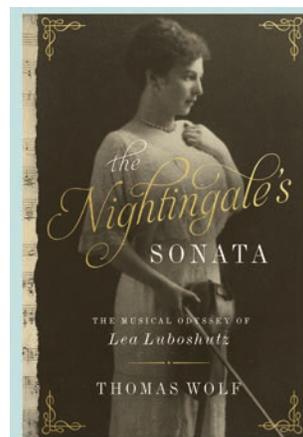
### Charlotte Zolotow Award

Cheryl Minnema received the 2020 Charlotte Zolotow Award for *Johnny's Pheasant*, written by Minnema and illustrated by Julie Flett.

The award is given by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

### Sophie Brody Medal

*The Nightingale's Sonata: The Musical Odyssey of Lea Luboshutz* by Thomas Wolf. Published by Pegasus Books.



Honorable Mentions:

*Strangers and Cousins* by Leah Hager Cohen. Published by Riverhead Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

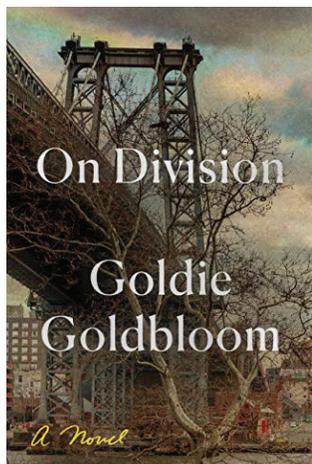
*The World That We Knew* by Alice Hoffman. Published by Simon & Schuster.

*The Guarded Gate: Bigotry, Eugenics and the Law That Kept Two Generations of Jews, Italians and Other European Immigrants Out of America* by Daniel Okrent. Published by Scribner, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

The Sophie Brody Medal was first awarded in 2006, and is given to encourage, recognize, and commend outstanding achievement in Jewish literature. Works for adults published in the United States in the preceding year are eligible for the award.

**Jewish Fiction Award**

*On Division*, by Goldie Goldbloom (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) is the recipient of the 2020 Jewish Fiction Award, awarded by the Association of Jewish Libraries. *The Flight Portfolio* by Julie Orringer (Knopf) is the Honor Book winner.



**2019 ALA Youth Media Awards**

Recognized worldwide for the high quality they represent, American Library Association awards guide parents, educators, librarians, and others in selecting the best materials for youth. Selected by judging committees of librarians and other children's literature experts, the awards encourage original and creative work. For more information on the ALA youth media awards and notables, visit the ALA website at [ala.org](http://ala.org).

**John Newbery Medal**

*New Kid*; written and illustrated by Jerry Craft; HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers.

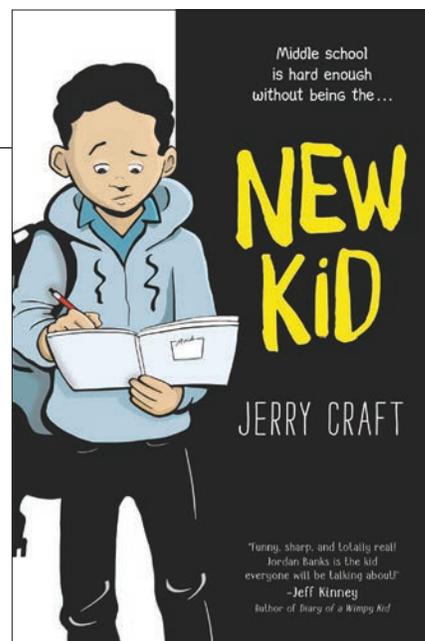
**Newbery Honor Books**

*The Undeclared*; by Kwame Alexander; illustrated by Kadir Nelson; Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*Scary Stories for Young Foxes*; by Christian McKay Heidicker; illustrated by Junyi Wu; Henry Holt and Company, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group.

*Other Words for Home*; by Jasmine Warga; Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

*Genesis Begins Again*; by Alicia D. Williams; Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, a Caitlyn Dlouhy Book.



**Randolph Caldecott Medal**

*The Undeclared*; by Kwame Alexander; illustrated by Kadir Nelson; Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

**Caldecott Honor Books**

*Bear Came Along*; by Richard T. Morris; illustrated by LeUyen Pham; Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group.

*Double Bass Blues*; by Andrea J. Loney; illustrated by Rudy Gutierrez; Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

*Going Down Home with Daddy*; by Kelly Starling Lyons; illustrated by Daniel Minter; Peachtree Publishers.

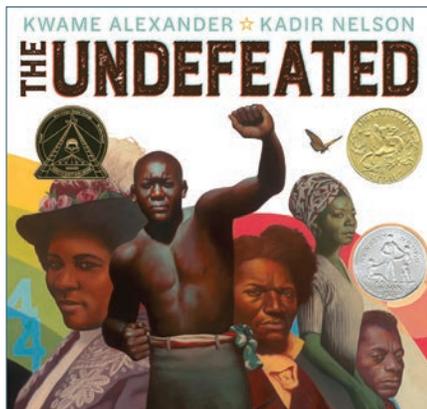
**Coretta Scott King (Author) Book Award**

*New Kid*; written and illustrated by Jerry Craft; HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers.

**King Author Honor Books**

*The Stars and the Blackness Between Them*; by Junauda Petrus; Dutton Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.

*Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*; by Kwame Mbalia; Disney-Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book Group.



*Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks*; by Jason Reynolds; Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, a Caitlyn Dlouhy Book.

**Coretta Scott King (Illustrator) Book Award**

*The Undeclared*; by Kwame Alexander; illustrated by Kadir Nelson; Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

**King Illustrator Honor Books**

*The Bell Rang*; written and illustrated by James E. Ransome; Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, a Caitlyn Dlouhy Book.

*Infinite Hope: A Black Artist's Journey from World War II to Peace*; written and illustrated by Ashley Bryan; Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, a Caitlyn Dlouhy Book.

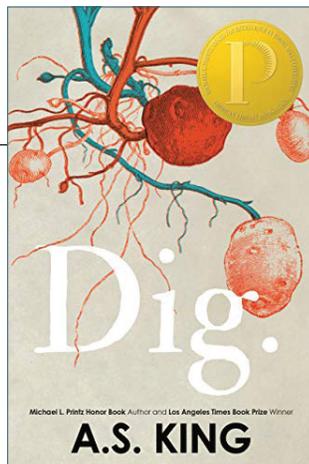
*Sulwe*; by Lupita Nyong'o; illustrated by Vashti Harrison; Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.

**Coretta Scott King–John Steptoe New Talent Author Award**

*Genesis Begins Again*; by Alicia D. Williams; Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, a Caitlyn Dlouhy Book.

**Coretta Scott King–John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award**

*What Is Given from the Heart*; by Patricia C. McKissack; illustrated by April Harrison; Schwartz & Wade Books, an imprint of Random House



Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

**Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement**

Mildred D. Taylor

**Michael L. Printz Award**

*Dig*; by A.S. King; Dutton Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers, a division of Penguin Random House.

**Printz Honor Books**

*The Beast Player*; by Nahoko Uehashi; translated by Cathy Hirano; Godwin Books/Henry Holt, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

*Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me*, by Mariko Tamaki, illustrated by Rosemary Valero-O'Connell, First Second/Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

*Ordinary Hazards: A Memoir*; by Nikki Grimes; Wordsong, an imprint of Boyds Mills & Kane.

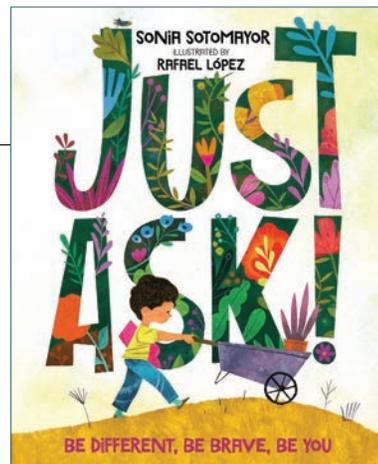
*Where the World Ends*; by Geraldine McCaughrean; Flatiron Books, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers.

**Schneider Family Book Award for Young Children (ages 0-10)**

*Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You*; by Sonia Sotomayor; illustrated by Rafael López; Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.

**Schneider Family Honor Book for Young Children**

*A Friend for Henry*; by Jenn Bailey; illustrated by Mika Song; Chronicle Books LLC.



**Schneider Family Book Award for Middle Grades (ages 11-13)**

*Song for a Whale*; by Lynne Kelly; Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

**Schneider Family Honor Book for Middle Grades**

*Each Tiny Spark*; by Pablo Cartaya; Kokila Penguin Young Readers Group, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.

**Schneider Family Book Award for Teens (ages 13-18)**

*Cursed*; by Karol Ruth Silverstein; Charlesbridge.

**Schneider Family Honor Book for Teens**

*The Silence Between Us*; by Alison Gervais; Blink.

**Alex Awards**

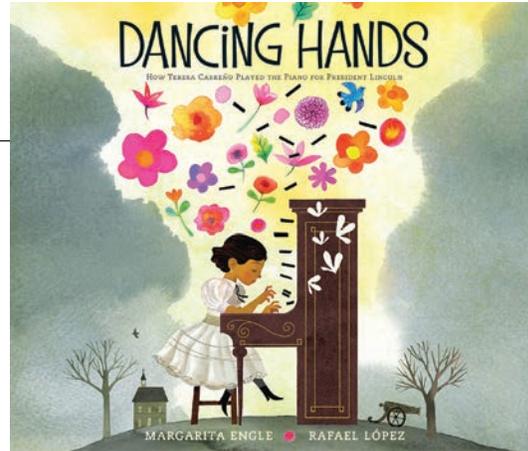
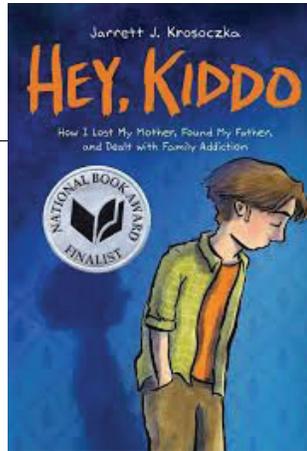
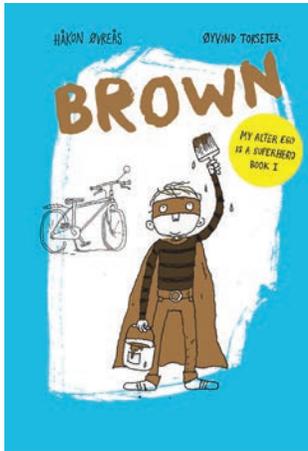
*A Boy and His Dog at the End of the World*; by C.A. Fletcher; Orbit, a division of Hachette Group.

*Do You Dream of Terra-Two?*; by Temi Oh; Saga Press/Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

*Dominicana*; by Angie Cruz; Flatiron Books, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers.

*Gender Queer: A Memoir*; by Maia Kobabe; Lion Forge, an imprint of Oni Press.

*High School*; by Sara Quin and Tegan Quin; MCD, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers.



*In Waves*; by A.J. Dungo; Nobrow.  
*Middlegame*; by Seanan McGuire; Tor.com Publishing, an imprint of Tom Doherty Associates, a division of Macmillan.

*The Nickel Boys*; by Colson Whitehead; Doubleday, a division of Penguin Random House.

*Red, White & Royal Blue*; by Casey McQuiston; St. Martin's Griffin, a division of St. Martin's Publishing Group, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers.

*The Swallows*; by Lisa Lutz; Ballantine Books, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House.

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**Children's Literature Legacy Award**  
Kevin Henkes

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**Margaret A. Edwards Award**  
Steve Sheinkin

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**2020 ALSC Children's Literature Lecture Award**  
Dr. Rudine Sims

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**Mildred L. Batchelder Award**  
*Brown*; by Håkon Øvreås; illustrated by Øyvind Torseter; translated from the Norwegian by Kari Dickson; Enchanted Lion Books.

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**Batchelder Honor Books**  
*The Beast Player*; by Nahoko Uehashi; illustrated by Yuta Onoda; translated from the Japanese by Cathy Hirano; Godwin Books/Henry Holt, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

*The Distance Between Me and the Cherry Tree*; by Paola Peretti; illustrated by Carolina Rabei; translated from the Italian by Denise Muir; Atheneum Books

for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.

*Do Fish Sleep?*; by Jens Raschke; illustrated by Jens Rasmus; translated from the German by Belinda Cooper; Enchanted Lion Books.

*When Spring Comes to the DMZ*; written and illustrated by Uk-Bae Lee; translated from the Korean by Chungyon Won and Aileen Won; Plough Publishing House.

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**Odyssey Award**

*Hey, Kiddo: How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction*; by Jarrett J. Krosoczka; narrated by the author, Jeanne Birdsall, Jenna Lamia, Richard Ferrone and a full cast; produced by Scholastic Audiobooks.

---

**Odyssey Honor Audiobooks**

*Redwood and Ponytail*; by K.A. Holt; narrated by Cassandra Morris and Tessa Netting; produced by Hachette Audio.

*Song for a Whale*; by Lynne Kelly; narrated by Abigail Revasch with the author; produced by Listening Library, an imprint of the Penguin Random House Audio Publishing Group.

*We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga*; by Traci Sorell; narrated by Lauren Hummingbird, Agalisiga (Choogie) Mackey, Ryan Mackey, Traci Sorell, and Tonia Weavel; produced by Live Oak Media.

*We're Not from Here*; written by Geoff Rodkey; narrated by Dani Martineck; produced by Listening Library, an imprint of the Penguin Random House Audio Publishing Group.

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**Pura Belpré Illustrator Award**

*Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played the Piano for President Lincoln*; by Margarita Engle; illustrated by Rafael López; Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.

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**Belpré Illustrator Honor Books**

*Across the Bay*; written and illustrated by Carlos Aponte; Penguin Workshop, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.

*My Papi Has a Motorcycle*; by Isabel Quintero; illustrated by Zeke Peña; Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.

*¡Vamos! Let's Go to the Market*; written and illustrated by Raúl Gonzalez; Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

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**Pura Belpré Author Award**

*Sal and Gabi Break the Universe*; by Carlos Hernandez; Disney-Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book Group.

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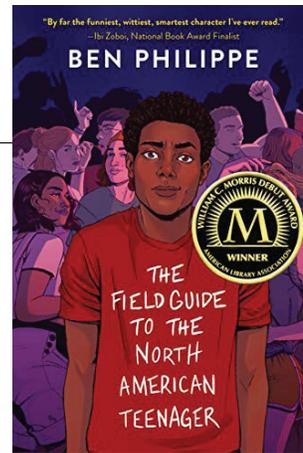
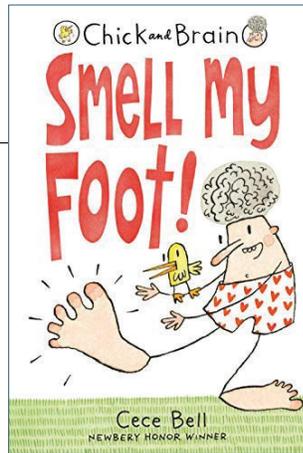
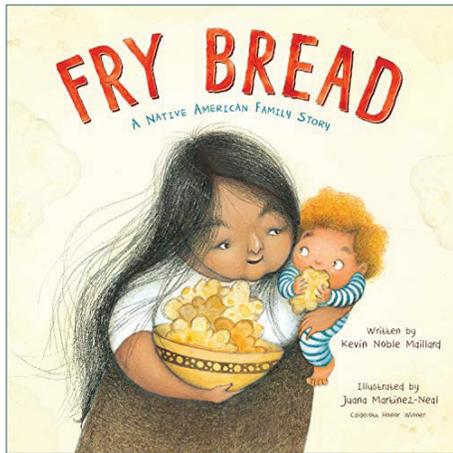
**Belpré Author Honor Books**

*Lety Out Loud*; by Angela Cervantes; Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.

*The Other Half of Happy*; by Rebecca Balcárcel; Chronicle Books.

*Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré*; by Anika Aldamuy Denise; illustrated by Paola Escobar; HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers.

*Soldier for Equality: José de la Luz Sáenz and the Great War*; written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh; Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of ABRAMS.



**Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award**

*Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*; by Kevin Noble Maillard; illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal; Roaring Brook Press, a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings.

**Sibert Honor Books**

*All in a Drop: How Antony van Leeuwenhoek Discovered an Invisible World*; by Lori Alexander; illustrated by Vivien Mildenerger; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*This Promise of Change: One Girl's Story in the Fight for School Equality*; by Jo Ann Allen Boyce and Debbie Levy; Bloomsbury Children's Books.

*Ordinary Hazards: A Memoir*; by Nikki Grimes; WordSong, an imprint of Highlights.

*Hey, Water!*; written and illustrated by Antoinette Portis; Neal Porter Books, Holiday House.

**The Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Award**

*Molly of Denali*; produced by PBS Kids.

**The Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Honor Recipients**

*Seek*; produced by iNaturalis.

*States of Matter* by Tinybop; produced by Tinybop, Inc.

**Stonewall Book Award-Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's & Young Adult Literature Award**

*When Aidan Became a Brother*; written by Kyle Lukoff; illustrated by Kaylani Juanita; Lee & Low Books.

*The Black Flamingo*; by Dean Atta; illustrated by Anshika Khullar; Hodder Children's Books, an imprint of Hachette Children's Group, part of Hodder and Stoughton.

**Stonewall Honor Books**

*Pet*; by Akwaeke Emezi; *Make Me a World*, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

*Like a Love Story*; by Abdi Nazemian; Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

*The Best at It*; by Maulik Pancholy; Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

**Theodor Seuss Geisel Award**

*Stop! Bot!*; written and illustrated by James Yang; Viking, Penguin Young Readers.

**Geisel Honor Books**

*Chick and Brain: Smell My Foot!*; written and illustrated by Cece Bell; Candlewick Press.

*Flubby Is Not a Good Pet!*; written and illustrated by J. E. Morris; Penguin Workshop, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

*The Book Hog*; written and illustrated by Greg Pizzoli; Disney-Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book Group.

**William C. Morris Award**

*The Field Guide to the North American Teenager*; by Ben Philippe; Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

**William C. Morris Finalists**

*The Candle and the Flame*; by Nafiza Azad; Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic.

*Frankly in Love*; by David Yoon; G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers, a division of Penguin Random House.

*Genesis Begins Again*; by Alicia D. Williams; Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, a Caitlyn Dlouhy Book.

*There Will Come a Darkness*; by Katy Rose Pool; Henry Holt, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

**YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults**

*Free Lunch*; by Rex Ogle; Norton Young Readers, an imprint of W.W. Norton & Company.

**YALSA Award Finalists**

*The Great Nijinsky: God of Dance*; written and illustrated by Lynn Curlee; Charlesbridge Teen.

*A Light in the Darkness: Janusz Korczak, His Orphans, and the Holocaust*; by Albert Marrin; published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House.

*A Thousand Sisters: The Heroic Airwomen of the Soviet Union in World War II*; by Elizabeth Wein; Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

*Torpedoed: The True Story of the World War II Sinking of 'The Children's Ship'*; by Deborah Heiligman; Henry Holt, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

**Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature**

**The Picture Book Category**

*Queen of Physics: How Wu Chien Shiung Helped Unlock the Secrets of the Atom*; by Teresa Robeson; illustrated by Rebecca Huang; published by Sterling Children's Books.

# NEWS NOTES

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## Picture Book Honor Title

*Bilal Cooks Daal*; by Aisha Saeed; illustrated by Anoosha Syed; Salaam Reads/Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing.

## The Children's Literature Category

*Stargazing*; by Jen Wang; First Second, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

## Children's Literature Honor Title

*I'm Ok*; by Patti Kim; Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing.

## The Young Adult Literature Category

*They Called Us Enemy*; by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, and Steven Scott; illustrated by Harmony Becker; Top Shelf Productions, an imprint of IDW Publishing.

## Young Adult Literature Honor Title

*Frankly in Love*; by David Yoon; G. P. Putnam's Sons, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

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## Sydney Taylor Book Award Presented by the Association of Jewish Libraries

### Picture Book Category

*The Book Rescuer: How a Mensch from Massachusetts Saved Yiddish Literature for Generations to Come*; by Sue Macy; illustrated by Stacy Innerst; Paula Wiseman Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

### Picture Book Honor Titles

*Gittel's Journey*; by Lesléa Newman; illustrated by Amy June Bates; Abrams Books for Young Readers.

*The Key from Spain: Flory Jagoda and Her Music*; by Debbie Levy; illustrated by Sonja Wimmer; Kar-Ben Publishing, a division of Lerner Publishing Group.

### Middle Grade Category

*White Bird: A Wonder Story*; by R. J. Palacio; Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

## Middle Grade Honor Titles

*Anya and the Dragon*; by Sofiya Pasternack; Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*Games of Deception: The True Story of the First U.S. Olympic Basketball Team at the 1936 Olympics in Hitler's Germany*; by Andrew Maraniss; Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

## Young Adult Category

*Someday We Will Fly*; by Rachel DeWoskin; Viking Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

## Young Adult Honor Titles

*Dissenter on the Bench: Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Life and Work*; by Victoria Ortiz; Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*Sick Kids in Love*; by Hannah Moskowitz; Entangled Teen, an imprint of Entangled Publishing LLC.

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## American Indian Youth Literature Award, administered by the American Indian Library Association (AILA)

### The Picture Book Category

*Bowwow Powwow: Bagosenjigeniimi'idim*; by Brenda J. Child (Red Lake Ojibwe); translated into Ojibwe by Gordon Jourdain (Lac La Croix First Nation); illustrated by Jonathan Thunder (Red Lake Ojibwe); Minnesota Historical Society Press.

### Picture Book Honor titles

*Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*; by Kevin Noble Maillard; illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal; Roaring Brook Press, a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings.

*Birdsong*; written and illustrated by Julie Flett (Cree-Métis); Greystone Kids.

*At the Mountain's Base*; by Traci Sorell (Cherokee); illustrated by Weshoyot Alvitre (Tongva/Scots-Gaelic); Kokila/Penguin Random House.

*We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga*; by Traci Sorell (Cherokee); illustrated by Frané Lessac; Charlesbridge.

*Raven Makes the Aleutians*; adapted from a traditional Tlingit story and illustrated by Janine Gibbons (Haida, Raven of the Double-Finned Killer Whale clan, Brown Bear House); Sealaska Heritage.

## Middle Grade Book Winner

*Indian No More*; written by Charlene Willing McManis (Umpqua/Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde) with Traci Sorell (Cherokee); cover art by Marlena Myles (Spirit Lake Dakota, Mohegan, Muscogee Creek); Tu Books / Lee & Low.

## Middle Grade Book Honor Titles

*I Can Make This Promise*; by Christine Day (Upper Skagit); cover art by Michaela Goade (Tlingit, Kiks.ádi clan, Steel House); HarperCollins.

*The Grizzly Mother*; by Hetxw'ms Gyetxw ("Brett D. Huson," Gitxsan); illustrated by Natasha Donovan (Métis Nation of British Columbia); Highwater Press.

## The Young Adult Book Winner

*Hearts Unbroken*; Cynthia Leitich Smith (Muscogee); Candlewick Press.

## Young Adult Book Honor Titles

*Surviving the City*; by Tasha Spillett (Nehiyaw-Trinidadian); illustrated by Natasha Donovan (Métis Nation of British Columbia); Highwater Press.

*Reawakening Our Ancestors' Lines: Revitalizing Inuit Traditional Tattooing*; gathered and compiled by Angela Hovak Johnston (Inuk); photography by Cora De Vos (Inuk); Inhabit Media.

*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People*; by Debbie Reese (Nambé Owingeh) and Jean Mendoza; adapted from the adult book by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz; Beacon Press.

*Apple in the Middle*; by Dawn Quigley (Ojibwe, Turtle Mountain Band); North Dakota State University Press. ■



## Spring 2020 Virtual Conference

Thursday, April 2 • 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### SCHEDULE

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

**Introduction and  
Opening Prayer**

10:15 – 11:15 a.m.

**Aggiornamento Award**

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**Regina Medal**

12:30 – 1:15 p.m.

**Lunch and Chat Room Break**

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.

**St. Katharine Drexel Award**

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

**Jerome Award**

3:15 – 3:30 p.m.

**Break**

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

**Business Meeting and  
Mary A. Grant Award**

4:30 p.m.

**Closing Remarks**

**Registration: CathLA.org**

**Zoom: Web Conferencing**

Sign up in advance for Zoom at <https://zoom.us/>. Convention participation instructions will be e-mailed prior to the event.

Times noted are Eastern time. The sessions will be recorded and CLA members will have access to the full recordings at no charge.

### AGGIORNAMENTO AWARD

#### FORMED

FORMED provides the very best Catholic content from more than 75 organizations to nearly one million Catholics around the world. Supporting thousands of movies, children's programs, ebooks, audio, parish programs, and studies direct to your browser, mobile or connected device, FORMED helps parishes, families, and individuals explore their faith anywhere.

Matt Meeks is the Chief Marketing and Innovation Officer at the Augustine Institute and Director of FORMED. He previously served as Chief Digital and Marketing Officer at the Los Angeles Archdiocese and in various executive positions in the advertising and entertainment industries.

Matt's background in media, communications, and analytics is strengthened by his global perspective and passion for creative thought, human expression, and technology. Meeks has advised Hollywood studios, game developers and publishers, celebrity talent, and tech startups from an enterprise, brand, product, and campaign standpoint with an exemplary track record recruiting, training, and managing driven teams that achieve success and positively impact the bottom line.

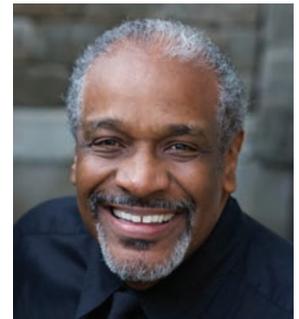
The Aggiornamento Award, established in 1980, is presented by the Parish and Community Library Services Section through the Aggiornamento Award Committee. It is awarded annually in recognition of an outstanding contribution made by an individual or an organization for the renewal of parish and community life in the spirit of Saint John XXIII (1881-1963).



### REGINA MEDAL

#### Christopher Paul Curtis

The recipient of the sixty-first Regina Medal is renowned author Christopher Paul Curtis. Read about his life and work in this issue's Regina Medal article on page 177.



### ST. KATHARINE DREXEL AWARD

#### Dr. Lesley J. Farmer

Dr. Lesley Farmer, professor at California State University–Long Beach, is the 2020 St. Katharine Drexel Award recipient.

At CSU, Long Beach, Farmer coordinates the Teacher Librarianship program and manages the California State University ICT Literacy Project. She earned her M.S. in library science at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and received her doctorate in adult education from Temple University. Farmer has worked as a teacher-librarian in K-12 independent and public school settings as well as in academic, public, and special libraries. She has chaired the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) School Libraries Section, serves as the International Association of School Librarianship's Library Education Special Interest Group chair, and is a Fulbright scholar. Among other awards, she was honored with the ALA Beta Phi Mu Award for contributions to library education, and the Library Instruction Round Table



Librarian Recognition Award. A frequent presenter and writer for the profession, including for *Catholic Library World*, Farmer's research interests include information and digital literacy, technology equity issues, and assessment. Farmer's most recent books include *Managing the Successful School Library* (American Library Association, 2017), *Library Improvement through Data Analytics* (American Library Association, 2016), and *Information and Digital Literacies: A Curricular Guide for Middle and High School Librarians* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

The St. Katharine Drexel Award was established in 1966 under the title Certificate of Merit and renamed in 2002. Presented by the High School and Young Adult Library Services Section through the St. Katharine Drexel Award Committee, the St. Katharine Drexel Award recognizes an outstanding contribution to the growth of high school librarianship.

## JEROME AWARD

### Mariological Society of America

The Mariological Society of America (MSA) is CLA's 2020 Jerome Award Recipient. The MSA is a Catholic theological association dedicated to studying and making known the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of Christ and in the Church and in the history of salvation. Through its annual meetings and in its publications, the society seeks to promote comprehensive and integrated study of the person and the role of the Virgin Mary so as to foster a well-informed and theologically sound devotion and spirituality.



The Mariological Society of America was founded by Fr. Juniper B. Carol, OFM, in October 1949. The charter members gathered for the first meeting in Washington, D.C., in January 1950. Since that time, the MSA has met annually in various cities throughout the United States. In 1954, the society was recognized as a corporation "organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes." Listed in the *Official Catholic Directory* as one of the national organizations of the United States Catholic Conference, it is recognized as a tax-exempt organization. Since 1979, the office of the executive secretary of the MSA has been located at the Marian Library of the University of Dayton.

Fr. Tom Thompson, SM, will accept the award on behalf of the MSA. Thompson is a member of the Society of Mary (Marianists) and is the secretary/treasurer of the MSA. Since entering the Marianists, he has taught at high schools and colleges and has always been associated with the libraries at his respective

institutions. He has studied at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. For the last thirty years, he has been at the Marian Library of the University of Dayton, teaching in the International Marian Research Institute. His academic interests include liturgy, Marian devotion, and ecumenism.

The Jerome Award, established in 1992, is presented by the Academic Libraries, Archives, and Library Education Section through the Jerome Award Committee. Named after St. Jerome (331-420), Doctor of the Church, and patron of librarians, it is awarded in recognition of outstanding contribution and commitment to excellence in scholarship which embody the ideals of the Catholic Library Association.

## MARY A. GRANT VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

### Elyse Hayes



Elyse Hayes is the 2020 Mary A. Grant Volunteer Service Award recipient. Hayes has been the Director of Library and Information Services at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, New York, since 2002. Previous to this role, she was the Review Editor of *The Seat of Wisdom*, and was the Public Services Librarian at both Huntington Public Library and South Huntington Public Library. Hayes received her M.A. in theology at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception and her M.L.S. at St. John's University in Queens, New York.

Hayes is currently a Board member-at-large with the Catholic Library Association, her term ending in 2022. She previously served in this role in the 2014-2018 term. In addition to being an active member of CLA, she is a member of the Ad Hoc *Catholic Periodical and Literature Index (CPLI)* Digitization Committee, the CLA Conference Planning Committee, and the CLA Academic Section. She was also a member of the CLA Scholarship Committee from 2005 to 2006.

Hayes has also been involved with the American Theological Library Association (ATLA), where she was a facilitator of the Roman Catholic Denomination Group in 2004-2006, an officer of the World Christianity Interest Group in 2009-2010, and a committee member for digitization of *McCabe's Critical Guide to Catholic Reference Books*. Hayes is a member of the New York area chapter of ATLA, where she currently serves as recording secretary. She served as secretary for the Long Island Council of Academic Library Directors in 2003-2004. She has also been involved with the Suffolk County Library Association, where she served as secretary in 2001-2002, chaired the Professional Concerns Committee in 2000-2001, launched the new Excellence in Library Service Award (ELSA) in 2000, and was co-chair of the ELSA Committee in 2004.

The Mary A. Grant Volunteer Service Award was established in 1996 and is presented by the CLA Executive Board in recognition of outstanding volunteer service to the association by a CLA member. ■

# CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

by Karen Lesiak, Hartford, CT, Digitizing Partner

CRRA CORNER

Earth Day celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year on April 22. After its institution in the United States in the 1970s, other countries followed suit and Earth Day became a global campaign. We face more challenges today than in years past with growing pollution that negatively affects biodiversity and ecosystems, threatening our existence and that of future generations. Organized by Earth Day Network, this year's theme is Climate Action. Proposed campaigns include Earth Challenge 2020, that is described as being the largest citizen scientist initiative ever and will aim to equip individuals with the necessary tools to report on the health and wellbeing of the environment.

We think of Saint Francis as synonymous with care and protection of all living things. He had a gentle yet steadfast love for all the creatures of the earth and all God's creation. Saint Francis was removed from the material world garnering tremendous spiritual insight and connection to our universe.

Pope Saint Paul VI; Pope Saint John Paul II, who declared Saint Francis the patron saint of ecology; and Pope Francis are popes who have championed a conscious and concerted effort to protect our environment. In the encyclical *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), Pope Paul VI asked us to consider the future of humanity and be strong enough to give reasons for life and hope for a coming generation. In *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), John Paul II stated that we all have a responsibility to protect the environment. Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si' or On Care for our Common Home* (2015) is the most recent Vatican document on the environment.

A great starting place for further research is Ted Bergfelt's freely available subject guide "Laudato Si'" <<http://guides.catholicresearch.org/laudato-si>> which provides links to papal documents, recent articles in the media, and search terms for finding books and other materials in the Catholic Portal. For compelling newspaper accounts of the beginning of the global environmental movement and other resources, tap into the Catholic News Archive and the Catholic Portal.

## Selected Catholic newspaper articles on the environment.

### PITTSBURGH CATHOLIC

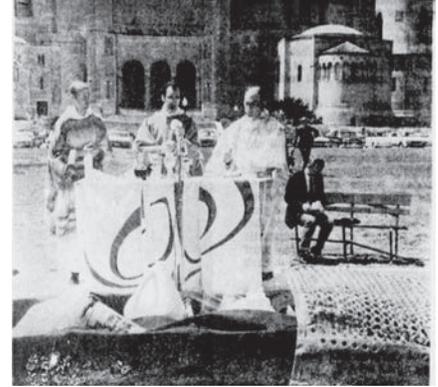
8 August 1969. Endst, Jeff. *Are we destroying the world we live in?* Predictions about the effects of pollution on the earth's climate at the millennium.

16 June 1972. *Weapons of War Cause Pollution*. Traces the impact of weapons of war as major causation for adverse effects upon the environment.

7 July 1972. *Editorial: Ecology and Theology*. A commentary on the results of the U.N. conference emphasizing the problem of social justice.

### NCR

25 March 1970. *Famous, Filthy Cuyahoga*. Cleveland, Ohio's Cuyahoga River Ohio Water Pollution Act.



*Earth Day Observance at Catholic University included an outdoor Mass. The coffin filled with trash in the foreground was a reminder of environmental pollution.*

25 December 1970. Kasper, Rob. *CAP Zaps Chicago Area Pollution*. Father Dubi and the Campaign Against Pollution (CAP) takes on big companies for excessive environmental waste.

24 September 1979. *New Books on Ecology*. A listing of books of the time period containing environmental studies, ecological essays, originally published narratives, and preventative solutions for the burgeoning environmental crisis.

### CATHOLIC TRANSCRIPT, HARTFORD

12 May 1972. *U.N. Conference to Study Environmental Influences*. A detailed look at the preparatory committees' drafting of the declaration for the international conference, to be held in Stockholm, on six major areas of the environment.

23 June 1972. *Ecocide Concerns Churchmen*. The aftermath of the historic Stockholm conference holds many concerns for Vatican delegates and religious task force members on issues not addressed such as ecocide and the population explosion.

15 June 1973. *Vatican Commission Views Eco Crisis*. The Vatican Commission for Justice and Peace issues a report to the U.N. Conference outlining ecological concerns on the environment on its first anniversary. ■

## EXPLORE MORE

- Catholic Research Resources Alliance | [catholicresearch.org](http://catholicresearch.org)
- The Catholic Portal | [catholicresearch.org/catholic-portal](http://catholicresearch.org/catholic-portal)
- Catholic News Archive | [thecatholicnewsarchive.org](http://thecatholicnewsarchive.org)

### Library Guides

- <https://libguides.lmu.edu/catholic>
- [https://setonhill.libguides.com/Catholic\\_Social\\_Teaching/CST](https://setonhill.libguides.com/Catholic_Social_Teaching/CST)
- Catholic News Archive | [thecatholicnewsarchive.org](http://thecatholicnewsarchive.org)



In the  
VINEYARD  
of the  
WORD

## Biographical Vignettes from the World of Catholic Print Culture

by Thomas Dousa

Metadata Analyst Librarian

The Joseph Regenstein Library

University of Chicago

### Arthur Preuss

Prominent German American Catholic Journalist, Editor, Translator, and Author

Arthur Preuss was an influential German American Catholic journalist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Born in St. Louis on March 22, 1871, he was the son of Eduard Friedrich Reinhold Preuss (also known as Edward Preuss) (1834 -1904), a theologian trained in the Lutheran tradition who had converted to Catholicism after immigrating to America in 1868 and became a leading journalist in the German American community as editor of the Catholic newspaper *Die Amerika*. Arthur Preuss elected to follow in his father's footsteps and arranged his studies at Canisius College in Buffalo and Quincy College in Quincy, Illinois, to prepare himself for the vocation of Catholic journalist. In 1892, he became editor of the Chicago-based German-language weekly *Das Katholisches Sontagsblatt* [*The Catholic Sunday Paper*], as well as editor of the Indianapolis-based newspaper *Die Glocke* [*The Bell*], positions that he held until 1896, when he returned to St. Louis to help his father edit *Die Amerika*.

In 1894, Preuss founded his own English-language newspaper, *The Fortnightly Review* (originally known as *The Review* and, later, the *Catholic Fortnightly Review* before receiving

its definitive title in 1912), which he published for the next forty years. Initially conceived of as "a German paper in English dress," the *Review* became a platform for Preuss's views on the state of the Catholic Church in the United States and its relation to American culture. Deeply influenced by the *Kulturkampf* in Germany and concerned about what he saw as a cultural environment inimical to Catholicism in the United States, Preuss propounded highly conservative views of Church affairs, espousing ultramontanism, strongly opposing Americanist accommodation to contemporary culture, condemning theological liberalism, and attacking Freemasonry. At the same time, he was a fierce advocate for German Catholics in the United States, a sharp critic of American anti-Catholicism, a supporter of fairer treatment of African Americans within the Catholic Church, a proponent of Heinrich Pesch's<sup>1</sup> "Solidarist" economic interpretation of Catholic social teaching, and an early voice for liturgical reform.

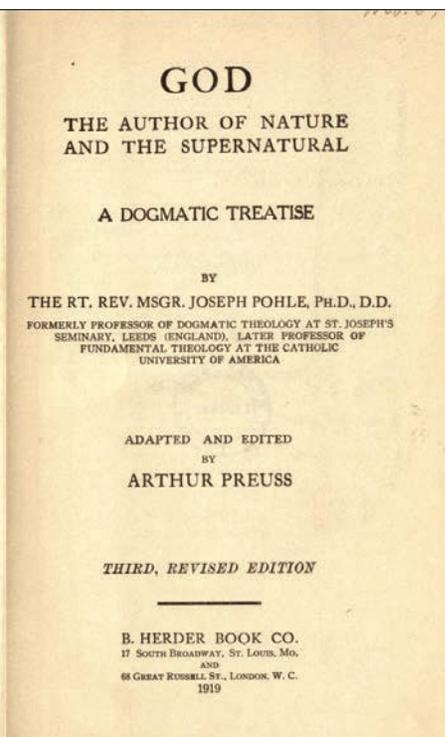
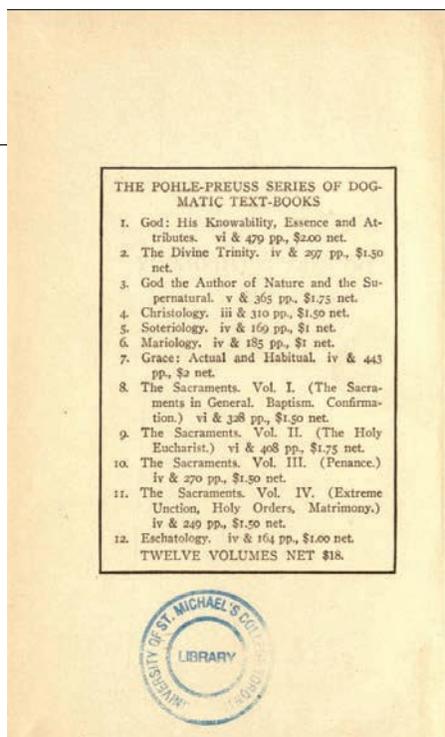
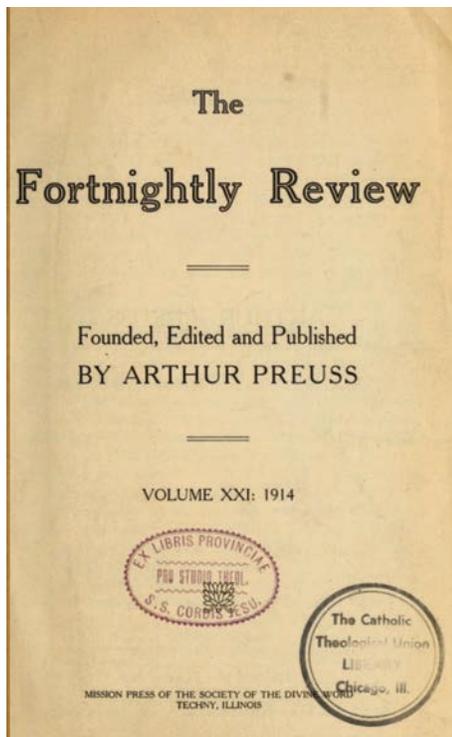
In addition to his journalistic work, Preuss was literary editor for a major German American Catholic publishing house, the Herder Book Company. In this capacity, he

translated into English a number of German theological works, most notably Joseph Pohle's<sup>2</sup> monumental twelve-volume *Manual of Dogmatic Theology*, sometimes referred to as the Pohle-Preuss Manual or the Pohle-Preuss Series of Dogmatic Textbooks. Preuss wrote books on Freemasonry as well as a critique of Socialism. He also served as literary adviser to the Society of the Divine Word Press in Techny, Illinois, where *The Fortnightly Review* was, for a time, printed, and contributed articles to other English-language Catholic periodicals.

Preuss died on December 16, 1934, in Jacksonville, Florida, at age 63. His most notable contribution to American Catholic journalism, *The Fortnightly Review*, ceased publication the following year.

<sup>1</sup>Fr. Heinrich Pesch, SJ, (1854-1926) was a German Jesuit economist whose theories exerted a profound influence on Catholic social thought in the twentieth century.

<sup>2</sup>Fr. Joseph Pohle (1852-1922) was a prominent German theologian whose academic career included a five-year stint (1879-1884) in the United States as professor of apologetics at the Catholic University of America.



### Periodicals Edited by Alfred Preuss

*Die Amerika* (St. Louis, Mo., 1872-1924); edited 1902-1905 and 1920-1921.

*Katholisches Sonntagblatt* (Chicago, Ill., 1891-1909?); edited 1892-1896.

*Die Glocke* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1882-1905); edited 1892-1896.

*The Fortnightly Review* (Chicago, Ill., 1894-1896; St. Louis, Mo., 1896-1935); edited 1894-1934.

### Title history

*The Review*, 1894-1904.

*The Catholic Fortnightly Review*, 1905-1912.

*The Fortnightly Review*, 1912-1935.

### Books Written by Alfred Preuss

*A Study in American Freemasonry*. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder, 1908. [2nd edition: 1908; numerous reprints]

*The Fundamental Fallacy of Socialism: An Exposition of the Question of Landownership: Comprising an Authentic Account of the Famous McGlynn Case*. St. Louis, Mo./ Freiburg (Baden): B. Herder, 1908. [2nd edition: 1909]

*A Dictionary of Secret and Other Societies*. St. Louis, Mo./ London: B. Herder Book Co., 1924.

### Works About Alfred Preuss

Rory T. Conley, "Arthur Preuss: German-Catholic Exile in America." *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 12(3), 1994: 41-62.

Rory T. Conley, *Arthur Preuss: Journalist and Voice of German and Conservative Catholics in America, 1871-1934*. New German-American Studies, Vol. 16. New York: Peter Lang, 1998.

### Photo Credits

Both photos are taken from Internet Archive.

The purpose of this column is to bring some of the lesser-known contributors to Catholic print culture to the attention of readers of *Catholic Library World* and so to foster greater awareness of the richness and vibrancy of this culture among its stewards in the library, archive, and classroom.

The author invites readers to suggest favorite, relatively little-known figures in Catholic literature (in the widest sense of the term) whom they would like to see featured in future columns. He can be reached at [tmdousa@uchicago.edu](mailto:tmdousa@uchicago.edu).



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WITH  
CATHOLIC  
LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERS

920  
CLA

## Kathy Harty

Resource & Education Services Librarian, Leo Dehon Library  
Sacred Heart Seminary & School of Theology, Franklin, Wisconsin

### **Describe your career as a librarian and where you work.**

I am the Resource & Education Services Librarian at Sacred Heart Seminary & School of Theology, in the suburbs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Sacred Heart is a national seminary run as an apostolate of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJ), an international order founded by Ven. Leo John Dehon in 1878. We have a seminary division that accepts students from dioceses and religious orders around the country, and a Master of Arts division that trains laity and seminarians for ministry in various parts of the Church. I've been at Sacred Heart since 1982 and have enjoyed pretty much every day!

My current duties include answering questions; helping faculty and students with research; co-teaching a first-year course (Theological Research & Writing) for all incoming Masters of Divinity students; being the library webmaster; creating LibGuides; assisting with inter-library loan; assisting faculty in using Populi, our learning management system; filming, streaming, and editing video for special events; learning more about online teaching; basically, many of the public services. In addition, the library staff is first-tier technical support for students, faculty, and staff—a nice variety of things, never a chance for boredom!

### **Share something about yourself not related to librarianship.**

My husband and I have three children and two grandchildren. I also teach fourth grade religious education at our parish.

### **How does your faith inspire or fit in with your work?**

It's a marvelous fit between the two because I don't have to hide or suppress my faith; it's a part of helping to train future priests and lay people for ministry in the Church. It has also given me the opportunity to get a second master's degree in theology, and for attending conferences and other continuing education sessions. And I love to hear the faith journeys of our students, both lay and future ordained.

### **When and why did you get involved in the CLA?**

I got involved with CLA through our local Wisconsin chapter. I had been encouraged by my library director to get involved locally, so I found out about WCLA and CLA. I served as the chair of the Academic/Library Education Section from 1991 to 1993, on the Executive Board from 1993 to 1995 as membership chair, and was the convention program editor from 1994 to 1996.

### **What has been your most rewarding experience with the CLA?**

I think my time on the board was wonderful, because CLA was going through a transitional time, and seeing how board members and members worked so hard to preserve this resource was inspiring. And to see how it's been kept up is encouraging.

### **What do you hope for the future of the CLA?**

CLA provides a much-needed forum, focus, and resource, particularly for those smaller libraries at the elementary and high school levels, which allows the librarians to form their students well. It's also a place in which librarians in specifically Catholic situations, or who are Catholic, can discuss issues that are pertinent in a helpful atmosphere. ■

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**Do you know a remarkable CLA member who we should learn about?** To nominate a CLA member to be featured in CLA 920, e-mail the editor at [sigriddkelsey@gmail.com](mailto:sigriddkelsey@gmail.com).

# 2020 Regina Medal Recipient Christopher Paul Curtis

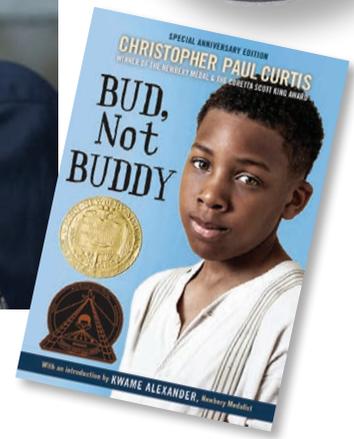
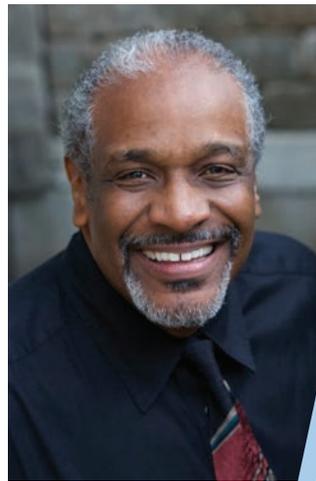
By Ebony McDonald

**C**hristopher Paul Curtis is an award-winning African American author of children's books. He was the first African American male to receive the Newbery Medal for his second novel *BUD, Not BUDDY*, in 2000. It also was the first novel to receive the Newbery and the Coretta Scott King awards in the same year. He is best known for prompting young readers to engage and empathize with racially charged historical events, often tragic and disturbing, through the use of humorous first-person narratives of fictional pre-pubescent African American males. He is receiving the 2020 Regina Medal for his continued, distinguished contributions to children's literature.

Curtis often situates his work within his hometown of Flint, Michigan. He was born there on May 10, 1953, to Herman E. Curtis, a chiropodist, and Leslie Curtis, a homemaker and, later, teacher of African American history. He was the second of five children. Although his father was a doctor, many of his patients were poor and unable to afford treatment, so Dr. Curtis filled in this income gap through work at the Fisher Body Plant No. 1.

After graduating from Flint Southwestern High School in 1971, Curtis spent his summer touring Europe, performing the work of Langston Hughes with the Suitcase Theatre group out of Lansing, Michigan. He then returned to Flint and, despite being accepted to the University of Michigan-Flint, spent the next thirteen years of his life at this same plant as his father because the work paid so well.

Curtis worked the assembly line at the plant, hanging eighty-pound car doors on Buicks for ten hours per day while also working toward his political science degree part-time in night school. During his downtime on the line (about every thirty minutes he and a coworker alternated hanging the doors), Curtis read works from his favorite authors such as Toni Morrison, Mark Twain, Kurt Vonnegut, and Zora Neal Hurston. He also wrote stories of his own. Eventually, he left the plant because he found it extremely unpleasant. "I quit because I was so worn out from the



regular nightmares about the factory, or waking and seeing the door-hanging fixture at the foot of my bed...I finally let it go because of an overwhelming desire I had to do anything, anything other than put another damned door on another damned Buick" (McDonald 2019). While continuing with school, he took on various low-paying jobs that he hated, such as unloading trucks in a warehouse (Levin 2006, 8).

Like his parents, Curtis had always been a great reader, but had also known from a very early age that he would become a writer. "I can remember being nine or ten years old and telling my brother and sisters, 'One day I'm going to write a book and make a lot of money'" (McDonald 2019). His opportunity to write full-time came in 1993 with the encouragement of his wife Kaysandra Sookram, a nurse with whom he has a son and daughter. She convinced him to take a year off to focus on further crafting his gift.

In this year, he took a writing class at the University of Michigan, where he entered short stories, an essay about leaving his factory job, and a novel (that was then titled *The Watsons Go to Florida*) into a contest for the Hopwood Awards. The novel and essay won first place, earning him a prize of \$4,000. Using directories at the local public library where he often wrote, he found two publisher-sponsored contests and submitted the novel to them. Delacorte Press

signed him and eventually published his first book *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* in 1995.

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* earned more than twenty-five major awards, including the Newbery Honor and Coretta Scott King Honor awards; has been translated into eleven languages; and, in 2013, was adapted into a Hallmark movie. The story centers on the Watson family of Flint, who, prompted by the ill behavior of the oldest son Byron, take a trip south to Birmingham, Alabama, during the summer of 1963. The parents intend to leave Byron with his strict grandmother for the summer and possibly the following year. Their visit coincides with the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, a historical tragedy that resulted in the death of four little girls (to whom he dedicated the work). Kenny, Byron's younger brother who is ten years old, narrates the story and is the same age as Curtis was when this real event occurred.

Inspiration for Curtis's novels originate from more than just historical events. They also come from his life experiences, which is also why they emphasize the importance of family, one of Curtis's deeply held values. For instance, his grandfathers, Earl "Lefty" Lewis and Herman E. Curtis, and Herman's band, The Dusky Devastators of the Depression, informed his second novel *BUD, Not BUDDY* (1999). Bud is a ten-year-old orphan in Flint during the Great Depression who, using clues left by his mother, runs away from his foster home to locate his father in Grand Rapids, Michigan. These clues include old promotional flyers for a performance by Herman E. Calloway and his Dusky Devastators of the Depression, a jazz band in the history of the novel. Bud believes the legendary bandleader to be his father and optimistically crosses the state in hopes of being embraced as a long lost son.

His novels also uniquely capture the African American experience for a young audience. *Elijah of Buxton* (2007) is the first in a trilogy based in Buxton, Ontario, a historic settlement created for and by former African American slaves who escaped to Canada via the Underground Railroad. It tells the story of eleven-year-old Bud, the first child born free there, who discovers the horrors that his family endured as slaves. Curtis uses this story to dramatically highlight the impact of the n-word based on his own experience as a young boy attending his first integrated school. "I did something in this novel that I usually try to avoid: I tried to teach... I went out of my way to try to give a lesson to young readers, to let them see the evil behind this (and many other) words" (Rochman 2008). *Elijah* won the Coretta Scott King Book Award, a Newbery Honor Book designation, and a Scott O'Dell Award.

Although Curtis never intended to become a children's author (that decision was made by the publisher of *The Watsons*), his writing technique involves letting the child narrators come to him rather than searching for them. He hears their voices and allows their stories to inhabit and manifest through him. "When I am writing a story I don't

have an outline or anything. I don't know where the story's going to go. I don't know who's going to be telling the story so when the narrator comes to me, I keep a list of character traits to be consistent" (Johnson 2001). Still, he does not think of himself as a children's or young adult author and, while cognizant of who reads his works, does not actively allow his audience to influence his writing process because he writes purely for the love of writing.

Curtis is nonetheless conscious that his works are telling African American stories by an African American male and that there is a dearth of this kind of representation in children's literature. "One of the sad reasons *The Watsons* is so successful is there are so few Young Adult books—or any books, comparatively speaking—by African American men" (Morgan 2002). Like his favorite author Toni Morrison, he understands the desire to develop narratives exclusively for black audiences. His editor suggested that he include more white characters in *The Watsons* so that the book could be more relatable to white audiences. Yet, growing up, his interactions with whites were limited and not part of his own personal experience. "As a writer, I don't think of the audience in those terms: I don't consciously say, *I'm targeting this book at this particular group*. I think what is most important, if you have a story to tell, is that you tell your story..." (Morgan 2002).

The most impressive element of Curtis's fiction is the way in which he encourages young readers of all backgrounds to empathize with historical tragedy through deep character development and the use of humor. He insists upon his young readers understanding how history affects ordinary people whom they like and can relate to, such as the Watsons, Bud, or Elijah. He hopes that his works spark their curiosity about these events and motivate them to continue to read. "My biggest hope is that my younger readers will feel a sense of curiosity when they finish one of my books. I hope I've piqued their interest in whatever I'm writing about and that will lead them to further investigation of the subject. Ideally, they'll seek out a nonfiction book and see where my story sits historically" (McDonald 2019).

Christopher Paul Curtis received a Bachelor of General Studies degree from the University of Michigan-Flint in 2000. He currently lives in Windsor, Canada, with his wife and two children. His most recent novel, *The Journey of Little Charlie* (2018), is the third book in the Buxton trilogy. ■

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Ebony McDonald is the African and African-American Studies Diversity Librarian and first participant in the Diversity Residency Program at Louisiana State University Libraries in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She assists with library communications and publications while also supporting research and learning in her subject area. She received her Master of Science in Library Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## Works by Christopher Paul Curtis

1995

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*  
Delacorte Press

1999

*BUD, Not BUDDY*  
Delacorte Press

2004

*Bucking the Sarge*  
Wendy Lamb Books

2005

*Mr. Chickee's Funny Money*  
Yearling, an imprint  
of Random House  
Children's Books

2007

*Mr. Chickee's Messy Mission*  
Yearling

2007

*Elijah of Buxton*  
Scholastic Press  
Book 1 in the  
Buxton Trilogy

2012

*The Mighty Miss Malone*  
Wendy Lamb Books

2016

*Madman of Piney Woods*  
Scholastic Press  
Book 2 in the  
Buxton Trilogy

2018

*The Journey of Little  
Charlie*  
Scholastic Press  
Book 3 in the  
Buxton Trilogy

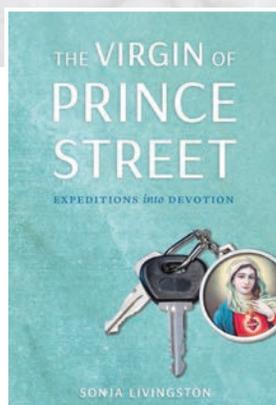


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# An Interview with Author Sonja Livingston

By Jen Cullerton Johnson



Sonja Livingston's latest book, *The Virgin of Prince Street: Expeditions into Devotion*, uses an unexpected return to her childhood church as an occasion to travel through space and time to explore the changes in the larger Church and in her own life. The result is a generous but unflinching look at the

shifting Roman Catholic Church and changing concepts of devotion. Livingston is an associate professor of English at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, and teaches in the postgraduate program at Vermont College of Fine Arts and in the Gap Creek Writers Studio. She is married to the artist Jim Mott.

**CULLERTON** 🌀 *The Virgin of Prince Street* inspires so many readers to consider their connections and reconnections to the Catholic Church. You have traveled to several places to explore Catholicism in action. What are the unexpected connections the book has brought forth for you and others? Which connections from your journeys were most surprising?

**LIVINGSTON** 🌀 In many ways, the book took shape because of how shocked I was to discover my deep and ongoing connection to Catholicism even after years away. Each essay explores a specific point of connection—such as the missing statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the fading sacrament of Reconciliation, or the history of my struggling urban church in Rochester, New York. What ties these various threads together is my curiosity about the changing nature of tradition, in general, and the idea of devotion, more specifically.

The writing led me to some fascinating people—such as Father Michael Champagne, who runs a mobile confessional booth in St. Martinville, Louisiana, and Mary Holland, who purchased one of the seventy-seven Catholic churches that closed in Buffalo in the mid-2000s and transformed it into a sanctuary to preserve religious artifacts from closed worship sites. There were many connections like this, but besides making a series of physical expeditions, I traveled through time to revisit old stories which introduced me to people from the past, such as Sister Lilian Marie McLaughlin, a 26-year-old teacher who lost her life in a 1967 church fire.

Some of the most surprising interactions have been with readers. When I wrote an article about searching for the missing statue for *America* magazine, a man in California wrote to share his memory of praying before Mary on his lunch breaks while he was a student at the Eastman School of Music in the 1960s. It turns out that his Mary was also my Mary and it was wonderful to read of his memory of the exact statue that, fifty years later, I'd been looking to find. The most unexpected connection came from the copy editor who e-mailed to say that editing my book for publication reminded him of all he'd loved about Catholicism and had sent him back to church!

“I learned to pay attention to words and noticed their ability to elevate experience, to connect us to something larger than our individual lives or limited understanding.”

— Sonja Livingston

**CULLERTON** ☞ What does it mean to be a Catholic writer in this complicated moment we live in? How does being a Catholic writer expand your perspective both locally and globally?

**LIVINGSTON** ☞ I'll get to the larger part of this wonderful question in a moment, but first want to acknowledge that one of Catholicism's gifts is its revelation of the power and beauty of language. Even as a kid from a family that couldn't afford books, I soaked in the rhythms and possibilities of language at Mass once a week, sometimes more. I learned to pay attention to words and noticed their ability to elevate experience, to connect us to something larger than our individual lives or limited understanding. Pat Conroy said it beautifully: “Because I was raised Roman Catholic, I never feared taking any unchaperoned walks through the fields of language. Words lifted me up and filled me with pleasure.”

Beyond this deep-rooted attention to language, being a Catholic writer means being anchored in a sense of the sacred in the everyday. For Catholics, the simplest objects are saturated with mystery and significance. I'm thinking of holy water as it lands in droplets on the skin, the swinging censer at funerals or the collective voices singing psalms each and every week at Mass. The sheer physicality of the Catholic tradition sharpens (and almost demands) the recognition of the sacred in the ordinary. This profoundly influences the way I see and write. If the water is holy at Mass, for instance, it's not a stretch to see it as holy when I'm walking along the James River or looking for birds at Lake Ontario. If I'm able to shake the hand of the person beside me during the sign of peace at Mass, or hold it during the Our Father—though she may not share my political preferences, neighborhood or skin color—it's similarly possible to extend a hand to people who are different from me at work, in my community, or in places I've never been. This may seem like a relatively minor matter, but we're living in a time of such massive disconnection (between ourselves and others, between ourselves and the natural world) that the ability to locate beauty and goodness in the world around us opens radical possibilities.

**CULLERTON** ☞ Catholicism celebrates life. There are many moments of joy and revelation in your writing. Which essay brought you the most joy to write?

**LIVINGSTON** ☞ That's a wonderful but tough question! Each essay—even the difficult subjects—rendered some unexpected moments of revelation. I'm thinking of my meditation on a Corpus Christi procession in Ireland, which begins with a discussion of the fading tradition, but, by the end, becomes a wash of language and a celebration of the incarnational aspects of faith. Another essay, “Litany for a Dying Church,” confronts the sad reality of church closings, but takes a sudden turn to joy by imagining all the lives brought together and touched by a particular church. I try to consider a hundred years of weddings and funerals, all the coffee hours, 50/50 raffles and potlucks—a century of confessions and first Communion and sung prayers.

In a strange way, returning to a tradition that's often in the news for all the wrong reasons these days brought me the greatest joy. Don't get me wrong, it also brought plenty of doubt and fear—but returning to a tradition so clearly troubled expanded my capacity to hold on to what's good (in myself and others) even as I struggle with its flaws. My usual pattern of walking away to look for the perfect job, the perfect relationship, the perfect church was challenged. There is no perfect church, I realized. There is no perfect anything. I don't mean to suggest that we should accept or excuse bad behavior, only that I discovered that there's an astounding amount of goodness waiting to be found, often exactly where we are.

**CULLERTON** ☞ Is there anything book groups should know?

**LIVINGSTON** ☞ I love to visit book groups and classrooms and often do so via Skype or telephone. For the next few months, I'm offering Virgin Mary keychains (the cover image from the book) for groups with eight (or more) members who adopt the book! I also give readings and book talks around the country and am always glad to be invited to universities, churches, and community groups. ■

Sonjalivingston.com | Twitter: @sonjalivingston  
FB: /sonjalivingston | Instagram: sonjalivvy

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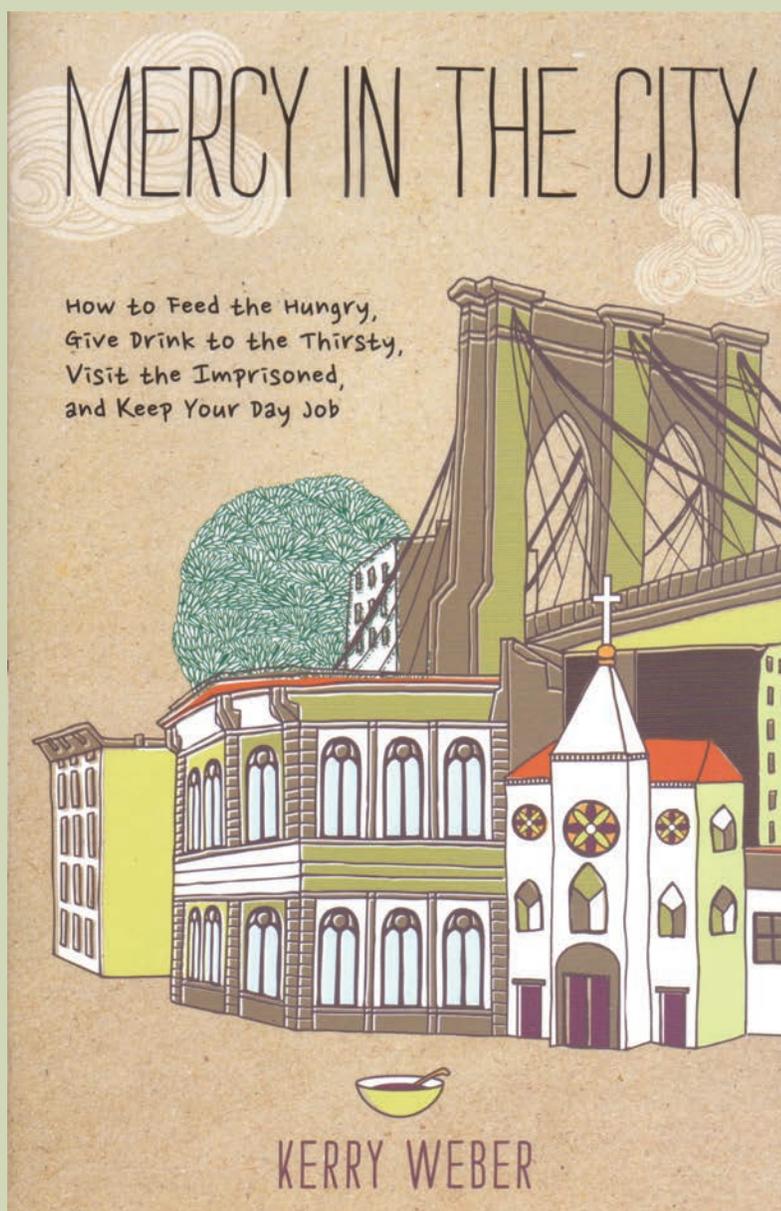
Jen Cullerton Johnson lives and writes in Chicago. Her most recent publication is a children's book titled *The Story of an Environmentalist* (Lee & Low, 2019).  
jencullertonjohnson.com



## CLA Fall 2019 Virtual Conference

### Keynote Presentation — Kerry Weber Lynch

Presented October 17, 2019



**KERRY WEBER LYNCH** is an executive editor of *America*, where she has worked since 2009, and author of *Mercy in the City: How to Feed the Hungry, Give Drink to the Thirsty, Visit the Imprisoned, and Keep Your Day Job* (Loyola Press), which received a 2014 Christopher Award, as well as awards from the Catholic Press Association and the Association of Catholic Publishers. Her writing and multimedia work have earned several awards from the Catholic Press Association, and in 2013 she reported from Rwanda as a recipient of Catholic Relief Services' Egan Journalism Fellowship recognizing excellence in the Catholic media. She is a graduate of Providence College and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. From 2004 to 2005, Weber Lynch volunteered through the Mercy Volunteer Corps as a special-education teacher on the Navajo reservation in St. Michael's, Arizona. She has been a Mercy Associate since 2012. She is a board member of the Ignatian Solidarity Network.

For many years my mother wrote a weekly column in our diocesan newspaper. When I was eight years old, she offered up her column space to allow me to write about how I felt about making my first Communion, as well as how it felt to be a kid and what God means to me. I began the section on my first Communion with this stunning lead: “Alleluia, Alleluia, Praise the Lord for I am making my first Communion April 28, 1990.” I followed that by saying I was very excited. Actually, what I wrote was that I was very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very excited—using ten verys.

For good measure, the section on being a kid included a series of complaints about how I’d eaten only home fries and milk for lunch, but that I wished I had also ordered a hot dog, and how I was upset that my brother didn’t help me clean the family room. In writing about God, I said, “When I say my own prayer it goes like this: ‘Dear God, please don’t let anything bad ever happen, and if anything does please make it better right away.’”

Now, in my prayer life since, I can’t say I’ve entirely moved away from asking God to make things better right away, but I am happy to say that my understanding of our faith—and of its elements of service, dialogue, prayer, and discernment—has grown somewhat since then. And I’m happy to report, to this group especially, that a large part of that growth has come from reading great books. Whether picking up a children’s Bible, the works of Dorothy Day or G.K. Chesterton, or my colleagues at *America*, Catholic books especially, time and again, have helped me to worry less about what I had for lunch or who cleaned which room, and a bit more about doing my part to make things better—if not right away, at least eventually.

Yet it isn’t always easy, especially these days, to focus on the lessons I’ve learned through these books. Each day our brains are bombarded with information, coming in at faster speeds than ever, yet perhaps of far more variation of quality than ever. So it is often difficult to figure out what exactly is worth our time. We are reading constantly, but often it is only snippets of thoughts or online conversations or Facebook posts that, while not without their value, don’t necessarily satisfy in the same way as something more permanent, deliberate, thoughtful. You know, like books.

Now I’m not a Luddite, and, as I said, digital technology and social media and YouTube can have real value. I literally wrote parts of my own book on the notepad function on my iPhone while riding the subway and then e-mailed them to myself so that I could copy them into my Google document. I shared status updates about my progress on Facebook and was encouraged by friends and family. There are now apps devoted to

helping people write books. These are all good things. Our ultimate aim is to preach the Gospel. We want to nourish people. We want to work for justice and peace. Social media, the Web, video, and radio, all can help us to do this. It just depends on how we use them. We as a Church cannot afford to just completely write off any new forms of communication, because in doing so we might write off the people they reach. And what we want is to invite people in.

In his World Communications Day message a few years back, Pope Benedict wrote that social media needs “the commitment of all who are conscious of the value of dialogue, reasoned debate, and logical argumentation; of people who strive to cultivate forms of discourse and expression which appeal to the noblest aspirations of those engaged in the communication process.” These are lofty words for digital spaces often dominated by cat pictures.

But he’s right. We need that. And we need that in all spheres. But how do we actually help to form people capable of encountering information in that way? People capable of true charity, hope, and love while in conversation in the digital world or in person? How do we make sure people are, in fact, entering into conversation at all? How do we keep people from spending all their time scrolling without ever stopping to truly start thinking? Well, no pressure, but a big part of this may be up to you: because what you do, as librarians, is to promote the value of information, of truth, of that dialogue and noble discourse, often one book at a time.

As we learn more about where digital developments can take us—or how they might distract us—we must always be mindful of the needs of the person interacting with them. Is there an underlying message in their tweets and Facebook posts and Instagram photos



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Libraries become a ministry for others when they inspire people to read not just for themselves, but because they hope that what they read might transform how they treat others.

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or even research methods, that tells us what people actually are yearning for below the surface? So when we think about sharing books and information and how it might resonate with others, we must have in mind a sense of what so many people are trying to find in the midst of the business and distraction of our days. We want to be of use. We want to be seen. We want to help, to inform, to be informed, to connect, to feel a little bit less alone in our struggles and joys. Libraries become a ministry for others when they inspire people to read not just for themselves, but because they hope that what they read might transform how they treat others.

The good news is that study after study shows that people who read any books are well positioned to be exactly the sort of person Pope Benedict describes. You can find studies that say that people who read books are nicer. They are the best people to fall in love with. They are more successful, more empathetic, more thoughtful. They are leaders.

Since having my children a few years ago, I have had to make very deliberate decisions about how I spend my time. I have had to let go of some things I loved to make sure I had time for my family. And in doing this, I have come to realize that books, the reading of them, the writing of them, remain worthy of my time. And not only that, they are crucial to helping build the sort of home and world I want my children to experience.

So much of my own growth through the years has been a result of people pointing me to books that urge me to look more closely at the people around me. I remember arriving at college, newly independent. I knew I was still sorting out exactly what I believed in, and why I believed it, and then trying to determine, crucially, what action was required to demonstrate these beliefs. At college, I had my first chance to truly study things like the history that has shaped our society's views on race and class, the literature inspired by revolutions, or the theology fueling our care for the poor.

And what I found out was that, as it turns out, I wasn't the first person to consider these questions. One of the most beautiful aspects of the library is that it contains within it a wide range of subjects that cover our collective past and that provide meaningful context for our world right now. Librarians can point people toward books and other resources that will help people think more deeply about those basic questions of our own lives, questions of service and community and the greater good.

My time reading in the library at college introduced me to Aristotle, who theorized that the just person is produced by doing just acts in the way that a just person would do them. I met St. Thomas Aquinas who, apparently, was pretty good at asking and answering questions himself. He asked questions about what it means to be merciful and virtuous, what it means to

show pity or charity or justice. I read *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens, and learned about the tragedy of poor working conditions, and the dangers of taking Utilitarianism too far. I entered into the many mansions of St. Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*, where she argued that the "Lord does not care so much for the importance of our works as for the love with which they are done."

Now reading books such as these can be a way to become really good at trivia, or to become a more impressive conversationalist at cocktail parties. But, more than anything, it can help to make us better people. And libraries can help to provide a community in which to process all these ideas, along with one's own doubts, fears, and hopes. In a world filled with distraction, the library setting can help people to focus on what is important. And the foundation built there allows people to continue to be part of these discussions, to ask questions long after walking out the doors. And thankfully these discussions are ongoing and great writers and thinkers and theologians continue to move and change the world today. And as of late, perhaps no one has fueled these discussions and captured the world like Pope Francis.

Now, one of the major themes of his papacy is mercy. Now mercy sometimes gets a bad rap, as a kind of letting someone off the hook when they turn in a paper late. But Francis has reminded us that mercy is not simply a grace requested in supplication and passively received. It is a motivating force, furthering the work of justice and love. "[T]he ministers of the Church must be ministers of mercy above all," Francis said in the interview published in *America*. This is not a request from which we can opt out. Mercy, in Francis's world, calls us, allows us, requires us to become better. And it is a call to all people of good will. But how should we begin?

The answer, perhaps, can be found in another part of that interview, in a wonderfully invented word from Pope Francis: mercy-ing. In turning the noun into a verb, a sentiment into an action, Francis calls us not only to have mercy or to show mercy, but to embody mercy. The word emphasizes the active element of mercy, as a force that binds us, compels us, and enables us to love one another more fully—just people acting justly.

Mercying is a call to allow ourselves to be moved, to proceed deliberately and with compassion. In short, mercying is a call to listen to one another with love. It allows us to realize the power of words, clearly and lovingly spoken, and of the Word of God, humbly lived.

Pope Francis has made clear that, in whatever we pursue, being merciful means we must make an effort to see people first—"individual persons, one at a time," he says. And libraries offer as many chances to do this as there are people who walk through those doors. You see patrons not as numbers or statistics, but as individuals.

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Libraries can point people toward books and other resources that will help people think more deeply about those basic questions of our own lives, questions of service and community and the greater good.

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And you work hard to meet visitors where they are, as they are.

While writing my book, I committed forty days to a spiritual experiment during which I tried to do each of the corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, and bury the dead. But I've found that that effort to think deliberately about these

things has lasted far beyond one particular season and has seeped into my life in surprising and enduring ways.

Because, in the end, the question at the heart of my challenge as I wrote about it wasn't, "How do I meet the minimum standard for being merciful?" but rather, "How do I do these works of mercy sincerely and in a way that is meaningful and fosters relationships with the people around me and with God?" This is an eternal challenge for all of us.

Many people might not immediately associate these acts with libraries, but the connection is easy to make. In public libraries today, the space provided is often a literal refuge, where someone can escape the heat or cold and settle down with a good book or do research on job opportunities, or meet with other parents of young children to socialize, or meet with other teens to stay out of trouble. In college, they can offer quiet, infinite research opportunities, a new community, or even just refuge from an annoying roommate.

Librarians everywhere satiate the hunger and thirst of people yearning for knowledge, they offer people a peace-filled destination, and then further direct them to new subjects or histories or far-off lands through books that can help people to escape from the imprisonment of isolation or fear or monotony or ignorance. Librarians help to clothe people in the knowledge that they are part of a long line of curious people striving to learn more about themselves and the world and to make both better. Librarians help us to remember and value voices long dead but resurrected each time someone begins browsing their words and ideas. Librarians can help people to feel at home in the world and shelter from the storms of distraction or division that so often bombard us.

Following graduation from college, I joined the Mercy Volunteer Corps and taught special education on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. One afternoon one of the students in my class wasn't feeling well. She was nonverbal, so she sometimes had difficulty communicating to us how she was feeling. On this day she was too ill to tell us anything at all and she got sick all over herself. All over. I took her to help her get cleaned up, and I was feeling both a bit grossed out and a bit noble, I suppose for taking this on. She was quite small, so when I knelt down I was at about eye level with her. She put her hand on my shoulder to steady herself and just looked at me expectantly, knowing that I would help her and with this look that sort of just said, "Okay, go ahead, and do what you're supposed to do." And I just knew right away that what I was doing did not make me special. It was just exactly the sort of attention and care for others that I needed to be showing, in some form, every day. I have never felt so clearly that I was looking into the face of Christ as when I saw her looking at me that day. That's how I picture God, someone who

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But Francis has reminded us that mercy is not simply a grace requested in supplication and passively received. It is a motivating force, furthering the work of justice and love.

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puts a hand on your shoulder and says, "Okay, let's go." Do what you've been called to do — and that is what we're all called to do: to love and to serve.

As librarians you have opportunities each day to truly see each person—people coming with their doubts and insecurities, coming from messy situations and trying to make sense of new ideas, new concepts—and to treat them as an "individual person one at a time," as Francis says. You have the power—whether through enhancing information literacy, ordering great Catholic books, hosting conversations about faith and reason, or just helping them find the right books—to put a hand on someone's shoulder and help them do what they've been called to do.

But in order to be good guides for others, we ourselves need to be oriented toward God. St. Ignatius talks about the need to recognize and let go of "attachments" or "unfreedoms," those things that keep us from readily loving God. These things can be anything—obsession with money or fame or relationships or material possessions or fears. As we determine the best way to serve others where we are, we are called to proceed in a spirit of Ignatian detachment. In everyday life we tend to think of detachment as meaning that we are coldly removed from something or that we don't care about something.

But in the context of Ignatian spirituality it means that we will accept with care and gratitude whatever it is that we receive from God. It allows us to find peace.

Of course there are as many ways to live mercy in our world as there are people wanting to try to do so. And so each of us must discern how to proceed and how God is calling us. Ignatius offers attitudes or qualities needed for an authentic discernment process. And these are very well distilled by the Jesuit Warren Sazama, SJ, in *Some Ignatian Principles for Making Prayerful Decisions* and they are important to keep in mind, because they're also good qualities to try to cultivate in anyone working to serve others and to serve God, as you are. It's so easy to get bogged down by the politics of a university or a city or your institution or the budget constraints and the limits that may have been placed on you. Developing an attitude of discernment helps us to make deliberate decisions about how we will respond in merciful ways when the opportunity arises.

**The first is openness.** We can't truly discern if we enter into the process simply trying to convince ourselves that God wants the thing for us that is easiest. We can't say I am discerning finding a new job that could be more satisfying, but only if it will also make me a millionaire. We have to be open to change, to the unexpected, to the God of surprises.

**The second is generosity.** To be open, we need to be willing to give fully of ourselves, to sometimes allow God to tell us how much and when to give, rather than deciding ahead of time and placing our own limits.

**The third is courage.** Discernment is a risk. We might be called to change in ways that are uncomfortable at first. We have to be brave to let go.

**The fourth is interior freedom.** This comes back to those attachments and "unfreedoms" I mentioned earlier. It is easy to be distracted by all the goods in our lives that mean that we never get around to thinking about what is most important and what God really wants of us and how to be truly present. To truly make a prayerful decision we have to be willing to have no strings attached. Ignatius talks here about trying not to be someone who is all talk and no action or all action and no focus.

**The fifth is creating a habit of prayerful reflection.** Prayerful decision making is especially difficult if we're not actually praying. And I've done this myself, worried so much about something and then realizing that I hadn't prayed about it at all, in part because I had a hunch that I might be moved to do something that I didn't really want to do. But this is where that Examen can be really important and useful. This is where we pay attention to what Ignatius calls our consolations and desolations.

**The sixth is getting our priorities straight.** If we say our ultimate goal is to do God's will for us, how do our daily decisions reflect that? Ignatius writes: "God has created me out of love, and my salvation is found in my living out a return of that love. All my choices, then, must be consistent with this given direction in my life."

**Finally, St. Ignatius urges us not to confuse the ends with the means.** We must recognize that friendships and relationships and jobs and talents all are not ends in themselves, but are ways in which we serve and love God. These things are manifestations of our larger goal of living out God's will, obeying God's commandment to love one another as God has loved us. In this obedience we find freedom to be more open, present, and generous with each other.

But no matter how you choose to live out mercy in your work and in your world, the good news is that your work is already inextricably linked with one of the most radical, powerful forces on the planet: books. So often we talk about curling up with a good book, but the reality is that to read a book is to take a stand. It says "this is worth my time." Reading a physical book is an activity that must be chosen over all other actions. It is nearly impossible to read a book and do anything else well. Reading says "I am willing to learn, to listen, to grow." Books start revolutions. They provide comfort, escape, foundations, and educations, all of which are much needed now, as they always have been.

In a time of distraction and division, good books and good libraries truly have the potential to help change—and maybe save—the world. And here are a few reasons why.

**Libraries offer opportunities for surprise.** All too often we, whether intentionally or mistakenly, try to lock God out of our lives, not by becoming atheists, but by refusing to see Christ in those around us, by sometimes arguing, as Thomas might have, "THIS isn't how I expected God to show up!"

Yet good books help us to acknowledge that God might appear in our lives in unexpected ways and might speak to us through someone very different from ourselves. And we must remember that what we hear or see or experience might jar us, challenge us, surprise us.

Good librarians have the opportunity to surprise readers through helping to guide their choices. To offer the work of a fellow person of faith on a different topic or perspective from their usual beat or to offer a nuanced and thoughtful perspective that can help readers to see all people as, well, people, with depth and complexity.

**Libraries offer a chance for reconciliation in a world that often encourages division.** Libraries have the opportunity to bring together people from across all backgrounds, ethnicities, faiths, and socioeconomic backgrounds for discussion, whether that is through

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But no matter how you choose to live out mercy in your work and in your world, the good news is that your work is already inextricably linked with one of the most radical, powerful forces on the planet: books.

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lecture series, art exhibits, study groups, or something else. And if you end up in a debate with someone, you'll have all the resources you need to prove you're right, right in front of you.

In some ways, the element of surprise I mentioned before may be a helpful step toward uniting a sometimes fractured Church and world. Surprise is an emotion that disarms.

When we are caught off

guard, we become vulnerable, and often it is in our most vulnerable times that we are most open to accepting grace, and to truly treating one another with mercy, to accepting mercy, to truly being changed, to saying, as Thomas did upon recognizing Christ, "My Lord and my God."

#### **Libraries empower people to seek the truth.**

As librarians, you have the chance to offer people an opportunity to overcome self-doubt, to feel empowered about learning, to open their minds and hearts. In a time of so much "fake news" it helps to be able to discern the truth. You help people to understand what it means to be a reliable source of information and you serve as just that yourselves. You help people understand it's okay not to know all the answers. And it's okay to ask someone for help.

Libraries give you the facts. And that is because there are people like yourselves trained in guiding people toward the right information. You help people learn the best ways to find the truth. And you inspire people to want to find it in the first place.

**Libraries have the potential to transform us, and more books might mean more change.** So be it. We must be willing to be changed over and over again. C.S. Lewis wrote that when we consider the resurrected body of Christ we have to reconsider our entire understanding of the universe. Yet he described it as "a picture—not of unmaking but of remaking."

Having the opportunity to thoughtfully engage with our faith through books and research means that we have new opportunities to see and to understand that our lives are unmade and remade by the One who made us in the first place. And yet in these times of change or of distraction, it's not always easy to feel or find God's presence. But the simple act of reading a book requires you to take the time to stop, be still, and see what's right in front of you.

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus arrives in the midst of daily life. His presence there reminds us that sometimes that thing we had hoped for is what is happening right this moment, if only we would recognize it. If only we could recognize that burning in our hearts for what it is and follow it. If only we could continue to become more like ourselves, even as we are not yet fully who we are meant to be.

Yet this is not easy. We are busy. We are tired. We are scared. We think we will do these things imperfectly. We resist grace. Yet we are also part of a community of believers that is called to break down barriers; and at the center of that community is the Word, the Word made flesh, the Word known to some for the first time or met for the millionth time through the words that you publish, words that move us to act as Christ in the world and to search for the presence of Christ in others, words that encourage us to seek the grace to accept those graces acting on us, which brings me to my last point.

**Libraries can help us to build community and in doing so, to grow in our humanity.** True community means coming together on behalf of each other, both in spite of our differences and in celebration of our differences. It means that we step out of our usual habits and patterns. We let each other know that they are welcome, that all people are at home here in our Church, in our world. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes that "an evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward.... An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives."

The words you share with others help to shape people's daily lives, their daily actions. They help us to become like family to one another. In his World Communications Day message a few years back, Pope Francis described the family as "an environment in which we learn to communicate in an experience of closeness... a 'communicating community.'" And so, in the end, libraries and the books they lend serve as a forum to help form each other in the Gospel, to model dialogue, and inform and strengthen faith, making the best use of the many tools that we have today in order to build a "communicating community" of readers and writers, editors and publishers, and librarians that also feels a lot like a family.

And as I continue to read, I'm encouraged every day by stories of that dialogue and faith and hope and community and joy at work in our world, and I can't help but want to call out, as my eight-year-old self did: "Alleluia, Alleluia, Praise the Lord," because I must admit I am very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very (that's ten verys) excited to see what you'll be doing next. ■

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Theology/Spirituality

### *2 Kings*

By Song-Mi Suzie Park, Liturgical, 2019, 405 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-8111-4, \$39.95.

In volume 12 of the Wisdom Commentary, Liturgical Press's series of feminist biblical interpretation, Song-Mi Suzie Park (Austin Presbyterian Seminary) strives in her study of *2 Kings* "to uncover and bring out through a variety of means and methods the ways in which women and other people on the margins were portrayed, characterized, and narrated" (xli). She has her work cut out for her in this monarchical history of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and Park is generally successful in her efforts "to shine a light on some of the androcentric messages, views, and visions that emerge from the narratives in *2 Kings* so as to explore their meaning and significance" (xli). Following the series's standard introductory apparatus, Park's introduction sets out her belief that the authors of *2 Kings* were largely trying to demonstrate the masculinity of YHWH, but many challenges in the kingdoms' history complicated this. Not least was the final destruction of Judah, just a few years after the reforms of the super-righteous King Josiah. According to Deuteronomic logic, this should have resulted in Josiah's success and Judah's health, instead of the Babylonian captivity. How the writers tried to defend YHWH is Park's "key query" of the book: "Whether YHWH is masculine enough to defend his country and to warrant the loyalties of its people" (317). Her commentary ably mines the growing wealth of historical and critical biblical scholarship and Park diligently seeks out feminist concerns and post-colonial insights. She takes special care to see through the biblical writers' vitriolic fixation on Jezebel. Park sees her instead as a dutiful wife and sincerely pious woman, not the

harlot and witch of myth. Wryly noting that "the biblical writers give [Jezebel] everlasting life" (131). Park also looks carefully at Athaliah, also scorned by the writers, the only woman who ever ruled over either of the two kingdoms.

Park concludes that the biblical writers' desperate efforts to prop up the masculinity of God is ultimately unsuccessful. Throughout her commentary she returns again and again to try to view the biblical narrative through the lenses of women: "It is important to keep in mind that the real history of this region is composed of different untold narratives: the numerous unrecorded tales of the voiceless women, children, and men who were killed, harmed, or dislocated because of the decisions, mistakes, and acts of violence perpetrated by power-hungry male autocrats" (217). The book is richly footnoted, and includes comprehensive indexes and bibliographies. Highly recommended to all academic libraries.

Daniel Boice

### *Agnostic at the Altar: Searching for Transcendence in the Story of the Prophets*

By John Van Hagen, Wipf and Stock, 2019, 111 pp., ISBN 978-1-5326-7580-5, \$19.00 (paper).

*Agnostic at the Altar* is a unique title that examines some of the principal prophets of the Old Testament, their situations, words, and audiences, and their implications for our modern world. John Van Hagen is a former Roman Catholic priest and psychologist who courageously confronts issues of faith and science. He looks to the prophets from the time after King Solomon's death through the Babylonian Exile (931-538 BCE). The prophetic voices include Elijah, Amos, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah and each receive full analysis within the broad theme of binding a people (the Israelites) to a universal God in forming a

new identity. This theme breaks from the tribal mentality of the older traditions to one that is more expansive and embraces all nations and people. His analysis of scripture and his insights into a post-religious culture are engaging and challenging. He posits that one need not conform to established religious traditions to embrace this new community of universal peace and harmony as expressed in the prophetic voices. Thus the use of the term agnostic. This is a challenging and well-argued position which seeks to widen access to the divine in ordinary daily life. *Agnostic at the Altar* is complete with bibliography and index.

*Agnostic at the Altar* is recommended for most theological libraries.

John Leonard Berg

### *American Parishes: Remaking Local Catholicism*

Ed. by Gary J. Adler, Jr., Tricia C. Bruce, and Brian Starks, Fordham University Press, 2019, 273 pp., ISBN 978-0-8232-8435-1, \$105.00, ISBN 978-0-8232-8434-4, \$30.00 (paper).

Since the 1990s, when congregational studies came into vogue, new theoretical models for mapping the sociology of parishes built upon prior scholars' suggestions that the parish structure was a unique item for critical study. This measures the body of research that has been generated since then. It incorporates insights of present practitioners seeking to test previous models. A concluding chapter finds that Catholic parishes are the "embodied middle" of American Catholic life.

The editors' introductory essay is beautifully supplemented by Tricia Bruce's excellent, if truncated, essay on the history of the sociology of parishes. Some key concepts are discussed. For instance, that continuity and change can be considered sociological hallmarks of parishes. The volume succeeds





admirably in capturing several examples and unpacking their significance. For instance, the chapter on liturgical forms in black Catholic parishes and the rise of segregated churches due to income disparities between certain ethnic communities. The jarring figures in this respect are made all the more stark when contrasting the rates with trends in the wider population.

The value of a book like this—one that is synthetic and balanced—shows the Church in its weakness. It also helps undercut our assumptions of the Church in the United States as either a monolith or as a set of discrete units. The authors seek to provide deep insights into the direction of the Church. Many point to the disconnections between the Church and young people, whose incomes are stagnant and who are plagued with distraction. The book forces us to ask hard questions when faced with some glaringly troublesome data. Do we cower or address it? Do we ask whether those in authority are somehow hindering growth by being stuck in conceptions of the Church taken from bygone eras? Are we being faithful to the Gospel by organizing ourselves into the kinds of parishes that we have, or is there a way to be better?

Recommended for advanced undergraduate courses in Catholic ecclesiology and for seminarians and divinity schools interested in parish life.

Patrick J. Hayes

**Avery Dulles: Essential Writings from America Magazine**

Ed. by James T. Keane, Christian Classics, 2019, 354 pp., ISBN 978-0-8706-1315-9, \$24.95 (paper).

Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ (1918-2008), was a prolific theological author. *America* is the premier journal of the Jesuits and has been in continuous publication since 1909. Cardinal Dulles was a frequent contributor to *America* for sixty years. In this book James T. Keane has collected

thirty-eight articles by Cardinal Dulles. He has arranged them by genre and then presented them chronologically. The genres include “Reports and Reflections,” “Lectures and Addresses,” “Book Reviews,” and “Appreciations.” A final chapter is an interview with Cardinal Dulles by James Martin, SJ. Though Keane is open in the introduction about his struggle to decide how to organize the texts, he does not address how these thirty-eight articles were selected as “essential.” The topics covered in these chapters span the gamut from social issues to theological conundrums. Vatican II, John Paul II and his humanism, orthodoxy, Catholicism and American culture, Ignatian charism, and Catholic teaching. Cardinal Dulles has a unique ability to present both sides of an argument in a positive light, without appearing indecisive; it is obvious where he believes the truth lies.

Recommended reading for anyone interested in Catholic thought in the twentieth century. Ideal for church, academic, and public libraries.

Shirley J. Martyn

**Becoming New: Finding God within Us and in Creation**

By Anselm Grün and Leonardo Boff, Orbis, 2019, 153 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-331-1, \$20.00 (paper).

This volume comprises two parts. The first, by Anselm Grün, is titled “The Divine in Us,” and is further divided into nine brief chapters. Grün’s emphasis lies with the relationship between the individual and God through reflection. Chapter themes include God’s immanence and transcendence, divine and human love, and the extension of a relationship with God to all of creation.

The second part, by Leonardo Boff, is titled “The Divine in Us and the Universe,” and is further divided into thirteen brief chapters. Boff’s emphasis lies with the relationship between humanity and the cosmos, with and in God.

Chapter themes include cosmic evolution, the place of humanity in the cosmos, God’s intervention in the cosmos including the Incarnation, and the renewal of the universe in the Spirit.

While the co-authors prepared their sections separately and in different languages, they acknowledge the influence one has on the other. Both also acknowledge their mutual inspiration from the document *Laudato Si*. This is a volume dedicated to spirituality and would be a fine addition to any adult collection with spiritual titles.

Arthur G. Quinn

**Birth of a Dancing Star: My Journey from Cradle Catholic to Cyborg Christian**

By Ilia Delio, OSF, Orbis, 2019, 232 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-347-2, \$24.00 (paper).

Sister Ilia Delio is perhaps best known for her numerous writings on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and her calls for the Church to embrace evolution in doctrine and policy. With doctoral degrees in both pharmacology and historical theology, Delio is uniquely qualified to continue the multidisciplinary momentum of Teilhard, and she moves easily among philosophical, scientific, and theological schools. In this book, she recounts her own life and the many twists and turns that brought her to her current views and work, including establishing the Omega Center. Unfortunately, Delio’s brilliance in articulating theological insights does not translate into narrating her youth, education, and life to this point. Stories of her childhood and school ramble without focus, and some rigorous editing would have been useful. Delia’s occasionally harsh criticism of members of the religious communities through which she passed might suggest that perhaps the trouble was less in the communities than in her own lack of aptitude for community life. Delia never quite explains why she felt so strongly about



continuing to wear her habit, or why she was finally comfortable leaving it, along with her traditionalist beliefs. It is finally toward the end of the book, as she discovers her ideal living and teaching situations at Georgetown and Villanova, that her writing becomes focused and she develops her views on “Cyborg Christianity.” Given her many insightful articles and books, this title will be primarily of interest to readers who want to know more about Delio’s life, and is recommended to them.

Daniel Boice

**Building Bridges in Sarajevo: The Plenary Papers from CTEWC 2018**

Ed. by Kristin E. Heyer, James F. Keenan, and Andrea Vicini, Orbis, 2019, 256 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-342-7, \$42.00 (paper).

Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church (CTEWC), an international gathering of many of the planet’s premier ethicists, has now met three times. The goal of these conferences is to learn from one another’s experiences in their home country or region. Each are leaders in their own field and those who have presented have had their papers published in successive volumes. The present book, under the theme of “building bridges,” supplies the plenary papers from the Sarajevo meeting.

Senior scholars are paired with the junior scholars in each of the eight plenary sessions. The subjects range from economic topics to health care to human rights. Many of the speakers are from the emerging world or former war zones. Quite naturally, their analysis is dependent upon location and this is brought to bear in several essays. For instance, many ethicists presently work in areas that are being affected by climate change with highly detrimental effects. Bangladesh and many of the smaller Pacific islands are prone to serious flooding from rising sea levels, which radically circumscribes the conditions under which people live. Similarly, security conditions in Africa, India, and the Middle East often mar human flourishing.

Of great benefit for most readers of this volume, including specialists, is a greater familiarity not only with the work of the assembled experts, but also the literature reviews of current work being done in their geographic area. They often point to the pioneers undertaking serious ethical or practical projects in their field. For many, this will be a first encounter with the names and places discussed.

It is unfortunate that this paperback, which comes at such a high cost, is limited in its market. It is difficult to see this put to use in classrooms. Its appeal may come only as a kind of souvenir of the meeting. Adding to this drawback is that the first forty pages contain a good deal of back slapping and congratulatoria given to conference organizers and participants. Still, it will be an important addition to graduate and seminary libraries.

Patrick J. Hayes

**Catholicity and Emerging Personhood: A Contemporary Theological Anthropology**

By Daniel P. Horan, OFM, Orbis, 2019, 272 pp., ISBN 978-1-626983-36-6, \$25.00 (paper).

This book is the latest entry in the series Catholicity in an Evolving Universe (Ilia Delio, general editor), with “catholicity” defined as a sense of dynamic wholeness and a conscious awareness of a continually unfolding creation. Daniel Horan positions his intentions for this book in that context: “I am interested in theological anthropology . . . consider[ed] . . . through the lens of catholicity or wholemaking, which reveals a general understanding of human personhood. What emerges from such a reflection are new insights about the role of evolutionary biology in our theological consideration of humanity; alternative approaches to explicating the doctrine of *imago Dei*; new resources discovered in the Christian tradition for grounding our theology; novel trajectories that allow us to understand how previous anthropologies have harmed certain populations or erased

them altogether, while offering us new paths forward for a holistic understanding of human diversity; reconsiderations and expansions of our understanding of sin; and explorations of the reality of God’s grace and lived-out response to that gift” (14).

In his critique of traditional views of human personhood, Horan begins with an affirmation of our basis in matter, “loving the Dust we are” (37). He moves on to establish our kinship with all living things—and with animals in a special way—in the context of biological evolution. He draws upon insights from Darwin, Teilhard de Chardin, and several contemporary theologians vis-à-vis deep incarnation, deep resurrection, and a new approach to theodicy.

Tackling the deeply ingrained Christian tradition of basing human privilege and exceptionalism on our creation “in the image of God,” the author considers the implications of an outright rejection of the *imago Dei* versus redefining it or expanding the meaning of *imago Dei* to be more inclusive of all created reality, while retaining the distinction between humans and the rest of creation.

Horan’s rethinking of the meaning of “human nature” begins with a critique of traditional medieval theories, primarily those of Thomas Aquinas, which the author says are based on Hellenistic philosophical worldviews that view this nature as abstract, universal, and atemporal, the same for every person at every era. He then draws upon an alternative medieval source, John Duns Scotus, whose theory of individuation (*haecceitas* or “thisness” as the ultimate unity of a unique individual) provides a starting point for a catholic or wholemaking approach to developing a more adequate theological anthropology. In the call of Jeremiah to be a prophet, the author provides scriptural grounding for the realization that we are each individually loved into existence: “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you” (Jer 1:4–5).

In a chapter titled “Gender, Identity, and Race,” the author



tackles several controversial issues: the sexism of “gender complementarity,” the reality of transgender persons, and the dehumanizing effects of racism.

In a chapter titled “What We Have Done, What We Have Failed to Do,” Horan starts with affirmations of original human goodness as well as original human sin. “In order to understand the human person with any sense of wholeness or catholicity, we must acknowledge from the outset the simultaneity of our existential goodness and sinfulness” (189). He proceeds to deconstruct the concept of original sin (versus the reality to which the concept refers) and investigates personal sin and structural sin, bringing in the often-neglected effects sin has on those who have been sinned against.

The final chapter presents Horan’s reflections on the many meanings of grace, the human “capacity” for God, and Rahner’s supernatural existential.

Daniel Horan’s insightful strategic approaches for building a more holistic (“catholic”) theological anthropology are important and helpful road signs that point to possible ways forward. They are valuable intuitive seeds that need to be watered and nurtured. The challenge remains for him, and other like-minded theologians, to do the substantial work necessary to grow a fully developed and rigorous theology of the human person.

Recommended for theological libraries in colleges, universities, major seminaries, and religious houses of study.

Robert R. Rahl

**Christ and the Common Life: Political Theology and the Case for Democracy**

By Luke Bretherton, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019, 522 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-7640-9, \$49.00.

This book provides an overview of political theology. The organization of the book is one of its most helpful elements. Broken into three parts, part one provides case studies on how different groups of Christians responded to political life, especially in post-Enlightenment times. Parts two

and three examine particular issues within modern political life and provide both a critique and a solution to those problems. In addition, the author structures his book to allow each chapter to be read by itself or the book as a whole. This means of organization allows it to be used beneficially for class settings whether in the church or an academic setting. However, this format also does not provide an overall thesis to the book, though one can figure out his thesis with a careful reading of the book. While not focused on Catholic social teaching, the author frequently cites various popes and Catholic theologians when presenting his argument. In addition, in his section of various movements within political theology in Christian history, he devotes one chapter to Catholic social teaching. This book is recommended for college libraries.

Robert Huttmeier

**Church As Dynamic Life-System: Shared Ministries and Common Responsibilities**

By Joseph A. Bracken, SJ, Orbis, 2019, 161 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-315-1, \$27.00 (paper).

In this theological work, Fr. Joseph Bracken discusses the Church as an evolving life-system that we need to manage in order to keep it thriving. His new “system-oriented approach” for his God-world relationship stems from two early twentieth-century philosophers, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Alfred North Whitehead. Fr. Bracken combines their ideas with his own reasoning and modern thought to create a new theological philosophy that attempts to address societal and Church concerns of the twenty-first century.

Bracken, like many modern philosophers, moves away from St. Thomas Aquinas’s God-centered approach of using science and philosophy to address world and Church issues. Instead the dynamic is placed on the person and their use of science and philosophy, while God is often seen as a backdrop in the daily lives of the world. These new theological/philosophical/scientific approaches can be viewed as the reversal

of Aquinas’s philosophy of the God-centered approach, instead inserting the created as, in the very least, equal to the creator in solving worldly problems that currently surround us. The author offers good examples for adapting his new philosophical approach from Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si*, as well as noting the decline in church attendance and vocations. He offers ideas and concepts that aim to propel us to a better world.

The book itself is broken down into five chapters, the first two focusing on Teilhard and Whitehead, respectively. The last three chapters focus on combining the ideas of these two philosopher/scientists with the author’s own knowledge to build his new philosophy which can be used to address some of the current crises currently facing humanity.

Michael A. Cerbo II

**Compassionate Christ, Compassionate People: Liturgical Foundations of Christian Spirituality**

By Bob Hurd, Liturgical Press Academic, 2019, 244 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-8462-7, \$24.95 (paper).

The book *Compassionate Christ, Compassionate People: Liturgical Foundations of Christian Spirituality* by well-known composer of liturgical music, Bob Hurd, is a study of the spirituality of the liturgy. When I was in graduate school, I had a professor who spent the first day of a new class section relating many facts and statistics. He then spent the next couple of class sections telling stories which brought to life the facts and figures. In a similar way, in the first section of the book, Hurd starts off by reflecting on the play *Our Town*, which in the second part leads into a systematic explanation of the spirituality of the liturgy. While focused on the Catholic Mass and tradition, Hurd incorporates material from the traditions of all of the liturgical churches. Hurd also relies heavily on the theology of Karl Rahner and Louis-Marie Chauvet to provide a framework for his understanding of liturgical spirituality. This book is recommended for college and seminary libraries.

Robert Huttmeier



**The Doctor of Mercy:  
The Sacred Treasures of  
St. Gregory of Narek**

By Michael Papazian, Liturgical Press Academic, 2019, 254 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-8501-3, \$49.95.

St. Gregory of Narek was an Armenian monk, theologian, and poet who lived in the second half of the tenth century at the monastery of Narekavank on the southeastern shore of Lake Van in what is today eastern Turkey. Over the course of his monastic career, he composed a number of works, including a commentary on the Song of Songs, panegyrics on various holy people and objects, two theological treatises, and an extensive body of liturgical and devotional poetry. His masterwork is *The Book of Lamentations*, a spiritual poem of more than ten thousand lines in which he reflects upon human sinfulness and the overwhelming mercy of God. St. Gregory has long been renowned as a major figure of the Armenian Church and *The Book of Lamentations* is considered to be a touchstone of Armenian culture and literature to this day. Yet, outside of Armenia, knowledge of St. Gregory and his writings has, until very recently, been restricted primarily to specialists in the history of Armenian Christianity. This situation changed when, on April 12, 2015, Pope Francis declared St. Gregory of Narek to be a Doctor of the Church, only the thirty-sixth person to be so designated. This declaration brought St. Gregory to the attention of the wider Catholic world. At that time, there were relatively few resources available for anglophone readers who wanted to learn more about the newest Doctor. Michael Papazian, a professor of religion and philosophy at Berry College (Mount Berry, Georgia), has now ably filled this gap with the volume under review, which is the first book-length treatment in English of St. Gregory's life and thought.

The volume opens with an extensive overview of the historical and theological context in which St. Gregory of Narek lived and worked. The later ninth century was a time of political, cultural, and religious revival in Armenia as two centers of power emerged:

the Bagratuni realm in the north and the kingdom of Vaspurakan, ruled by the Artsruni dynasty, in the south. St. Gregory was born into a family belonging to the clerical establishment in Vaspurakan—his father, Khosrov Andzewats'i, was a bishop—and, early in life, became a member of the monastic community of Narekavank, where he remained until his death. Thus it was the religious environment of the Artsruni realm that influenced his thought.

As Papazian shows, the theological and spiritual profile of the Armenian Church in Vaspurakan during St. Gregory's lifetime was complex. Unlike its Latin and Greek counterparts, the Armenian Church did not adhere to the Christological teaching of the Council of Chalcedon that Jesus Christ possesses two natures, divine and human, in one person, preferring the miaphysite (i.e., "one-nature") view that "the incarnation unites Christ's divine and human natures into one nature" (35). Some Armenian religious thinkers considered Chalcedonian dyophysitism to fall outside the pale of orthodoxy, while others took a more conciliatory approach, holding it to be an acceptable, if not optimal, account of the nature of Christ's person. The Armenian Church was not immune to the scandal of heresy, and two heretical movements, in particular, troubled the Church in Vaspurakan. One was Julianism, also known as apthartodocetism, a version of Christology that held that Jesus "did not have a body corruptible and pass[i]ble by nature because his virgin birth exempted him from the transmission of original sin" (37). This teaching entailed a denial of the human nature of Christ and so led directly toward monophysitism. The other was the T'ondrakean heresy, whose leaders claimed that Christianity is rooted solely in the subjective experience of worshippers and so denied the efficacy of all formal forms of worship, including the sacraments. Although sharply disagreeing with T'ondrakean views, many Church leaders, such as St. Gregory's father Khosrov Andzewats'i and his mentor and his spiritual father,

Abbot Anania of Narek, believed that religious practice had become overly routinized and mechanistic in spirit, and sought to bring about a revival of Armenian religious life that would deepen the interior life of the believer and so give the public confession of faith a firmer anchor in the spiritual life.

Having set the historical and theological stage, Papazian offers a wide-ranging discussion of St. Gregory's theology that draws on all of his writings, though with an understandable focus on *The Book of Lamentations*. The dominant themes in *The Book of Lamentations* are the ineluctability of sin, the necessity of genuine contrition, and the assurance of God's great mercy. In setting these themes in the compelling form of poetry, Papazian argues, St. Gregory was attempting to inculcate in his readers a sincerely heartfelt and truly spiritual attitude to confession in accordance with the revivalist currents of his time. In sharp contradistinction to the T'ondrakeans, St. Gregory's sacramental theology affirmed fully the material necessity and spiritual efficacy of the sacraments, insisting on the centrality of the Eucharist. St. Gregory followed the Armenian Church in upholding a miaphysite Christology, but, like Chosrov and Anania, considered the Chalcedonian position to fall within the limits of orthodoxy. At the same time, he held that Jesus "shares in all our sorrows and afflictions but ... remains sinless" (195), thus adopting a palpably anti-Julianist position. Throughout his writings, St. Gregory propounded a capacious understanding of God; indeed, as Papazian notes, he did not hesitate to speak of the motherhood of God in certain passages of his writings. St. Gregory's writings also contain significant reflections on the Blessed Virgin Mary, in particular, on her role as Daughter of Eve, her perpetual virginity, her assumption into heaven, and her immaculacy, all of which are discussed by Papazian.

All in all, *The Doctor of Mercy* is a wonderful introduction to St. Gregory of Narek, his world, and his richly generous and generative spirituality, which is so memorably expressed in his poetry. Papazian



is a knowledgeable guide to, and a skillful and insightful expositor of St. Gregory's works. It is to be hoped that his excellent book will inspire readers to immerse themselves further in the "sacred treasures" of the great Armenian Doctor, many of which are available in English translations. This highly readable and well-documented volume belongs on the shelves of all academic libraries supporting programs in patristics, theology, and Armenian studies; it is also suitable for public libraries.

Thomas M. Dousa

**Drop Your Nets and Follow Jesus: How to Form Disciples for the New Evangelization**

By Susan Muto, New City, 2019, 162 pp., ISBN 978-1-56548-685-0, \$16.95 (paper).

Renowned spirituality teacher and mentor, Susan Muto, has turned her attention in this new book to the hot topic of the new evangelization in the Catholic Church. Muto utilizes her many years of experience at the Institute of Formative Spirituality at Duquesne University and, more recently, as dean of the Epiphany Academy of Formative Spirituality in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

In using her typical poetic style that she has employed in her many spiritual books of meditations and reflections on sacred scripture, she give us, in a succinct format, a true compendium of information for spiritual self-direction as well as a guide to help those forming disciples of the new evangelization. In her flowing poetic style learned from her mentor, Adrian van Kaam, Muto has written a truly beautiful book.

In the twenty-one short chapters of six to eight pages each, Muto writes about the basic concepts of spirituality needed to become an effective disciple to those who have left their faith or those who wish to develop a more intimate relationship with Jesus. Each chapter begins with a short, beautiful poetic reflection either written by herself or Adrian van Kaam. Muto's inspiring words that follow are often from the writings of the great spiritual writers of the Church. The Bible as well as writers like Saint Catherine and Saint Therese of Lisieux are often

quoted. Simple yet deep inspiration and instruction for discipleship are provided. Each chapter ends with an original prayer and thoughts for personal application of Muto's words. A few pages of notes and a list of recommended further readings end the book.

Muto has attained a prominent position among current spiritual writers. Her numerous books have assisted multitudes of readers in gaining a deeper spirituality for over forty years. This book is a fine example of her skills as an author and teacher. Using non-theological language and with deep personal insights, she has provided us with wonderful reflections on what we must be to become disciples to others. The book is recommended to general readers for personal spiritual enrichment and specifically to those involved in the new evangelization. The book should be in all parish libraries.

Arnold Rzepecki

**Eating Together, Becoming One: Taking Up Pope Francis's Call To Theologians**

By Thomas O'Loughlin, Liturgical Press Academic, 2019, 192 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-8458-0, \$29.95 (paper).

As a Catholic, Thomas O'Loughlin, professor of historical theology at the University of Nottingham, has long held a pastoral concern about his church's position regarding intercommunion with non-Catholic Christians. In *Eating Together, Becoming One* he speaks of the problem this presents for married Christians who are not both Catholics. O'Loughlin also relates the personal dilemma he faced some twenty years ago while attending a Methodist church to celebrate the baptism of a friend's baby boy. Since the Eucharist was offered that Sunday, he felt compelled to take communion with the non-Catholic Christians in the congregation as a testament to their shared journey in "building bit by bit now the one, holy, catholic church" (40).

Then, on November 15, 2015, while attending a joint Reformation celebration at a Lutheran church in Rome, he heard Pope Francis answer a question on the possibility of intercommunion with these

words: "Is the sharing of the Lord's Supper *the end* of the journey or the *viaticum* to journey together? I leave the question to the theologians, to those who understand" (16).

Out of his pastoral concerns, O'Loughlin had previously written various academic papers on intercommunion issues. He has now produced this book as a more comprehensive response to the pope's challenge. In it, he sees the pope calling for "a discussion based on the idea that the eucharist is 'food for a journey' (*viaticum*) and so belongs to the world of where we are now" (17). The book presents a series of reflections exploring the theological, liturgical, and pastoral issues related to the question. Through these, O'Loughlin's goal is not to provide a definitive answer, but to offer a new pastoral vision for changing Catholic practice to allow other Christians to share in the Eucharist.

In his conclusion, O'Loughlin asks how can we in good conscience "exclude any member of the (baptized) Spirit-formed family from full participation in the very activity for which the Spirit has transformed us?" (155). His book is recommended for academic and parish libraries and for all those with pastoral concerns about the appropriate answer to this question.

Rafael Ubico

**The End of the Beginning: Joshua & Judges**

By Johanna W.H. van Wijk-Bos, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019, 365 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-6838-1, \$29.99 (paper).

This is the first volume in Eerdmans's A People and a Land, a small set of commentaries on the Bible's historical books, which will include volumes on Samuel and Kings. Van Wijk-Bos (Professor of Old Testament, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary), approaches Joshua and Judges "with deep commitments to feminism and issues of gender and to analysis of patriarchal structures and ideologies" (x). This is not a verse-by-verse commentary, but more a running study of the stories that comprise the books, viewed as discrete dramas comprising acts, scenes,



and parts. “Every chapter,” she notes, “has its own purpose and place in the construction of the whole, with distinct connections and context” (128). And what stories they are, culled over centuries and gathered by a tiny nation trying to understand its place in a frightening world. In her helpful introduction, Bos recounts her own experiences as a native of the Netherlands, a small nation conquered and brutally occupied for years by the Nazis. After the war, the Dutch struggled to reclaim their identity and self-respect, much like the editors in post-exilic Israel who compiled these books. Bos uses a wealth of modern scholarship, and includes her own translations of selected verses, rendering the Tetragrammaton as “Adonai” throughout the book. In Judges, Bos takes special note of the presence of women, including Rahab, and the even more spectacular variety of roles played in Judges, including a shrewd negotiator, a burnt offering, a heroic judge, and a victim of gang rape. She contrasts horrific violence with care for outsiders, both actions commanded by God.

In the end, Bos has no facile answer as to what exactly we are supposed to take away from these wonderful, strange, sometimes horrifying stories, except to note that the books “can teach and guide us” (316), if mostly through the telling of the stories themselves. The volume concludes with helpful bibliographies and indexes, and is warmly recommended to all academic libraries.

*Daniel Boice*

***Faith and Evolution:  
A Grace-Filled Naturalism***

By Roger Haight, SJ, Orbis, 2019, 236 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-341-0, \$30.00 (paper).

Big History is a multidisciplinary field, recently popularized by David Christian, that takes as its domain everything from the moment of the Big Bang down to the present time, all 13.8 billion years of it, in eight thresholds. While not seamless, in large part because of the transitional

nature of the thresholds, it is a coherent story, one that Roger Haight boldly assumes as his architectural starting point to help Christian believers understand the fundamentals of their own faith in the present day reality. In fact, in the final chapter, Haight provides the other bookend by extending the discussion into the eschatological realm, terra incognita to the scientific paradigm.

Haight begins his thoughtful exploration with brief historical excursions into Copernican planetary motion, Darwinian evolution, and Einsteinian relativity to show how science has revealed and continues to reveal to ourselves our own nature and our own place in nature. But then he shows how science must withdraw from the question: Why is there anything at all? Thus, the line is drawn and it’s clear where there are radically different views on reality and, if they are to be mutually respected, where there must be rules for engagement. In preparing the groundwork, Haight succeeds in organizing a structure for thinking about the relationship between the science of evolution and the theology of religion, specifically Christianity.

Of particular interest is the provocative discussion on Original Sin in “Ambiguity in the Heart of the Human” (chapter five) and the explication of God “as an internal cause of the unfolding of the mysterious web of relationships found everywhere ... in the universe” in “Christology from Within” (chapter seven).

Only a scholar with Haight’s lifetime breadth and depth of experience could bring to the discussion relevant perspectives from the TaNaKh and an eclectic range of theologians, among them Aquinas, Eckhart, Kung, Niebuhr, Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Stoeger, and Tillich.

In beginning with a new framework and providing a new perspective with a new vocabulary and a new set of dynamics for what has long been assumed to be an arcane niche discussion about an enigmatic intersection of otherwise presumed incompatible fields, Haight has instead painted

a timely and accessible canvas of extraordinary richness that will prompt all manner of curious and thoughtful discussion for decades to come.

*Faith and Evolution* would be of most value to educated and informed readers with some initial grounding in this conversation, or those who are desirous of integrating for themselves the ideas of Big History in a more meaningful way with the biblical imagination of creation.

*Paul Beninger*

***Full of Your Glory:  
Liturgy, Cosmos, Creation***

Ed. by Teresa Berger, Liturgical, 2019, 444 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-6456-8, \$44.95 (paper).

This volume comprises seventeen essays, collected from papers given at a conference hosted by the Yale Institute of Sacred Music (ISM), where editor Teresa Berger teaches. Berger’s introduction is masterful in situating the conference theme within the growing interdisciplinary ecclesial concern for the environment. The essays themselves are written by an international amalgam of scholars from several disciplines and a variety of denominational perspectives. The topics and quality of writing vary, and in some cases, the connection to the book’s theme is pretty tangential. Unsurprisingly, the first essay by Rowan Williams is profound and provocative. David Grumett’s essay on “The World as Christ’s Body” gives a historical survey that seems poised to provide an exciting new emergent perspective, but suddenly and frustratingly stops with the work of Maurice Blondel. Joris Geldhof examines the *Ordo Missae* to see what it says about creation. While he admits that there is not much explicit language, the sense of God’s presence in the created world is pervasive, if only we are aware of it. That essay is nicely teamed with one by Kevin Irwin, who has written a book-length commentary on *Laudato Si*. A few essays are less approachable, such as one that leans heavily on the curious and undefined use of “imaginary” as a noun. Berger’s editing is

rigorous, with each essay well footnoted, and the book concludes with a subject index that includes biblical references. Recommended to seminary libraries.

Daniel Boice

### **Go Forth: Toward a Community of Missionary Disciples**

By Pope Francis, Ed. by William P. Gregory, Orbis, 2019, 196 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-326-7, \$22.00 (paper).

The papacy of Pope Francis is characterized by a renewal of a pastoral missionary praxis that is responsive to the contemporary ecclesial and cultural milieu. Pope Francis envisions a Catholic Church that is not self-enclosed, but a self-disclosed ecclesial community of missionary disciples sent forth to evangelize the world. Attentive to this pastoral praxis, William Gregory reconstructs the teachings of Pope Francis, which are shaping the Church's mission—*ecclesia ad intra* and *ecclesia ad extra*. Starting with an extended introduction, the book is structured into eleven thematic chapters, based on the writings of the pope. These include papal messages and addresses, pastoral letters, apostolic exhortations, encyclicals, and interviews. Each chapter's theme resonates with the teaching of Pope Francis in his first apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel).

Chapters one and two present the pope's understanding of mission in the life of the Christian, employing the dynamics of witness and closeness in the world. While witness is typically more effective for evangelization, its complement is pastoral closeness to others for an enduring prophetic action and communication of God's love. The author moves on, in chapter three, to examine the place of God's mercy in the Church's encounter with the suffering of the marginalized and the most vulnerable of society. Continuing the mandate of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy (2016), this third chapter echoes Pope Francis's renewal invitation to ecclesial communities to become a harbinger of mercy to a humanity facing crises of diminishment of faith and hope.

In sequence, chapters four, five, and six focus on the virtues of hope, humility, and joy, in light of the Christian disposition to evangelize and transform the world. These Christian virtues, for Pope Francis, must be embodied authentically in the life of the Church and of the Christian. Further, these virtues are to be exemplified and presented to the world amidst emerging cultures of despair and pessimism, of searches for worldly glory and self-satisfaction, and of new forms of agnosticism and individualism. The author turns to the social principle of solidarity in chapter seven. Given the appalling poverty in the world, Pope Francis stresses solidarity with the poor as an imperative for the Church's mission, especially of economic equality and just distribution of earthly goods.

Chapters eight and nine deal with peace and vitality. In the former chapter, Gregory articulates the call of Pope Francis on the Church to be a peacemaker, and to remain steadfast in proclaiming to the world nonviolence, dialogue, fraternity, justice, and reconciliation unto peace. The latter chapter examines current mission frontiers, with emphasis on the relevance of ecclesial renewal in light of mission strategies, theological vision, and pastoral practices. The Gospel is valid for all seasons and demands refreshing insight and renewing inspiration on Christian witnessing in our fast-evolving society.

Chapter ten presents the theme of proclamation as a primary mission of the Church in the world. As framed by the author, in no way does proclamation undermine witness, as manifested in care, compassion, personal holiness, unity, and love. Chapter eleven addresses accompaniment, a seminal pastoral orientation of Pope Francis. The pope has consistently reminded all the faithful of the authentic presence and assurance of God's love in the world, especially among those who feel unwanted, undeserving, and unsure.

Gregory has grafted the thoughts of Pope Francis on ecclesial mission in a manner that is rejuvenating for scholarly

research and pastoral formation. With a valuable introduction and commentary on each chapter, Gregory articulates both the theological and pastoral vision of Pope Francis with clarity and depth, in light of the contemporary world. In this book, the author offers theological academia access to the underpinnings of the pope's vision of the Christian Church as a community of missionary disciples for the twenty-first century. Although accounted for in the introduction, a formal concluding chapter could have offered readers closing food for thought on the pope's teachings. Nevertheless, Gregory has creatively articulated insight into the theology and pastoral vision of Pope Francis for the Church—a Church sent forth by Christ to evangelize and transform the world. This book is most appropriate for seminary, theological college, Catholic university, and parish libraries.

Idara Otu, MSP

### **God, Mystery, and Mystification**

By Denys Turner, University of Notre Dame Press, 2019, 204 pp., ISBN 978-0268105976, \$50.00.

*God, Mystery, and Mystification* is a collection of eight essays by Denys Turner, a retired professor of religion at Yale University. These essays are not only a culmination of his philosophical and theological brilliance, but the insights of an engaging mind who is challenging the dimensions between faith and reason. While his reasoning is erudite and appealing to scholars, Turner also includes a level of informality and wit throughout the texts. The eight essays, most or which have not been previously put to print, can be read individually as standalone texts or as a cohesive narrative about divinity, mystery, and mystical theology. A constant theme pervasive throughout the essays is the relevance of Christian faith in the realm of science and politics. Terms like theoretical, speculative, and mystical are balanced with concepts of prayer and faith. The audience for this exceptional title will be scholars of philosophy and theology and graduate students in similar disciplines. The text is complete with comprehensive notes and an index.





*God, Mystery, and Mystification* was reviewed from an advance uncorrected page proof, and is recommended for theological libraries.

John Leonard Berg

***The God Who Acts in History: The Significance of Sinai***

By Craig G. Bartholomew, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2020, 282 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-7467-2, \$29.99 (paper).

For Jews and Christians, one of the central pillars of faith is God's covenanting with Israel at Mount Sinai. Craig Bartholomew (Director, Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics, Cambridge, UK) notes that while many scholars accept this, they nevertheless question or flat-out deny the historicity of the event of God's speaking to Moses. This skepticism has been especially apparent among biblical scholars of the historical-critical school. So how, he wonders, can a faith be founded on an event that did not happen and how did we get to what seems to be an illogical state? Bartholomew provides a historical survey, starting with Augustine, slowing down to focus on Moses Maimonides and St. Thomas Aquinas, and then spending extra time with Spinoza and Kant. He argues that many of these thinkers viewed religion through their philosophical lenses, exactly in reverse of what they should have done. In so doing, Maimonides, for example, tried to make Judaism and Christianity fit his Aristotelean framework, rather than basing his philosophy on his faith. Bartholomew writes from a Reformed Christian perspective, and notes with special affirmation recent scholars who affirm the historicity of the biblical narrative, and he especially applauds the work of Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff. Bartholomew asserts that, while recognizing the scripture's similarities to ancient Near Eastern texts, we must also recognize many aspects of the Sinai event that are unique, such as God covenanting with the people and not only the king, or the Law's special concern for aliens and the poor. Bartholomew

concludes by suggesting that the Sinai narrative should be regarded as historical, if not in precisely the same way we currently define "history," and that the God of Sinai refuses to be tucked into one of our neat little philosophical boxes. Bartholomew speaks to some central questions in biblical criticism and this scholarly study is warmly recommended to all academic libraries.

Daniel Boice

***Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises: An Anthology***

Ed. by Jacques Servais, SJ, Ignatius, 2019, 328 pp., ISBN 978-1-62164-279-4, \$19.95 (paper).

*Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises* is an anthology of Balthasar's writings on St. Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises and it is edited by Fr. Jacques Servais. This anthology was originally published in German. Balthasar had wanted to write a book on Ignatius Loyola, but he did not accomplish this task. Balthasar is considered one of the greatest thinkers in the twentieth century and he pursued a lifelong interest in Loyola's Spiritual Exercises. Balthasar frequently recommended the Spiritual Exercises to young people seeking God's will for their lives. In addition, Balthasar frequently led others through the Spiritual Exercises. Servais has served as the director of the Casa Balthasar house of formation and discernment for young people since it was originally founded in 1990. He was a friend of Balthasar until the theologian's death in 1988.

Balthasar thought of the Spiritual Exercises not as a "book of meditations, but a handbook for those giving the exercises" (xxxvii). The intended audience for the book is those who lead others through the Spiritual Exercises. Some knowledge of the exercises would be helping in reading this book. The editor of this book wants to show the "inseparable link between Balthasar's whole work and the Ignatian exercises and to offer this central aspect as a starting point for further theological research" (xi). This

book edited by Servais serves two purposes: to introduce the reader to the thought of one of the greatest theological thinkers and to offer a commentary on the Spiritual Exercises from one of its greatest practitioners. This book is recommended both for those who would like an introduction to Balthasar's theological thinking and those who would like help in leading others to experience the Ignatian exercises.

John E. Shaffett

***Hearers of the Word: Praying & Exploring the Readings for Advent & Christmas: Year A***

By Kieran J. O'Mahony, OSA, Messenger, 2019, 216 pp., ISBN 978-1-78812-095-1, \$31.75 (paper).

Irish Augustinian Kieran O'Mahony serves in Dublin as a diocesan coordinator for Bible studies, and provides in this volume a self-contained resource for those interested in diving into the Sunday readings for Advent and Christmas of Year A, including all three Christmas Masses. The chapter for each Sunday includes a thought for the day and a prayer, then the Gospel: the reading itself, "Initial Observations," "Kind of Writing," "Old Testament (OT) Background," "New Testament (NT) Foreground," "Brief Commentary," "Pointers for Prayer," then a prayer. Materials for the other two readings include Context in Community and Related Readings instead of the OT and NT references. Oddly, O'Mahony takes the readings for each Sunday in reverse order—Gospel, Epistle, and then OT reading—with no explanation and he does not include the psalm. For the three pericopes, O'Mahony puts each into its context within the book and within the Bible. He notes how the texts echo or reflect passages from both testaments and he offers some historical and theological criticism. The volume includes the full texts of the readings as well as many of the other biblical texts that O'Mahony references, which is helpful for readers wishing to study the pericopes without having to keep a Bible open. The writing is crisp, but there are enough editorial

blunders to cause concern. At one point the text remarkably mangles the Tetragrammaton as YWHW, pages 161-168 are reduplicated, and O'Mahony blames fifth-century Muslims (!) for the collapse of the frankincense trade. The book includes a biblical index, but no notes. This could be a helpful guide for lectors wanting to more deeply understand the Word they are proclaiming and for homilists seeking context for the readings.

Daniel Boice

### **Hearing John's Voice: Insights for Teaching and Preaching**

By M. Eugene Boring, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019, 288 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-7546-4, \$29.99 (paper).

Now retired, the author has published several volumes on New Testament themes. This volume is dedicated to the Johannine corpus. The book's prologue emphasizes the spiritual experience of walking with the Lord by listening to the Word. Following are four long chapters. The first chapter focuses on the eschatological sources used by the author of the Johannine corpus that contribute to his theology.

The second chapter concentrates on the book of Revelation as revealing the nature of the one true God and the faith response by believers. The third chapter spotlights the tensions and conflicts in the Christian community as expressed in the letters of John. The author of these letters is concerned with Christological errors and the false teachers spreading them.

The fourth and final chapter aims to present the Gospel of John as narrating the nature of Jesus Christ as human and divine. Extensive notes, bibliography, and two indexes complete this volume. Although the content is scholarly and well researched, the author of the book maintains a spiritual dimension. This title would be a good addition to any collection that builds on scripture study.

Arthur G. Quinn

### **Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction**

By Sherri Brown and Francis J. Moloney, SDB, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019, 286 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-7519-8, \$25.00 (paper).

Something of a sequel to their acclaimed title, *Interpreting the Gospel and Letters of John: An Introduction*, this book is designed for undergraduate students who have virtually no knowledge of the origins and purpose of the New Testament and perhaps no religious affiliation. Generously illustrated from classical Christian art, it tries—successfully—to visualize the various needs of its readers, offering a clear understanding of Gadamer's "three worlds:" the "world behind the text" (the historical world that gave rise to both the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and the Christian Bible/New Testament); the "world of the text" (the various literary styles and techniques employed by the different authors and their writings); and the "world in front of the text" (the subsequent and present meaning attributed to these texts).

Every book of the New Testament is given systematic treatment. Key terms and concepts are identified, and its purpose, strategy, and argument are carefully detailed. As the preface explains, this is "a full-service textbook that attempts to provide all the steps needed for a beginning student to approach the biblical literature in general" (xiv), which includes "a sound methodology for biblical interpretation... and the introduction of Jesus, his teachings and his followers" (ibid).

No "introduction" can, nor should, cover all that could be said. But some things only touched on here could be profitably expanded for everyone's benefit: orality, the divine passive, honor and shame, and myth. It is to be hoped that teachers who use this textbook will pursue such topics in greater detail.

Beginning student or not, any serious Christian believer will find this a treasure-trove of informed scholarship, expert guidance, and

stylistic clarity. It deserves to be as successful and helpful as its predecessor.

Anthony J. Gittins, CSSp

### **Jesus Wasn't Killed by the Jews: Reflections for Christians in Lent**

Ed. by Jon M. Sweeney, Orbis, 2020, 128 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-352-6, \$19.00 (paper).

Anti-Semitism is a dark, ugly stain on the history of the Church, and the horrific charge of deicide still haunts. Prolific author and editor Jon Sweeney has collected sixteen essays, most very short, that address a wide variety of topics relating to how Christians have seen and can better relate to our Jewish forebears and brothers and sisters. Essays include histories of how the Church emerged in and from Judaism, God's covenant with Israel, translations of the Gospels, anti-Semitism in the early Church, and commentary on problematic texts. Sweeney himself offers thoughts on responding to specific parts of the Lenten liturgies and practices, essays as insightful as they are incisive. Other contributors include a superb cast of Christian and Jewish scholars, rabbis, religious, and writers, including Walter Brueggemann, Robert Ellsberg, and Massimo Faggioli. Perhaps the most useful and most difficult chapter of all is Amy-Jill Levine's astringent afterword, a sober reflection that harsh realities cannot be quickly whisked away with simplistic translations or nice feelings, but must be honestly confronted. As Mary C. Boys, SNJM, notes, in her essay, "it's complicated."

But really, fifty years after Vatican II's seminal *Nostra Aetate*, we have come such a long way; do we still need such a book? The all-too-regular killings at synagogues and choruses of hate-filled chants from American Neo-Nazis answer that question bluntly: emphatically, yes. This reasonably priced collection of essays is recommended highly to all libraries and to all readers willing to grow through repentance and effort.

Daniel Boice



**Mark**

By Warren Carter, Liturgical, 2019, 579 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-8166-4, \$39.95.

This is volume 42 of the Wisdom Commentary, “the first series to offer detailed feminist interpretation of every book of the Bible” (xxi). It is reviewed here, not by a scripture scholar but from the perspective of an interested feminist, cultural anthropologist, and missiologist.

A Wisdom Commentary mines both meanings of the word wisdom: knowledge-with-discernment, and—in a biblical context—female personification (xviii). My interest was sparked both by the book’s feminist approach and by its author: a man. As the general editor Barbara E. Reid explains, some men “choose to identify with and partner with feminist women in the work of deconstructing systems of domination and building structures of equality” (xlii). If there is a danger that some feminist women might demonize every trace of androcentrism, a volume such as this might help maintain a self-conscious balance between culpable blindness and utter caricature.

A central organizing concept is “hegemonic masculinity,” an ungainly and often intrusive, though analytically useful, phrase. It is explained as male dominance and “power over,” exercised by some men. “Hegemonic” refers to contested and controlling power or influence, which the author affirms as a—perhaps *the*—key to understanding the world within the text. Sometimes Jesus himself “scores” over other men of power by His palpable authority, but they will exact revenge, ultimately through His death. But the ultimate authority (*hegemon*), culturally understood, belongs to God who, however, does not use it to display “power over” but as the eternal authority before which every knee must bend. The antagonistic relationship between Jesus and Jewish (and sometimes Roman) authorities is focused on whose power/authority will finally prevail. If “patriarchy” has dominated the discussion of gendered power/authority until

recently, “hegemonic masculinity” seems here to be challenging it for space.

This study contains abundant cross-references to classical and contemporary biblical scholarship. Its focus is not on fostering faith, but on stimulating the intellect and sharing the fruit of feminist scholarship. The author hews close to the received biblical text and analyses it exhaustively without, however, allowing much scope for the evangelist’s deeper intentions of forming communities of faith after 70 C.E. There is much to be learnt from this comprehensive academic study, but it does not presume to supersede the wide range of scholarship and piety that focuses on the same Markan text. Not intended simply as a “reading book,” it is for the serious student of scripture. As a reference it must surely stand among the classics of biblical scholarship.

Everyone approaches the biblical text with personal history, opinions, and prejudices, and every reader will have quibbles with aspects of this interpretation. But there are valuable and much-needed riches to be found in these pages and in the abundant references therein.

Anthony J. Gittins, CSSp

**Mary in Different Traditions: Seeing the Mother of Jesus with New Eyes**

By Thomas G. Casey, SJ, Messenger, 2019, 144 pp., ISBN 978-1-78812-087-6, \$20.00 (paper).

In this exploration of alternate Marian narratives, the book’s subtitle tells the tale. Thomas Casey explores several views of Mary in various cultural or religious traditions that readers may find refreshing. Casey looks at the figure of Mary as seen in and beyond Catholicism. Protestant Christianity is represented by Martin Luther’s writings on the Magnificat, along with writings of other Lutheran philosophers. The devotional practices of Orthodox Christianity are also explored. Mary’s life as a young Jewish woman is considered with the narratives of several biblical women of her heritage. The Islamic regard for Mary in the Qu’ran, although much different from that

of the Bible, presents possibilities for finding common ground with the Muslim community. The author concludes with a look at universal and personal views of Mary. Each lens is an addition to any conversation about how Mary is considered. Looking outside the prevailing narrative may lead to a deeper understanding of Mary. Although this book is not comprehensive, Casey covers the aspects of his theme and adds to the conversation of how to consider Mary in our faith. The author notes in the foreword that this process of examining Marian narratives allows us to choose a Marian devotion sensibly and purposefully, rather than as an unquestioned process. Recommended for parish and school libraries, as well as Marian collections.

Susan M. Camille

**On Creation, Science, Disenchantment, and the Contours of Being and Knowing**

By Matthew W. Knotts, Bloomsbury, 2020, 197 pp., ISBN 978-1-5013-4458-9, \$25.95 (paper).

In Saint Augustine’s view, the world was created “in the wisdom of God, ... the human person in the image of God” (xviii). Matthew Knotts seeks in this volume of the Reading Augustine series from Bloomsbury to work out what kind of ramifications this has in the realms of reason, intellect, vision, and even cosmology. When Augustine, basing his philosophy extensively on the Gospel of John, posits that the world was created in Wisdom, by “Wisdom” he means the pre-incarnate Christ. The world then testifies to its creator, requiring vision that is physical, spiritual, and intellectual, for humans to recognize the vestiges of God in the sapiential creation. Our spiritual eyes, of course, have been occluded by sin and require God’s healing. Knotts also explores Augustine’s thought about God vis-à-vis time and space, ideas which should resonate strongly with modern cosmologies, yet are based solidly on classical Greek philosophy and Augustine’s astonishing recall of scriptural writings. In his analyses, Knott refers to and often quotes from

many other modern scholars in German, French, and Spanish, showing how international is the scholarship that continues to unearth riches from Augustine. Forty pages of notes, an extensive if not exhaustive bibliography, and indexes to scripture and Augustine's writings provide plenty of scholarly ballast for this book, which is recommended to academic libraries supporting any philosophical or theological studies of Augustine.

Daniel Boice

### **The Psalms as Christian Praise: A Historical Commentary**

By Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019, 366 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-7702-4, \$36.00 (paper).

This book completes the three-volume set of volumes on the psalms written by Bruce Waltke and James Houston. In the previous two books they write of the Christian use of the psalms as worship and lamentation. Now with the third volume about the psalms as praise, the authors have completed an amazing commentary which will stand as a complete and scholarly study of the psalms.

Even though almost all of the psalms are full of the praise of God, the authors have elected to look more closely and comment on psalms 90 to 106 as the best examples of songs of praise. In the opening chapter of this volume, Waltke and Houston explore four basic questions: to whom do we give this praise, why we must give praise, who specifically praises, and, most importantly, how to give praise. Underlying this prefatory material is the belief that we join Jesus who petitioned and praised the Father and we also praise and petition Jesus as the Son of God the Father.

Each of the chapters deals with an individual psalm. The format of each chapter follows a well thought-out plan. Part one is a modern translation of the psalm. Part two is a commentary which includes an introduction and exegesis. Part three is titled "Voice of the Church in Response." The "voices" are quotes from prominent commentators from the

early Church, like St. Augustine, to authors from the twentieth century, and hence we have the historical commentary referred to in the subtitle of the book. Each chapter has a fourth part, a conclusion, which relates a modern application of the message of that particular psalm.

Beautifully planned and written with much knowledge and insight, each chapter enlightens and gives a more complete understanding of each of the twelve praise psalms about which the authors have written.

A glossary and several indexes complete the work of Waltke and Houston—both professors emeritus from Regent College in Vancouver.

The three volumes on the psalms are a very important contribution to modern biblical commentary and should be in all college and seminary libraries offering studies in scripture.

Arnold Rzepecki

### **The Rhetoric of Pope Francis: Critical Mercy and Conversion for the Twenty-First Century**

By Christopher J. Oldenburg, Lexington, 2019, 143 pp., ISBN 978-1-4985-7236-1, \$90.00.

*The Rhetoric of Pope Francis* brilliantly illustrates the transformative power of words and gestures that are sincere and based on loving pastoral care. Pope Francis uses words that are in complete harmony with his actions. Christopher Oldenburg, professor of rhetoric at Illinois College, examines written papal pronouncements and oral discourse in conjunction with visual documents to demonstrate Francis's amazing ability to facilitate the conversion of hearts.

Oldenburg writes that Pope Francis, faithful to tradition, continues to challenge that tradition with renewed analysis and insight. Mercy is certainly the new theme of this modern pontificate and it is employed as the medicine of conversion. There is resistance to his style that breaks established barriers and moves the institution into uncharted waters.

*The Rhetoric of Pope Francis* covers approximately the first three years of his reign, including

the inauguration of the Year of Mercy, his pastoral visit to the United States, and his address before a joint session of Congress. While Pope Francis is a skillful rhetorician and worthy of careful study by preachers and pastors, his genuineness of heart and character is what fires conversion. The four chapters of this book are beautifully written, informative, and inspirational. The text is heavily footnoted, referenced, and indexed.

*The Rhetoric of Pope Francis* is recommended for all academic and theological libraries.

John Leonard Berg

### **Theological Territories**

By David Bentley Hart, University of Notre Dame Press, 2020, 420 pp., ISBN 978-0-268-10718-5, \$29.00 (paper).

Daniel Bentley Hart is no stranger to those engaged in theology and in the intersection of theology and religious faith with science, philosophy, the arts, and culture. He is probably more well known to professional scholars than to the well-read layperson, but engaging with his thought is essential for anyone looking for a provocative insight into "the signs of the times." He also has produced a recent translation of the New Testament that is worthy of note.

This volume is mostly a collection of his public addresses on topics ranging from postmodern theology to the New Testament, from a critique of the new militant atheism to the subject of universal salvation, from a reflection on the thinking of the late Bernard Lonergan to how to pray for the poor. The work is a compendium of ideas that are foundational to a deep understanding of religious topics. The scope and depth of his mastery of material is remarkable.

Having commended the author, I must caution against reading the book—especially by the non-professional. The work suffers from terrible editing, and the text is full of paragraphs that range, in several cases, up to three pages. While the book has no critical apparatus, it employs the language of professional scholarship. Rather than read the book, Hart's ideas are more accessible to the lay





reader by viewing any of his many talks and interviews (more than one hundred) recorded on YouTube. He is more the speaker than writer, at least as far as this volume is concerned.

*Kenneth J. Zanca*

***Toward a catholic Christianity: A Study in Critical Belonging***

By Michael Halpin McCarthy, Lexington, 2017, 277 pp., ISBN 978-1-4985-3801-5, \$11.00.

*Toward a catholic Christianity* is a collection of twelve philosophical essays that examine the reality of reason and belief in our Western intellectual tradition. The twelve chapters were previously presented as public lectures or specifically written for this particular volume. Michael McCarthy, a retired professor at Vassar College, masterfully edits this work into a nearly seamless narrative focused on Christian belonging in a world frequently bent on exclusion. McCarthy's analysis of Western culture incorporates the elucidations of modern scholars like Bernard Lonergan, Charles Taylor, John O'Malley, and Paul Valley, plus historical greats like Aristotle, Aquinas, and Pascal. The summary chapter is an exclusive consideration of Pope Francis and his pastoral focus on welcoming the excluded and marginalized in our shared human experience. Francis's philosophical, ethical, and political theme of mercy truly completes the goal of human civilization and the main premise of this book. McCarthy is a superb teacher who proposes multiple questions to readers who are now equipped with the intellectual tools to transform both the mind and heart of society. This reflective inquiry is extensively footnoted and supported by a bibliography and index.

*Toward a catholic Christianity* is recommended for all academic and theological libraries.

*John Leonard Berg*

***The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles***

By Ormond Rush, Liturgical, 2019, 601 pp., ISBN 978-0-81468-074-2, \$69.95.

Well-known Australian ecclesialogist Fr. Ormond Rush here provides the most comprehensive set of principles captured in the debates and outcomes of the Second Vatican Council. The council's legacy is given remarkable coherence in this book's pages. The author has masterfully assembled much of the pertinent literature on each of the principles which aim to give clarity and contour to the conciliar texts. Any analysis of the reception of these texts by the faithful, up to and including our own day, will be well served in consulting Rush's work.

Sections of this book are clustered into three thematic parts: hermeneutical principles, Theo-logical principles, and ecclesiological principles. Within these sections are found the guides for understanding the council. These are often set in opposition to one another or are contrasted for clearer delineation. Thus, in Rush's second principle, the conciliar interpretive key "Pastoral/Doctrinal" is established as a governing idea for the hermeneutics of the council and is supplemented by ideas such as "Resourcement/Aggiornamento" and "Continuity/Reform." The "Christological/Pneumatological" or "Mystery/Sacrament" principles fall under the Theo-logical section. Additionally, principles like "Scripture/Tradition" and "Faith/History" support the ecclesiological principles—the largest portion of the volume, with thirteen distinct principles.

Admittedly, this latter section is filled with somewhat controversial material, but Rush's explication of each is patient and masterly. He is on solid ground in identifying how we frame our understandings, by what lens we explore. In the ecclesiological section we are treated to thoughtful considerations of the "Particular/Universal" dynamic in the Church. There is much to

value in the relations between "People of God/Hierarchy," the "College of Bishops/Bishop of Rome," and "Magisterium/Theologians."

The utility of this book for classroom use, particularly in seminaries, is manifest. So many of our reflections on the Second Vatican Council seem to be clouded by vapid and politically charged intentions. Though slightly technical at times, this book is a life preserver from such faulty notions.

*Patrick J. Hayes*

***Vulnerable and Free: An Encouragement for Those Sharing in the Life of Jesus***

By Paul Farren, Paraclete, 2019, 144 pp., ISBN 978-1-64060-200-7, \$12.99 (paper).

As Fr. Paul Farren states in the introduction, his book explores "how we can face and live the incompleteness of our time on earth, including the failures of our lives, with hope and confidence" (16).

The eight chapters of the book focus on embracing what the world disdains—for example, communion over competition, poverty in place of power, humiliation instead of success, death and the afterlife as opposed to living merely for the temporal—as means of transforming our lives when difficult situations force us to take a deeper look at reality. The author notes, "Freedom only comes from truth, and truth is the acceptance of reality" (18), the ultimate reality being that all will die but will go on living in a fashion determined by how we have lived before death.

Farren offers ways to view seeming and inevitable failures and crises as opportunities for growth and avenues to truer, lasting life in heaven. He cites real examples of persons who have confronted catastrophes and horrors—such as the experiences of victims of abuse, the murders of monks in Algeria, and the economic reversals of individuals who have suffered financial ruin—to offer anecdotes and alternatives for approaching faith-challenging events in the context of God's

plan for us. Farren stresses that throughout such trials, “when we focus on Jesus, we can, like Peter, walk on water” (94); moreover, in handling trying events, “our primary call is to collaborate with God in his ongoing creation and his ongoing dream for our lives” (95).

Farren concludes that, our true home being in heaven, our lives do not end in this world. What his book affords are tips for returning home to heaven, living with Jesus, and facing reality without being held captive by a single moment of it.

*Germain J. Bienvenu*

### **When the Disciple Comes of Age: Christian Identity in the Twenty-First Century**

By Diarmuid O’Murchu, Orbis, 2019, 240 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-337-3, \$20.00 (paper).

While the standard view is that young people are our hope for the future, Diarmuid O’Murchu, a prolific theologian and writer, turns this on its head. O’Murchu’s thesis and hope is that “the elders” (those of us fifty-five years old or older) will be part of a massive reordering of society, culture, and the environment. This generation is healthier and more educated than those before, and we are dissatisfied with the simple answers and structures of the past; we are part of a great evolutionary movement in which religions are being redefined. In other words, humanity is finally “coming of age,” an oft-repeated mantra, which O’Murchu grounds in a “threefold dynamic” comprising quantum physics, evolution, and archetypal wisdom. O’Murchu regards the institutional Church as patriarchal, misogynistic, idolatrous, tyrannical, and requiring members to be infantilized in relationship to the hierarchy and to an angry God. So he explains how we who have “come of age” have advanced beyond this juvenile system. O’Murchu reframes “the Christian story in archetypal terms” (56), clearing away terms like “Messiah,” and explaining in typical phrasing that “Jesus

was certainly a revolutionary in seeking to create an alternative empowering consciousness” (61). O’Murchu replaces “Kingdom of God” with “the companionship of empowerment,” because he believes this is more what the historical Jesus was getting at, versus what is reported by the Gospel writers, with their patriarchal mindset burdened by imperial baggage. In addition to reinterpreting parables, which are for “adult discernment,” he also says that biblical tales of miracles are NOT stories of supernatural marvels, but parables in actions that deal with problems caused by colonialism. O’Murchu regards the Gospels and most of the New Testament as misogynistic screed, written in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem and canonized by the Church (see descriptors above), that do not give due credit to the women who led the early Church, most notably Mary Magdalene. Like so much else that discomfits us, we who have come of age can dispense with this and enfold ourselves with ideals that seem far nicer.

O’Murchu is widely read and brings in sources that help us to be open to God (although O’Murchu prefers to speak of the Great Spirit) and change our way of seeing things, not least of which is the unconditional love of God. To simply proclaim ourselves—and those who agree with us—as having finally grown past the childish nonsense is itself immature, reminiscent of the smug arrogance of a college sophomore, and unlikely to persuade many. There are enough misspellings to cause some concern, but for those who appreciate a provocative challenge to traditional beliefs, O’Murchu is a lively read. Recommended to seminary libraries.

*Daniel Boice*

## **Pastoral**

### **Art and Architecture for Congregational Worship: The Search for a Common Ground**

By Richard S. Vosko, Liturgical, 2019, 248 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-8471-9, \$29.95 (paper).

Fr. Richard Vosko, renowned liturgical designer, consultant, author, and lecturer, states that “the thread that ties this whole work together is the conviction that worship and justice are inseparable. The call to worship God and the summons to work for justice are one in the same... It is my thesis that the establishment of egalitarian equivalence within the architectural setting for worship will manifest not only a more united church, but also a people of God more capable of answering that call” (4).

As a means of achieving the above, Vosko proposes moving away from cruciform floor plans that feature a long nave focused on a separated sanctuary in favor of circular, semicircular, or antiphonal settings that place the altar in the middle and eliminate barriers between congregation and celebrants. The author contends that such arrangements unite gatherers, encouraging participation rather than dividing those who are active in the liturgy from those who might end up merely observing it. He affirms that the proposed layouts also help prevent discrimination and inequalities that could result from physical separations at worship.

Vosko focuses on interiors over exteriors, stressing that the environment within a gathering place influences behavior outside it. He maintains that “when a building is designed to bring worshipers together as equals and when sermons, art work, and song lyrics are provocative reminders of the congregation’s social responsibilities, then hopefully the same worshipers will find ways to set aside differences and learn to work together for the common good” (33).



In short, Vosko stresses Christocentric gathering places of worship and action built around the Eucharistic banquet table, which unites the body of Christ, the true Church.

Germain J. Bienvenu

***Becoming An Ordinary Mystic: Spirituality for the Rest of Us***

By Albert Haase, OFM, InterVarsity Press, 2019, 168 pp., ISBN 978-0-8308-4657-3, \$16.00 (paper).

The flood gates are opening! And it's about time.

Spirituality is taking hold, and it's being democratized. It's coming into the pew, and into the home (armchair mystic) and into the outdoors (Celtic spirituality) in all its colors and with all its opportunities. And now with *Becoming An Ordinary Mystic: Spirituality for the Rest of Us* from the *formatio* (tradition, experience, transformation) imprint of the InterVarsity Press, the quondam has become the quotidian.

Albert Haase has poured his more than twenty-five years of lived experiences and depth of spiritual writing into this accessible volume of perspective, insight, direction, advice, and wonderful quotations from present and past iconic masters.

As described in the introduction, "Mystics are ordinary Christians who do what we are all called to do, respond to grace..." We see the possibilities for our own special relationship with God, no different than the burning bush of Moses, the zephyr of Elijah, the call of Samuel, or the Damascus road of Paul.

Thirteen chapters distill Haase's deep insights into 162 tightly written pages with titles that give a presence to timeless challenges, such as "Right Here Right Now — Mindfulness Breeds Mysticism;" "Challenging the Ego — Forgiving God, Myself and Others;" "Ears to the Ground — Listening to God;" and "Staying Awake — Mindful Living."

This feels like a practical travel guide, a guide for a mystic's life. Each chapter concludes with a one-page set of tips: "Practice, Reflect, Ponder." We hear from Thomas Keating, Pope Francis, Ronald Rolheiser, Teresa of Avila, Margaret Silf, Mother Teresa,

Richard Rohr, and Thomas Merton. This is also deeply autobiographical, as Haase tells moving stories of personal growth and family tragedies.

This is a work for anyone who has struggled with their prayer life and has been searching for guidance. This could lead seamlessly to spiritual companionship.

Paul Beninger

***A Book of Saints for Catholic Moms***

By Lisa M. Hendey, Ave Maria, 2019, 332 pp., ISBN 978-1-59471-273-9, \$18.95 (paper).

*A Book of Saints for Catholic Moms* is an updated edition of a devotional guide published in 2011. Intended as a yearly guide, the book consists of fifty-two chapters, each highlighting a particular saint. Each saint featured is chosen as an example of one of four aspects of the spiritual life. These aspects are those of the heart, the mind, the body, and the soul. Each aspect has a picture associated with it and is shown with the respective saint.

The saints chosen include a wide cross section of men and women from the beginning of Church history (St. Anne and St. Joachim) to recent saints such as St. Teresa of Calcutta and St. John Paul II. Each chapter (corresponding to a week of activities) includes a short biography and lessons taken from their lives, a tradition associated with them, wisdom obtained through them, short daily scriptural passages, saint-inspired activities for mom and her children, a prayer to be recited daily for that week, and lastly a short reflection to consider.

Though intended for family use, there are classroom applications in many of the above-named components. The activities for children cover a range from active, nature-oriented ones to arts and crafts to community service projects, reading, and food preparation.

The book is cross-referenced by aspect emphasized. This book is recommended for parish and family libraries.

Jane Braun

***Catholic Hipster: The Next Level: How Some Awesomely Obscure Stuff Helps Us Live Our Faith with Passion***

By Tommy Tighe, Ave Maria, 2019, 207 pp., ISBN 978-1-59471-919-6, \$15.95 (paper).

This is the sequel of Tommy Tighe's *The Catholic Hipster Handbook* and is intended to serve as a guide to living the Catholic faith. The book is divided into three parts: "Living with Faith," "Living with Hope," and "Living with Love." The thirty-nine contributed chapters explore a vast array of topics: the Sabbath, praying the rosary, observing Ember Days, J.R.R. Tolkien, fasting, tattoos, Catholic feminism, house blessings, social justice, gender equality, Flannery O'Connor, and natural family planning. Each chapter follows the same general format: a brief (two-four pages) essay on the topic at hand, followed by a description of a "Cool Saint," then a "Forgotten Prayer" provided to add depth to the reader's devotional/meditative reflections, and concluding with a section labeled "Living the Faith," which provides concrete suggestions for living a more deliberate life. A fascinatingly quick read. Recommended for public, high schools, academic, and church libraries.

Shirley J. Martyn

***Conscious Contact with God: The Psalms for Addiction and Recovery***

By Kenneth W. Schmidt, Liturgical, 2019, 232 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-6415-5, \$19.95 (paper).

Fr. Kenneth Schmidt loosely paraphrases the *World English Bible's* translation of the psalms to pattern them for persons suffering from addiction. In many instances, he completely rewords passages, using terms such as *addiction*, *sobriety*, *abstinence*, and *Higher Power* (for God) to express the viewpoint of someone contending with addiction and undergoing recovery. Schmidt replaces nouns and verbs with an "X" in some lines so that the "reader/prayer" may insert terms specific to an addiction, behavior, or need, and

he injects references to the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous throughout.

After the compiler's preface and introduction, the 150 creatively revised psalms appear numerically, followed by the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. An index at the end recommends not only passages addressing certain needs but also sections highlighting positives such as freedom, joy, and victory.

The new renderings aim to make the psalms "more clearly prayers" (x). Although Schmidt crafts the verses to help those enduring addiction, anyone may use them for any reason in an outpouring of the soul toward its Creator.

Schmidt ends his introduction with the hope: "May these psalms help you find God and fall in love, and thus be healed" (xiv). With this wish in mind, reading/praying Schmidt's thoughtful reworkings of timeless cries from the heights and depths of human experience can prove to be sure steps to recovery and a return to the Author of Life.

Germain J. Bienvenu

### ***A Course in Desert Spirituality: Fifteen Sessions with the Famous Trappist Monk***

By Thomas Merton, Ed. by Jon M. Sweeney, Liturgical, 2019, 176 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-8473-3, \$19.95 (paper).

*A Course in Desert Spirituality* is edited from tapes of lectures that Thomas Merton gave to novices at the Abbey of Gethsemani. The lectures were previously published in two annotated, scholarly volumes (edited by Patrick F. O'Connell and published by Cistercian Publications in 2005 and 2006). This edition, with an appendix of discussion topics and questions, makes the content more accessible to a wider readership, suitable for academic but also personal study. As Jon Sweeney notes in his introduction, these conferences were given not only to convey scholarly information but, more importantly, as part of the monastic formation of novices.

The lectures reveal Merton to be a skilled teacher (with a judicious use of humor) who has deep knowledge and affection for these heroic spiritual figures.

He deftly describes theological controversies, presents historical context, and offers incisive word portraits of major figures, including St. Anthony of the Desert, St. Basil of Caesarea, the Cappadocian Fathers, St. Melania, and St. John Cassian. St. Jerome, he notes, "is not the best of models for contemplatives. He inspires rather those whose spiritual life is aggressive, ascetical, active, and controversial: but these are often people who stir up monastic orders and cause dissension—though when they are really saints they may accomplish much good" (56).

Merton describes Cassian as "the great monastic writer—the Master of the spiritual life par excellence for monks....He is a classic, profoundly attached to tradition" (90). Cassian gives us "lifelike portraits of the Desert Fathers. They remain 'models for imitation.' But, in what sense are they to be imitated? Not in all their exterior actions—which are impossible for us—not at all suited to our situation; not in all their attitudes—they were extremists—they were often quite wrong. They are to be followed in their *faith*, their love of Christ, their zeal for the monastic state, and their spirit of prayer and sacrifice" (91-92).

That description of Cassian applies as well to Merton and this book. Interestingly, as Sweeney notes, Merton's presentations on hermits (anchorites) and organized monastic communities (cenobites) were given at a time when he had his own struggles in achieving greater solitude. "Rarely, from time to time, in monastic tradition, the hermit life reappears. It is something that is always there and must always be there but it will remain a special vocation. The life of the cenobite is the 'ordinary' and 'normal' monastic way" (30-31).

*A Course in Desert Spirituality* contains insights that can be helpful for all Christians, not just monastics. True, there exists in many writers "a spirit of aversion and estrangement from the world" (64), but there is also an intense focus on issues that all serious Christians share, whether they live in the world or in a monastery. The need to cultivate purity of heart ("the ability to love God purely and to

do His will for love's sake alone" (114)), the conflict between self-love and disinterested love, how to be prudent in ascetical practices, what constitutes a healthy prayer life, how to deal with distractions, cultivate silence, and develop humility. Non-monastics may have to read between the lines, but it is a pleasure to immerse oneself in Merton's enthusiastic prose, comprehensive portraits, and delighted intellect.

While primarily recommended for academic and seminary libraries, it could also be useful for parish and personal collections.

Rachelle Linner

### ***Eight Ways of Loving God: As Revealed by Love Himself***

By Jeanette Flood, Ignatius, 2019, 385 pp., ISBN 978-1-62164-045-5, \$18.95 (paper).

*Eight Ways of Loving God* is Jeanette Flood's first book and is clearly a labor of love, serving as a companion guide for seekers desiring to encounter, know, and love God more intimately. Flood has read extensively and this shows in the multitudinous references that are in the text, as well as in the recommended works (357-362) and scripture index (381-385). Her aim is to "...unpack what Jesus revealed, offering you [the reader] the chance to learn how to love God better." Presenting a distinct Catholic perspective, she aims to reach a broader audience of seekers who at least have a basic faith in a "Christian God and His goodness" (15). She includes short descriptions and explanations of distinctly Catholic practices and teachings along with footnotes leading to more in-depth coverage from a variety of sources, but largely from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The book is organized into three parts: "Love the Lord Your God," "Love One Another as I Have Loved You," and "Be Perfect as Your Heavenly Father is Perfect." Incorporating references and practices from many classical and contemporary writers (e.g., St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Faustina, Fulton Sheen, Corrie Ten Boom, Matthew Kelly, and many others) as well as personal examples from her

life, Flood illustrates a variety of ways to grow deeper in faith and service to God. The chapter topics include trust, prayer, obedience, repentance, sacrifice, loving others, and following and awaiting Jesus. At the end of the book, she reveals and explains how her eight ways “dovetail with the eight Beatitudes that Jesus gave us” (349).

This book, like many others, is one that offers guidance on the journey to holiness as one matures and practices virtuous living with the hope of ultimate union with God in heaven. While the contents are not unique, it brings together a collection of references, thoughts, and experiences from one seeker to another. Combining both scholarly and folksy wisdom and language, this writing in essence can serve as a mentor by one’s side. The references are rich and Flood’s personal examples are compelling and contemporary, making this book a fruitful addition to collections on spiritual growth and direction in both academic and public libraries.

Nadine P. Ellero, SFO

**Faithful Friendships:  
Embracing Diversity in  
Christian Community**

By Dana L. Robert, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019, 225 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-2571-1, \$19.00 (paper).

Dana Robert is one of the best known and respected scholars in, and beyond, the ecumenical field of mission history. Something of a departure from her previous writings, this passionate and non-scholarly book should add a multitude of readers unfamiliar with her work. The title illustrates the narrative incorporating many accounts of deep friendships forged in the fire of explicit Christian—and often conventionally “missionary”—living. Pertinently, discussing the possibility of cross-cultural friendships, she quotes the “faith-mission” of Catherine Macdonald among Japanese ex-prisoners returning to their homeland after World War I. “We who call ourselves Christians have no reason for talking about the differences among us. Any fool

can see the differences. It takes a loving heart and a well-balanced head to see that we are all one. The likenesses are fundamental, the differences are superficial” (63). This whole book effectively illustrates this statement.

Chapters cover “Cultivating Christian Friendship;” “Friendship and Remaining;” “Friendship and Family;” and “Friendship and Joy, Struggle, and Hope.” There is plenty here for everyone to ponder and try to live.

Short-term mission trips are standard these days, but friendship requires long-term, mutual commitment (82); willingness to experience exile and accepting the role of stranger in other people’s lives (108); and a commitment to “boundary-crossing” and being “third culture” people who have left home and live as authentic outsider-participants among those they try to befriend (178ff).

The author concludes, “I seldom see close historical analysis of the relationship between specific friendships and Christian community” (190). This book goes a long way to filling that lacuna—and challenging us all to reflective action. It is an excellent resource for beginning missionaries, as well as for the well seasoned.

Anthony J. Gittins, CSSp

**The Flowing Grace of Now:  
Encountering Wisdom through  
the Weeks of the Year**

By Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB, Sorin, 2019, 227 pp., ISBN 978-1-932057-18-8, \$16.95 (paper).

Some people might think that books about wisdom are written by and for people in the evening of life. This very impressive volume of reflection and prayer disproves that bias. Macrina Wiederkehr admits that she has garnered wisdom over the years, but the sources from which she has learned have no age-appropriate classification. Quite the contrary. The wisdom teachers who tutored her are accessible to all of us, teachers such as contemporary and classical writers, biblical characters, natural creation

and seasons of the year, family and acquaintances, and most especially Jesus. At issue is not the extraordinary nature of the teachers, but the openness of the student/reader to learn from them.

The book consists of fifty-two short reflections, each inspired by a biblical passage. This is followed by a moving prayer. Each reflection concludes with an explicit identification of a particular teacher, or suggested focus for personal reflection. This short but concise format is meant to facilitate the reader’s own prayerful reflection.

Wiederkehr’s own wisdom is evident in the insightfulness of her reflections and the depth of the prayer she offers. However, it is in the realization that genuine wisdom is learned through an honest and reflective life as well as profound interaction with the people and events of that life that her own wisdom is manifested. With this book she invites others into a reach for their own wisdom.

Dianne Bergant, CSA

**Francis of Assisi:  
Messenger for Today’s World**

By Robert Waldron, New City, 2019, 109 pp., ISBN 978-1-56548-689-8, \$19.95 (paper).

*Francis of Assisi: Messenger for Today’s World* takes as its inspiration “The Canticle of the Creatures.” This poem was composed near the end of Francis’s life at San Damiano. Nearly blind and in failing health, the canticle is an early Italian vernacular poem praising the “glory of God’s creation. It conveys such pure joy that one wonders how a man so ill could be so happy and articulate” (17).

This poem and the painting used on the front cover (Bellini’s *St. Francis in the Desert*) are the foundation of the book with each chapter offering a section of the canticle. This is followed by a reflection on that segment. There is a section offering a portion of Francis’s biography and historical context. Next are presented observations on the painting of

Francis by Bellini. Details from this consideration are sometime a bit of a treasure hunt: where's the rabbit, shepherd, the grapes? The final part of each chapter provides the well-known prayer of St. Francis with discussion questions completing the chapter.

The book is designed to be read over five weeks—a chapter a week. It is stated that it is intended for personal or group use. Due to the nature of the discussion questions and in-depth look at the poem and painting, group use may be more appropriate. *Francis of Assisi* is recommended for home and parish libraries.

Jane Braun

### ***Giving Thanks and Letting Go: Reflections on the Gift of Motherhood***

By Danielle Bean, Ave Maria, 2020, 109 pp., ISBN 978-1-59471-945-5, \$14.95 (paper).

*Giving Thanks and Letting Go* shares author Danielle Bean's personal reflections on motherhood now that her children are in high school and in young adulthood. Each of the ten chapters shares a memory from married life or parenthood and is a hopeful and encouraging message to other mothers. It is written with casual and approachable language that focuses on having faith and finding God in everyday circumstances.

This book is ideal for personal reflection and group discussion, especially as a launching point for small group discussion in mothers whose children are young adults. While it does not focus on strategy for young mothers, it is written in a way that would allow it to be used with women in different stages of motherhood and/or as an ecumenical resource for women of different Christian denominations. It would be best in parish libraries and fits a unique need for resources for mothers of older children, a need not easily met, as most resources speak to the early stages of child rearing.

Nicole M. Lancour

### ***Glimpses of the Gospels: Theological, Spiritual & Practical Reflections***

By Jack Mahoney, SJ, Messenger, 2019, 164 pp., ISBN 978-1-78812-023-4, \$15.60 (paper).

Fr. Jack Mahoney, a Scottish Jesuit who has taught in both the U.K. and America, has published books and essays, including articles for the Jesuit online website *Thinking Faith*. In this book, he gathers and updates a number of those brief essays on a wide variety of biblical topics. These tend to be short speculations and meditations, with titles like "Our Daily Bread," "The Golden Rule," "God Being 'With' Us," and "Learning from Zacchaeus." A quarter of the book considers the chapters of Luke's Lenten Sunday pericopes, with additional chapters on the Lucan accounts of the Resurrection and Ascension. Mahoney is familiar with biblical commentaries by the Church Fathers, scholars such as Raymond Brown and Joseph Fitzmyer, and Pope Benedict XVI's musings on the Gospels, so he combines insights from those sources with his own devotional or personal reflections. Unfortunately, he provides no notes to his many references, and the lack of an index limits the book's utility to academics or priests seeking help for homilies. As a collection of scattershot ruminations, the book will be primarily appreciated by readers who have enjoyed Mahoney's thoughtful meditations in other formats, and this book is warmly recommended to them.

Daniel Boice

### ***Habits for a Healthy Marriage: A Handbook for Catholic Couples***

By Richard P. Fitzgibbons, MD, Ignatius, 2019, 280 pp., ISBN 978-1-6216-4241-1, \$17.95 (paper).

Most of the habits presented here—as with most marital advice and counseling—involve instruction on how couples can learn to communicate better. This is "a good thing." The advice is sound. The author emphasizes a growth in the love between husband and wife, but he does not sugarcoat the difficulties of dealing with past wounds and the work to get beyond them that needs to be done for the couple to reorient their communication.

It is in the writing about past wounds, however, where the author gets into trouble. He maintains a Freudian understanding that all—or at least most—of our wounds are deeply embedded in the relationship between the father and the infant daughter and between the mother and the infant son. He not only oversimplifies the sources of past wounds, he oversimplifies the path to forgiveness. He has a plan and the plan involves exercises. Do the exercises, work the plan, and you can forgive the past.

The author is even more problematic when laying out how parents can hurt their children. Mostly he blames women. Men are distant, but women file for divorce. Women choose careers. Women are selfish. Women raise daughters that are almost incapable of loving, intimate relationships.

All in all, the book is useful and has some valid instruction for moving forward to better communication. Given its flaws, however, the book is recommended only if there are other books less attached to traditional gender roles available for couples.

Mary Kelleher-Fitz



### **The Handbook for Catholic Moms**

By Lisa M. Hendey, Ave Maria, 2019, 243 pp., ISBN 978-1-59471-228-9, \$17.95 (paper).

Lisa Hendey's 2019 *The Handbook for Catholic Moms* is an updated version of her original resource for development of the heart, mind, body, and soul of Catholic mothers. The book focuses on each of those four areas through the author's own story and personal testimonies from Catholic speakers, leaders, and mothers. With chapters covering everything from Catholic parenting advice to budgeting, this book demonstrates how the Catholic mother can integrate faith into each of her responsibilities. Hendey does an excellent job providing clear, conversational introductions to theology and offers easily accessible further resources for growing in knowledge of the Church's teachings on married and family life, as well as participation in the prayer and sacramental life of the Church.

Each chapter within the four main sections begins with a scripture quote and closes with "Mom's Homework," a list of practical steps to take to implement the chapter; "Wisdom to Live By," a supporting quote from a saint or well-known spiritual writer; "The Church Teaches," a supporting reference from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; and "To Ponder," questions which are wonderful for personal reflection and small group discussion. This format makes the handbook a reference that mothers can return to time and time again as they review their progress in life changes. This also lends itself to group study and is an easy "open and go" resource for small groups.

This book is ideal for parish libraries. It is recommended that multiple copies are purchased and perhaps bundled as a book club resource for mothers to build community and more deeply in their faith.

*Nicole M. Lancour*

### **Happiness in God: Memories and Reflections of the Father Abbot of La Trappe**

By Dom Marie-Gérard Dubois, Trans. by Georges Hoffmann and Jean Truax, Cistercian, 2019, 390 pp., ISBN 978-0-87907-058-8, \$39.95 (paper).

*Happiness in God* is a collection of musings from Dom Gerard Dubois, former abbot of the Monastery of LaGrande Trappe in France. The fifteen chapters are not only spiritual reflections on topics of interest to monastics, but a commentary on the turbulent times in Catholicism leading up to and following Vatican II. The insightful and pastoral words of the abbot provide a wisdom not limited to the nostalgic past, but a path through the issues facing a contemporary Church and secular society. The text covers a multitude of themes, events, and unique situations in Cistercian observances and liturgical reforms, but still reads as a fine narrative from cover to cover. Although written within the confines of a cloister, the insights of Abbot Gerard are relevant and surprisingly appropriate to our modern life. The Church historian will delight in the perspectives of actual experiences faced in the decades following the council and casual readers will be touched by the pastoral sensitivity of this humble and wise "father." The text is footnoted with explanatory material to assist readers unfamiliar with monastic traditions, and possesses a bibliography and an index.

*Happiness in God* is part of the Monastic Wisdom Series (Book 58) and is recommended for all libraries collecting monastic history and for personal reflection.

*John Leonard Berg*

### **How We Love: A Formation for the Celibate Life**

By John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, Liturgical, 2019, 235 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-8796-3, \$29.95 (paper).

*How We Love* is an important investigation of celibacy in the Roman Catholic tradition and of how to establish a program of formation for both men and women entering religious life. John Mark Falkenhain is a Benedictine monk and a clinical psychologist who spent the early part of his career researching ways to most effectively assist the novice or seminarian to integrate sexuality, love, and service into his life. The author closely scrutinizes Church teaching and human psychosocial developmental stages to suggest a contemporary approach of celibate happiness. He reviews the motives for celibacy, the theological dimensions for it, sexual identity, and a set of skills essential to support and sustain celibate life. These four considerations form the program of formation to be utilized in religious institutions, seminaries, or one-on-one encounters with a trusted spiritual director. While *How We Love* focuses on actual programs, an individual reader may also find the material inspiring and beneficial. The final chapter is specifically geared toward formation personnel and supports them in their unique roll in creating a future Church that is healthy, integrated, and happy. The text is complete with a bibliography and index.

*How We Love* is recommended for libraries within religious institutions and seminaries.

*John Leonard Berg*

**Jesus Speaking:  
Heart to Heart with the King**

By Gabrielle Bossis, Ed. by Maria Grace Dateno, FSP, Pauline Books and Media, 2019, 395 pp., ISBN 978-0-8198-4031-8, \$24.95.

*Jesus Speaking* is a daily devotional with excerpts from French Catholic Gabrielle Bossis's *He and I*. Editor Maria Grace Dateno, FSP, expertly pairs these excerpts with a scripture verse and a related prayer prompt. While Bossis is not a canonized saint, *He and I* has received an imprimatur. Her writings fall under the category of private revelation. Regardless, these daily selections are not theological declarations, but helpful aids to one's personal prayer. In addition to a brief introduction to Gabrielle Bossis and her spirituality, the book also provides a "How to Use This Book" reference section. This reference section is an excellent introduction to personal prayer and provides an approachable and practical process to begin contemplation.

This book is ideal for personal reflection and would be a great resource to parish, university, and school libraries. The content is conversational enough to be accessible to youth, but also profound enough for adult contemplation. It is recommended that multiple copies be purchased, as the reflections are meant to be used daily versus read straight through. The book could be used as a resource for a prayer group.

Nicole M. Lancour

**Live Big, Love Bigger:  
Getting Real with BBQ, Sweet Tea, and a Whole Lotta Jesus**

By Kathryn Whitaker, Ave Maria, 2019, 137 pp., ISBN 978-1-59471-914-1, \$15.95 (paper).

Many books are published about how people live their life with God, but I believe none of them are as thoughtful and funny as this story about a Texas family, Dr. Pepper, and BBQ. This book focuses on the personal reflections of Kathryn Whitaker, a Catholic blogger and speaker. Her family and friends are a major focus of the book. Her son, Luke, was born prematurely and has many medical issues, which made her think about her relationship with God. She tells her story honestly and shares with readers how messy life is. She suggests people should not worry about the small stuff in life. Faith is important to her and keeping one's faith helps with the many problems that arise. The author uses humor to make her points and advises readers to keep their faith strong even in times of trial. Her many faith mentors have influenced her and through writing this book, she hopes to influence others to grow in their faith. The book not only addresses concerns most people think about, but also shows how she has worked through them, giving readers some faith-based food for thought. Each chapter is short and easy to read. An example is a chapter about finding balance in the digital age. The book enables readers to ponder and use this book for their own critical reflection. This book is a recommended purchase for individuals seeking spiritual reflection. This book offers inspiring reading for Christians, not just Catholics.

Jo Monahan

**Pray Fully: Simple Steps for  
Becoming a Woman of Prayer**

By Michele Faehnle and Emily Jaminet, Ave Maria, 2020, 133 pp., ISBN 978-1-59471-973-8, \$15.95 (paper).

Michele Faehnle and Emily Jaminet, in *Pray Fully*, serve as intimate and wise companions for women seeking to begin, create a daily routine, or deepen their prayer life in both contemporary and traditional Catholic ways. In an easy-to-read style the authors introduce the basics of *Lectio Divina* (sacred reading and reflecting on scripture), the *Examen* (self-reflection on God in your life), and *Visio Divina* (reflecting upon a sacred picture) as three ways to enter more deeply into prayer. As they share compelling personal stories, they introduce saints who have been instrumental in their own prayer life such as St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Gianna Beretta Molla, Sts. Louis and Zelig Martin, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), and St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. They include many ways to foster daily prayer, cultivate a closer relationship to God, and listen for God's subtle calls and gifts of grace.

The authors alternate writing chapters, offering an inviting change of voice and experience. At the end of the book is a set of study guide questions to inspire reflection, facilitate discussion if used in a group setting, or assist in journal writing. There are plenty of references to other authors and spiritual guides for further exploration. This book is a good addition for parish libraries and personal growth collections.

Nadine Ellero, SFO



## **Salvation: What Every Catholic Should Know**

By Michael Patrick Barber, Ignatius, 2019, 189 pp., ISBN 978-1-7335221-8-2, \$16.95 (paper).

This book begins with an anecdote from the author about the first time he was asked if he was saved. This question provides the organizational concept for the entire book. The author's premise is that this question, common in many parts of the country, is misunderstood by Catholics and those Protestants who find this question key to their faith. Michael Barber breaks this question into ten different parts with each chapter stating what salvation is not. The book provides a helpful guide to Catholic belief on salvation using the Bible and the Catechism as primary sources to answer this question. My biggest complaint with this book is with some of the editorial decisions. For example, when Barber mentions other Christian "denominations" the word denomination is in italics. I could not figure out why this was done or what was meant by it. This example and similar choices make an otherwise clear volume confusing. In addition, as this is meant to be an introductory book, a bibliography would have been helpful for those who wish to go into more detail on a particular aspect of the subject. This book is most appropriate for parish libraries.

*Robert Huttmeier*

## **Teachings for an Unbelieving World: Newly Discovered Reflections on Paul's Sermon at the Areopagus**

By Saint John Paul II (Archbishop Karol Wojtyla), Ave Maria, 2019, 115 pp., ISBN 978-1-59471-985-1, \$20.00.

It is amazing that people are still discovering works written by Archbishop Karol Wojtyla, who became Pope John Paul II. He was one of the most prolific authors in the history of the papacy. These thirteen homilies were written by Wojtyla while he was archbishop of Krakow, Poland, shortly after the Second Vatican Council. Wojtyla was strongly influenced by the

council. He "lived Vatican II as a Pentecostal experience summoning the Church to mission" (xix). After he became pope, he continued to place evangelism at the core of much of his writings. George Weigel, in his foreword to the book, writes of the pope's visit to Athens in 2003 and John Paul's meeting with Greek Orthodox Church leaders as the culmination of his vision of a broader universal Church. Paul's preaching at the Areopagus had to have been in his mind then as it was when he wrote his homilies many years earlier.

Taking lines and passages from Acts 17:16-34, Wojtyla expanded and interpreted Paul's words to make them relevant to the post-Christian world of the twentieth century. His homilies were written in the clear, uncomplicated style we have come to know as the way of a good homilist and teacher. Wojtyla took Paul's words from his historic speech at the foot of the Areopagus and made them relevant to the Church of his time.

The homilies are a pleasure to read as they serve as an antidote to the negativism and atmosphere of faithlessness that we so often see today. The book is recommended to all Catholic libraries for personal enjoyment and encouragement. It is hoped that Marta Burghardt, curator in charge of the Wojtyla/St. John Paul papers, may yet find other such inspiring works.

*Arnold Rzepecki*

## **What Does the Bible Say About...? Old Age**

By Ronald D. Witherup, PSS, New City, 2019, 134 pp., ISBN 978-1-56548-695-9, \$16.95 (paper).

Fr. Ronald Witherup is Superior General of the Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice (Sulpicians) and brings to his audience in a most engaging style the collective wisdom found in both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles on a theme of general importance. The author's interpretation of references to high age in the lives of the patriarchs, is not literalist, rather, he takes them to have symbolic meaning. He places his subject in the context of a lengthy age being representative of God's

life-creating blessing and an appreciation of a righteous life's existence.

Generously borrowing from canonical and non-canonical texts to highlight his theme, Fr. Witherup examines the biblical view on an essential aspect of human existence, aging. One of his early examples is a value requirement for the young to respect their elders, since all youths, if they continue on the road of life, will become elderly themselves. The author notes that a community's seniors, often referred to as the "elderly," have a perspective over time known colloquially as wisdom. Old age does not necessarily mean withering away since as found in the Bible, there is adequate witness to great achievements performed by senior figures such as Moses and heroes like Eliazar.

One of the more interesting but troubling aspects of aging brought out by the author is the potential for unbearable hardship and pain, bringing up the question of the right to die or euthanasia. The author notes, correctly of course, that the Bibles do not explicitly proscribe suicide, but the Catholic Church's Catechism does to deflate this process. As is sometimes observed, the elderly are not only disrespected, but also may be jeered. The remedy to inter-generational conflict, the author prescribes, is education of youths. Writing as he does from the perspective of a Catholic priest, Witherup follows the teaching of the Christian Bible of "everlasting" life as a truly spirited characteristic of Christianity fitting into God's plan for life in His kingdom.

A functional addition is a set of questions that serve as reflective moments that follow each chapter. The value of this brief testament is disproportionate to the soothing message for people of all ages. It is also a worthwhile subject for family and associational groups and offers a great resource for sermons. As the spouse of this reviewer is fond to remark: The first fifty is easy, it's the second fifty that gets difficult.

*Sanford R. Silverburg*

## BIOGRAPHY

### ***The Radical Gospel of Bishop Thomas Gumbleton***

By Peter Feuerherd, Orbis, 2019  
120 pp., ISBN 978-1-62698-340-3,  
\$18.00 (paper).

Within the recent past, a word has surfaced describing an attitude of mind ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to many bishops. That word is hierarchalism. Two defining aspects of this concept are power and privilege. Not all bishops fit into this category; however, such a categorization does not appear to be totally inappropriate in some cases. Peter Feuerherd's brief sketch of the life of Bishop Thomas Gumbleton reveals an entirely different episcopal profile. Rather than power and privilege, Gumbleton's is a life of commitment and service. He took being a shepherd of the people seriously, even when his seemed to be a lone voice among the other bishops and the flock he sought to lead.

In this very readable book, Feuerherd traces some of the important steps Gumbleton took as he responded to the needs of the Church as he saw them. Feuerherd deftly shows how public stances on issues of justice frequently placed Gumbleton in an unpopular light in both the country and the Church. The fact that he was repeatedly passed over for advancement within the conference of bishops actually freed Gumbleton from some of the burdensome administrative responsibilities that accompany leadership in a diocese. This provided him with opportunities to become more involved with social issues. Gumbleton was not invested with one form of authority, but his dedication to justice produced a form of authority that is often referred to as prophetic. Wherever there was a cry for justice and people, one could expect to see and hear from Thomas Gumbleton — and they were not disappointed.

Feuerherd has provided us with a glimpse of this very unpretentious man, a priest of the

Diocese of Detroit, a servant of the Catholic Church in the United States.

*Dianne Bergant, CSA*

### ***Sharing Life: Stories of L'Arche Founders***

By Carolyn Whitney-Brown, Paulist, 2019, 269 pp., ISBN 978-0-8091-5431-9, \$22.95 (paper).

In 1964, when Jean Vanier decided to share a house in France with two institutionalized men, he had no idea that he was introducing a novel concept that would take hold and spread throughout the world. Vanier, a Canadian philosophy professor, said, "I simply felt called to live with these two men who had suffered rejection and a lot of inner pain" (8). As Vanier began his new lifestyle, he had much support, and *Sharing Life* is a testament not only to the fortitude and dedication of L'Arche founders who invited men and women with and without intellectual disabilities to live together, but a reminder that every successful endeavor has many people who encourage it along the way.

Carolyn Whitney-Brown asked founders of early L'Arche communities to recount their stories—their successes, their problems, their weaknesses—as they established homes in Canada, India, the Ivory Coast, Haiti, Honduras, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The result is an interesting history of each community, as well as a profile of those who were called to live the gift of L'Arche. Each founder would agree that the recognition of a "common humanity regardless of culture, rank, knowledge, or religion" (103) was their reward. In the book's afterword, Vanier notes that these men and women who were called to live the way of the Gospels "revealed that if we enter into a relationship with those who have been humiliated and rejected, we are transformed and healed; together we discover a new road to peace" (251).

The book is certainly food for thought and concludes with a study guide that suggests discussion or retreat use. I recommend it especially for those who are interested in L'Arche and its compassionate way of life.

*Theresa Grass*

### ***St. Gianna: Her Life of Joy and Heroic Sacrifice***

By Giuliana Pelucchi, Trans. by Michael J. Miller, Pauline Books & Media, 2019, 286 pp., ISBN 978-0-819-89120-4, \$19.95 (paper).

St. Gianna Beretta Molla (1922-1962) was an Italian doctor, wife, and mother who ultimately died as a result of choosing to give life to her fourth child. This biography is an updated reprint of one originally published in 2004 at the time of St. Gianna's canonization. It includes both a foreword and afterword written by Gianna Emanuela Molla, the youngest child of St. Gianna. She refers to this book as "her favorite" biography of her mother because "the author enriched it with quotations from my parents' writings."

Giuliana Pelucchi does not write as a disinterested third party. She includes herself in the retelling, sharing the interviews she conducted and her impressions of people and places that were important to St. Gianna. Her interviews with Pietro Molla, St. Gianna's husband, are particularly touching. Pelucchi had the unusual opportunity to write a biography of a saint who had many relatives and friends still alive during the beatification and canonization process. She strives to present St. Gianna as a three-dimensional modern woman, one filled with joy and trust in God, but who was also very human.

Pelucchi illustrates that Gianna trusted in God throughout her life. "Her whole life had been characterized by continual, sincere spiritual striving...Year after year, day after day...she was committed to abandoning herself to God's will." Pelucchi traces Gianna's life from her birth to her school days during World War II; her time as a single woman working as a physician; her married life where she balanced the responsibilities of caring for a family with caring for her patients; and finally, her selfless decision to continue with her fourth pregnancy in spite of a poor prognosis and her suffering after the birth. Pelucchi also shares the story of how St. Gianna came to be beatified and



then canonized, including the recognized miracles that were part of that process.

This resource is valuable for anyone interested in learning more about St. Gianna. It is recommended for parish and Catholic high school/college libraries and for personal use.

*Patrice Fagnant-MacArthur*

***Stronger than Death: How Annalena Tonelli Defied Terror and Tuberculosis in the Horn of Africa***

By Rachel Pieh Jones, Plough, 2019, 266 pp., ISBN 978-0-87486-251-5, \$26.00.

*Stronger than Death* is a biography of Italian-born Annalena Tonelli, who, being drawn to love the poor as Jesus and St. Francis did, moved to Kenya and then to Somalia. She was a strong influence in successfully treating tuberculosis. Annalena had a particularly strong personality and did not choose a traditional path for Catholic women. This telling of her life relates the hardships she endured and the decisions she made while working with impoverished Muslim nomads.

Annalena did not consider herself a saint and participated in the female genital mutilation (circumcision) of her five adopted daughters. Later, she came to see the practice as unjust and worked for it to be discontinued. In honoring the religion of the community she served, Annalena did not work toward the evangelization of the Muslims she served. The primary goal was to minister to the poor—in spite of the dangers of civil unrest and violence. With the devastation caused by HIV/AIDS, she became a target of blame and was ultimately murdered.

Annalena's life is a testament of love in action. Those who met her state that they were led to better themselves. This book is recommended for teens and adults; it is suitable for high school and parish libraries.

*Jane Braun*

***Thea Bowman: Faithful and Free***

By Maurice J. Nutt, CSsR, Liturgical, 2019, 152 pp., ISBN 978-08146-4608-3, \$16.95 (paper).

Doctor Thea Bowman (1937-1990), a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration, made her mark on the world through her avid promotion of the black Catholic experience—a joy-filled project meant to awaken the Catholic Church in the United States to the beauty and value of millions of Christians of color. In music, teaching, and preaching, she took the Gospel into spaces that drew life from her, but that also gave her the power to make further witness.

Bowman's given name was Bertha and she was a convert. Though a granddaughter of slaves, she was born into a stable and fairly privileged home and, perhaps precociously, she joined the Church at age nine. A gifted child, she developed a passion for reading, especially under the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, who arrived in her hometown of Canton, Mississippi, in 1948. Their relationship led to further study, entrance into the community in LaCrosse, Wisconsin (over her parents' objections), and later graduate work at the Catholic University of America, from which she earned her doctorate in English. She became a bridge builder between blacks and whites all over the United States.

Maurice Nutt, a Redemptorist priest and the episcopal liaison for Bowman's canonization cause in the Diocese of Jackson, surveys her life and times. There are gaps in the book, as its size may indicate, but the main themes and important moments are covered so that one gets a sense of who Bowman was as well as the impact she has had on the Church. By the 1980s, she had achieved considerable notoriety as a lecturer, not least at the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans. In 1987, she drew the attention of *60 Minutes*, which did an extensive interview with her. She was a Gospel herald, incorporating song and poetry to signal the beauty of her race. Among the most

pronounced of these moments was her discourse before the American bishops at their annual gathering in 1989, which Nutt describes as "a heart-to-heart conversation with her brothers" (110).

In the spring of 1984, Sister Thea was diagnosed with breast cancer and she began a long battle that eventually ended her life. This, too, was a grace, for it deepened friendships. The story of this remarkable life is given in an introductory but still powerful way in this little book, which is ideal for parish libraries as well as for undergraduate courses in American Catholic history.

*Patrick J. Hayes*

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## CHURCH HISTORY

***Many Tongues, One Faith: A History of Franciscan Parish Life in the United States***

By David J. Endres, Academy of American Franciscan History, 2018, 204 pp., ISBN 978-0-8838-2268-4, \$40.00, ISBN 978-0-8838-2269-2, \$25.00 (paper).

As skilled an historian as one can find, Fr. David Endres supplies an engaging and enlightening survey of Franciscan parishes in the United States. Although there are hundreds of such communities of faith, his selection of fourteen of them is representative of geographic location, ethnic composition, and members of the Franciscan family, whose variegated styles and traditions are richly described. From the middle of the nineteenth century to the present, Endres finds that targeted but often risky deployment of Franciscan personnel helped shape the Church in America in both urban and rural enclaves. In the process, Franciscans themselves have had to adapt to changing circumstances.

Recently, the largest of the American Franciscan groups—the East Coast's Holy Name Province—has engaged in a "Fraternal Ecology" process. The friars have found their numbers are such that it necessitates a re-evaluation of the number of ministries they can carry and so they departed nine

foundations. In Endres's book, he provides a brief update on the older parishes that Franciscans have served. Some have transformed themselves mightily to keep pace with changing cultural needs, but these summaries point to larger trends within the Church. Social contexts are in flux. The Church in America is on the move.

Endres leads us through four main parish types: immigrant-based institutions, that is, those established to serve mainly immigrant communities; Native American and early Hispanic parishes; rural, suburban, and small-town parishes and shrine churches; and finally, urban, African American, and Latino parishes. Particularly in the last group, we find among Franciscans those who make special efforts toward social justice in their communities. Activist friars are joined, partly, by Franciscan sisters who staff schools and hospitals within parish boundaries or work with similar populations. Their presence is not as explicit in Endres's book, but their impact is noted.

This is the first in a series of books on American Franciscan life to appear in the United States Franciscan History Project sponsored by the Academy of American Franciscan History. It is a wonderful beginning and, one hopes, a sign of good things to come. Ideal for Franciscans and their collaborators, the book will also do well in seminaries and Church history courses reflecting especially the American experience.

Patrick J. Hayes

**Upper West Side Catholics:  
Liberal Catholicism in a  
Conservative Archdiocese:  
The Church of the Ascension,  
New York City, 1895-2020**

By Thomas J. Shelley, Fordham University Press, 2020, 164 pp., ISBN 978-0-8232-8541-9, \$29.95.

Thomas Shelley, doyen of American Church historians, brings us more than a jubilee volume for this notable Manhattan parish. At once an ethnographic, political, and economic study, it also has the benefit of good

ecclesiology. His subject is more than the physical structures of the church, school, and rectory. Shelley observes how parish change often bumped up against, or in some cases helped create or sustain neighborhood culture.

The book is a solid exposition of extant primary source material, but Shelley's interests lie far beyond the recording of data mined from the parish sacramental books. He examines census data and the secondary literature on the Upper West Side, and has engaged in oral histories with the living pastors. The yield is a bounty of information, but also a model for how to write parish histories. Like many Catholic churches in that part of the archdiocese, it is a story of growth and decline and resurrection. Given the modest incomes that Catholic families had, it is a wonder that their generosity helped to launch this neighborhood church, especially on such a grand scale. The crime wave that plagued the area in the 1970s was ameliorated by the continued presence of parishioners so that in the present moment, a broad selection of social justice ministries helps address local concerns.

The parish is still changing and stands on much better financial footing than in years past. Though Shelley doesn't record it, in late November 2019, it was announced that a Keith Haring mural, which had filled the stairwell of a parish building called Grace House, brought in \$3.9 million from a recent auction.

Filled with fun facts and gossip about ecclesiastical politics in the Archdiocese of New York, Monsignor Shelley's book will have a wider appeal than readers in New York. It will likely spark the imaginations of pastors around the country. It's also suitable for parish libraries.

Patrick J. Hayes

**Voice of Empathy:  
A History of Franciscan  
Media in the United States**

By Raymond Haberski, Jr., Academy of American Franciscan History, 2018, 252 pp., ISBN 978-0-8838-2266-1, \$40.00, ISBN 978-0-8838-2265-4, \$25.00 (paper).

Through the sheer number of publications emanating from Franciscan publishing houses to the multi-platform broadcasts beamed over the air and Internet, Franciscan media's large footprint on the American landscape has indelibly shaped both the Church and society for the last century.

What's interesting about Raymond Haberski's narrative is not only his coverage of the history of Franciscan publications, but the short biographical data on the founders and editors. These people were definitely motivated to fill the minds of readers with a Franciscan mentality and to help permeate the culture with Franciscan values on issues as diverse as the Cold War and birth control. Their audiences were not large, but they were vitally engaged. The pages of each magazine were often filled with important articles by well-known contemporaries. For instance, the magazine *The Way* published articles by Thomas Merton on nuclear war, Karl Rahner on free speech in the Church, and United Nations Secretary General U Thant on peace.

Haberski's survey of other publications is worth noting, in part because they were meant to support the spiritual lives of tertiaries and Franciscan sisters. He reflects on the success of Father Philotheus Boehner, OFM, a professor at St. Bonaventure University, who in 1950 launched *The Cord* (now *Franciscan Connections*). The *Padres Trail* sought to bring to light the activities of Franciscan missionaries who ministered to the Navajo peoples across Arizona and New Mexico. He also discusses electronic evangelization in radio and television.

Publication figures were never large—usually less than a few thousand. This was not the case with *St. Anthony Messenger*, which had national reach. Its general





audience included a letters column with replies written by Franciscan friars. Typically, the letters came from women, and so these columns would often reflect issues faced in the home, family, or confessional. Haberski treats this as a window on American Catholic culture in the postwar years, but he also examines how magazines and broadcasts formed the groundwork for the present day conglomerate Franciscan Media.

The polar opposites of this book—Mother Angelica of EWTN fame and the prolific spiritual writer Franciscan Father Richard Rohr—come in for special attention at the end of the volume. Both media juggernauts, the two contrast with one another in style and message. The Franciscan message is hardly monolithic, but Haberski is fair to both. Thus the text is recommended for courses in Catholic studies and the history of communication.

Patrick J. Hayes

## HUMANITIES

### ***Erich Przywara and Postmodern Natural Law: A History of the Metaphysics of Morals***

By Graham James McAleer, University of Notre Dame Press, 2019, 147 pp., ISBN 978-0-268-10593-8, \$100.00, ISBN 978-0-268-10594-5, \$35.00 (paper).

In the years following the appearance of the English translation of Erich Przywara’s seminal work *Analogia Entis* in 2014 (see *CLW* 86: 32-33), there has been an upsurge in interest in the German Jesuit’s thought among anglophone theologians and philosophers (see, e.g., *CLW* 90: 126-127). The volume under review is the latest manifestation of this welcome trend. In it, Graham James McAleer, a professor of philosophy at Loyola University, takes key ideas from Przywara’s theory of the *analogia entis* (i.e., analogy of being) and demonstrates how they can illuminate some recurrent patterns in the history of metaphysics as well as provide a foundation for understanding the basis of morals in natural law.

Przywara famously argued that a formula promulgated by the Fourth Lateran Council—namely, the statement that “one cannot note any similarity between creator and creature, however great, without being compelled to observe an ever greater dissimilarity between them” (3)—encapsulates a central truth of metaphysics, namely that, in relation to God, all being is analogical—that is to say, all things are in some sense like God, but God always exceeds their being so that He always stands in a relation of “in-and-beyond” to His creation. Such an analogical metaphysics, with its dynamic internal tension of the “in-and-beyond,” stands as a middle term between two extreme forms of metaphysics: univocal metaphysics, which subsumes all things into God (i.e., “God is all”) and stresses changeless unity, and equivocal metaphysics, which tends to absorb God into the world (i.e., “All is God”) and foregrounds the changeability of things (4). Przywara held that univocal and equivocal metaphysics, each in its own way, miss the mark as accounts of reality; moreover, each, if pushed to its limits, collapses into its contrary, so that univocal metaphysics tends towards equivocity and equivocal metaphysics towards univocity. Only analogical metaphysics, with its dynamic internal tension of the “in-and-beyond”, can offer an adequate account of reality.

McAleer considers the foregoing conceptual framework to be a hermeneutic key to understanding certain difficulties that have recurred throughout the history of Western metaphysical thought. In his view, the lapse from an analogical metaphysics into either a univocal or equivocal metaphysics results in “metaphysical decapitation” (5), wherein two fundamentally related components of being—reason and passion or, again, the spiritual and the physical—are wrongly sundered. Univocity leads to sterile “angelism,” while equivocity issues in rampant “vitalism” (9). In McAleer’s estimation, the stakes in departing from an analogical metaphysics are very high. Commitment to a univocal

or an equivocal metaphysics marked by decapitation leads not only to philosophical difficulties, it can also have significant implications for cultural, political, and civilizational ethos. Indeed, McAleer avers, “the West faces moral questions that all have one thing in common: decapitation” and “decapitation is the reason modernity’s humanism is failing” (103). Accordingly, his application of Przywara’s theory entails cultural as well as philosophical critique.

McAleer divides his book into eight chapters. In the first five chapters, he offers case studies of metaphysical decapitation drawn from medieval, early modern, modern, and postmodern philosophy, showing how a number of thinkers, ranging from Robert Kilwardby and Peter John Olivi, through Arthur Schopenhauer, to Giorgio Agamben and John Leahy, have succumbed to angelism or vitalism in various ways, as well as providing some telling examples of the cultural and political implications of lapsing into univocity and equivocity. In the final three chapters, he turns to developing an analogical understanding of natural law. Central to this understanding is the idea that values are inscribed upon the embodied psychology of the human being in a manner that reflects the “in-and-beyond” structure of analogical metaphysics. “God’s reason promulgates [natural] law, and human nature is somewhat like (analogical to) God’s reason” (79). In virtue of this, “the anticipatory signs of the law” expressed through the body are “gesture, play, and ritual...responsive and bowing to value tones ...”. Play and liturgy, in McAleer’s view, are primary modes through which the values encapsulating natural law are realized and this makes natural law, in a phrase that he borrows from Francisco de Vitoria, a “law of liberty” that, within the limits of prohibitions against certain kinds of acts, is “tolerant of all manner of human playfulness and enterprise” (104).

The foregoing summary does not begin to do justice to the richness of McAleer’s book. *Erich Przywara and Postmodern Natural*

*Law* offers a highly original and insightful application of Przywara's doctrine of the analogy of being to philosophical and cultural issues both historical and contemporary. Much like Przywara did, McAleer draws upon the resources of an astonishingly diverse range of philosophical thinkers and traditions, including Thomism and various other strands of Scholasticism, Schopenhauer, the philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, Edmund Burke, Aurel Kolnai, phenomenology, and postmodernism to shape his arguments. He thus makes many interesting, and sometimes quite unexpected, connections between thinkers from quite divergent schools of thought. At the same time, he is an attentive observer of today's world and provides incisive discussions of contemporary ethical issues to illustrate the points he is making. McAleer's ideas are consistently stimulating, though they are couched in a highly compressed and allusive style of writing that sometimes obscures as much as it clarifies. This book is an important intervention in the contemporary rediscovery of Przywara's thought and deserves a place on the shelves of all academic libraries supporting graduate programs in philosophy or theology.

Thomas M. Dousa

***The Hundredfold: Songs for the Lord***

By Anthony Esolen, Ignatius, 2019, 224 pp., ISBN 978-1-62164-292-3, \$17.95 (paper).

A noted scholar, Anthony Esolen (Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts, New Hampshire) is most famous for his acclaimed translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, but he has also written widely on historical and current matters. Here Esolen turns his years spent in great literature and his own skills to a collection of poems or, as he calls them, "songs," all with a biblical or religious focus. Esolen opens with a helpful and spritely forty-page guide to poetry, especially that in English. He writes of his own dissatisfaction with free verse and, especially, how the modern Church is largely ignoring our musical heritage in favor of what some call "happy

clappy" music with little depth or value. To demonstrate that good poetry, with real substance and form, is still viable, he has collected one hundred of his own poems. These include "sixty-seven lyric meditations upon Scripture; twenty-one hymns; and twelve long dramatic poems" (35), arranged in a numerical structure demonstrating that Esolen's verse, like the great epics he has translated, works well in patterns large and small. In his long poems, Esolen uses monologues, dialogues, and even the epistolary form, sometimes to stunning effect as he limns what biblical characters might have seen, felt, and thought. As with any collection, there is unevenness. The reviewer was less taken with Esolen's hymns than the longer ballads, finding many of the latter profoundly moving. The monologue of the Gadarene Demoniac is especially inventive and powerful, but there are throughout this collection many other flashes of insight and sustained musings that well repay careful attention. Highly recommended to Catholic colleges and to readers who enjoy savoring rich, sometimes long, good poetry.

Daniel Boice

***The Sound of Beauty: A Classical Composer on Music in the Spiritual Life***

By Michael Kurek, Ignatius, 2019, 229 pp., ISBN 978-1-62164-271-8, \$17.95 (paper).

Michael Kurek's *The Sound of Beauty* is a commentary on the spiritual character of music, one that is both pensively philosophical and overtly practical. A classical composer, professor of composition at Vanderbilt University, and certified Catholic catechist, Kurek pairs an examination of music, rich with analogies drawn from Catholic theological thought, with an earnest call for reform of both sacred and secular music through the influence of traditional styles. Together these twin threads remind readers that instrumental classical music (Kurek is not concerned with vocal music here) possesses a profound ability to shape each individual's spiritual life through its mirroring of God's own immanence and transcendence. "Ultimately, we can appreciate and understand music properly and fully only as

a symbol or reflection of the true 'source and summit' miracle, the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Eucharist," Kurek asserts. "Properly ordered, music exists as a signpost on the road of life, with a big arrow pointing out the Way toward the Creator" (22).

Kurek opens with an explanation of the physical properties of music, basically the scientific observation of how sound waves pass through the medium of air. The second chapter studies the psychological perception of music, drawing on the theories of the aesthetic philosopher, Susanne K. Langer (1895-1985), and the perceptual psychologist, Rudolf Arnheim (1904-2007). The chapter "How Music Communicates to the Emotions" considers emotional responses to music with thoughts on how we listen to music, why music triggers emotions, and the need to rightly order our emotional response to music for the cultivation of virtue. "How Music Communicates to the Spiritual Soul" concerns the role of music in the spiritual edification of performers, composers, and listeners. These chapters present quite thoughtful and sometimes very considerable philosophical and theological observations, but Kurek mercifully conveys his ideas in a vocabulary comprehensible to non-specialist readers.

More accessible and decidedly earthier are chapters on contemporary music in both the concert hall and the church. In my opinion, Kurek's chapter on contemporary classical music is worth the price of the whole book. A classical composer famous for challenging the Modernist, Postmodernist, atonal, and avant-garde hegemony of the concert hall with his own neotraditional style, Kurek exposes the academic elitism, societal disconnect, outright cruel tricks, and amusing self-deceptions that characterize the world of contemporary classical music. His chapter on sacred music contains a particularly helpful comparison of Catholic and Evangelical church music and styles of worship, as Kurek spent some time as an Evangelical Christian during his time away from the Church. Finally, a later chapter scrutinizes the Vatican



II documents of *Musica Sacram* and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* to see what the Church really teaches about liturgical music. Collectively, these chapters call for a new appreciation of traditional styles, whether tonal music in the concert hall or Gregorian chant in the liturgy, to create music that is new yet timeless.

Closing with a call for artistic renewal in the Church and some appendices of useful documents, Michael Kurek's *The Sound of Beauty* is a timely commentary on the need for composers of both sacred and secular music to appreciate the spiritual quality of their art and consider the potential of traditional styles to inspire future compositions. It is recommended for academic and parish libraries for the education of music faculty, composition students, and parish music directors.

Hans C. Rasmussen

## LIBRARY SCIENCE

### **53 Ready-to-Use Kawaii Craft Projects**

Ed. by Ellyssa Kroski, ALA Editions, 2019, 255 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1924-8, \$59.99 (paper).

Kawaii is known as the "culture of cuteness in Japan" (xiii) and this book provides an excellent collection of craft projects across a variety of skill levels and media for kawaii, or "super-cute," crafts and makerspace programs. Each chapter provides details on the project including the appropriate age range of crafters, the type of library best suited to host the workshop, cost estimates, materials list and necessary equipment, step-by-step instructions, learning outcomes, and recommended next projects. These projects and details have been compiled from a variety of librarians who have done them with various library users (tweens, teens, young adults, and adults). Potential complications or problems are discussed, as well as solutions provided. The staffing necessary is also presented. The projects are divided into eight sections: "Crochet Projects,"

"Felties, Plushies, and Sewing Projects;" "Quilling, Origami, and Paper Projects;" "3-D Printing Projects;" "Jewelry Projects;" "Vinyl Cutting and Sticker Projects;" "Food-Themed Projects;" and "Craft Projects." This is well organized and an ample listing of further resources, as well as online guides and tutorials, is provided with an index. The black-and-white photographs of craft projects are a bit lackluster, whereas full-color photos would have provided finer details and may have been worth the additional printing cost.

Highly recommended for all libraries that offer programming, but particularly for the tween, teen, and young adult populations.

Shirley J. Martyn

### **Academic Libraries for Commuter Students: Research-Based Strategies**

Ed. by Mariana Regalado and Maura A. Smale, ALA Editions, 2018, 163 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1701-5, \$59.99 (paper).

For academic libraries, an ongoing task is to consider the characteristics of our users as we seek to implement change that improves the library user experience. Since the majority of students at US colleges and universities are commuters, it is essential for academic librarians to consider the experiences of these students as they interact with libraries.

Edited by Mariana Regalado and Maura Smale, the book consists of eight chapters addressing various aspects of the commuter student experience in academic libraries. The work attempts to identify trends through offering case studies from different colleges and universities. The first chapter by Regalado and Smale provides a valuable literature review to frame the issue and reveals a major gap in LIS research on commuter students. The editors show that there is a scarcity of research that focuses specifically on the behaviors and needs of commuter students, even though they constitute the majority of academic library users.

Each chapter is a case study. All of the case studies in the book

examine different aspects of the commuter student experience as related to academic libraries. Case studies are valuable in that they provide an inclusive variety of evidence, including documents, interviews, and observations. These examples could assist librarians who plan to implement changes related to space planning or service enhancement in an academic library. Each chapter has a similar template that readers could use to conduct their own study.

The activities of the libraries to respond to the needs of commuting students should prove to be instructive. As related in the second chapter, librarians at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) conducted a space study using both mapping data and observation data. The goal of the study was to create space that improved the learning experience for students. Their study revealed the heavy use and the value the quiet study floor had for students. The third chapter is a study of an academic library that identified the needs of student-parents and how the library could create a "family friendly library room," with follow-up research on best practices in creating this new type of library space. Other chapters investigate usage patterns of commuting students, library design issues, and technology use.

This work is useful for collections supporting library science and for academic librarians who plan to make library improvements with a focus on enhancing the experience of commuting students.

Glenn S. McGuigan

### **Be Opportunity-Minded: Start Growing Your Career Now**

By Caitlin Williams, ALA Editions, 2019, 224 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1772-5, \$49.99 (paper).

If you need help finding opportunities to grow in the library field or help finding your place in an ever-changing workplace, then this book is for you! *Be Opportunity-Minded: Start Growing Your Career Now* is written by a professional development consultant who has



conducted career coaching for ALA for the past nineteen years. Caitlin Williams has a great grasp of the field of librarianship and provides excellent advice on how we can grow in our careers. This book is a comprehensive manual that can provide insight about ourselves, helping us to discover what we want out of a career. Each chapter has self-assessment questions that, when looked at together, help to identify the best growth opportunities. “Each person’s decision about which opportunities to pursue will look a bit different because each of us prioritizes differently and places a different emphasis on certain things given how we organize and want to shape our careers and our lives” (96). While each person’s decisions will be different, Williams has included questions to assist in the appraisal of opportunities as well as real-life examples of these appraisals in practice.

This book is an excellent resource both for those new to the field of librarianship and for experienced librarians who would like to get more out of their jobs. Williams discusses the changing workplace and details the skills needed to adapt to common challenges which we all face. She provides tools to help gain deeper knowledge about yourself, who you are, and what you can offer to an employer. Williams details three primary ways to find growth opportunities: listing different types of opportunities, listing places to find opportunities, and describing different circumstances in which you may find it challenging to pursue opportunities. All of this is written in terms that anyone can understand and put into practice. Furthermore, at the end of each chapter, Williams provides resources for those who wish to read further.

This comprehensive book is a great resource for any librarian and for all who work in the field of library science and are looking for ways to grow in their careers. By the end of the book, readers will have a growth plan that will help them to put all that they have learned into action.

*Abigail DeSoto*

### **Coaching Copyright**

Ed. by Kevin L. Smith and Erin L. Ellis, ALA Editions, 2020, 196 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1848-7, \$59.99 (paper).

For all librarians who have seen the eyes of patrons (or *clients*, as editor Kevin Smith insists we call them) glaze over as soon as they hear the word “copyright,” this book offers both confidence and excellent ideas. In particular, in the opening chapter Smith discusses how to field questions of copyright using a coherent strategy and risk management. Focus on the specific question, says Smith. Don’t get into theory; stay real. To structure this approach, Smith provides five questions to help determine how to provide, if not a definitive answer, at least guidance for going forward through the tangle of copyright rules and determining the best approach. He suggests high-impact learning strategies for including copyright as part of information literacy. Laura Quilter builds on this in her chapter, “Hooking Your Audience,” with some really nifty ideas for getting students and faculty personally invested in the topic. Anne T. Gilliland follows this up by showing how to tell stories that make copyright real to students. One drawback to the book is that almost all of the contributors, a third of whom are attorneys, work at very large universities that can afford to have librarians specializing in scholarly communication and instructional design. Thankfully, an essay by Stephanie Davis-Kahl and Karen Schmidt describes how Illinois Wesleyan, with 1,800 students, deals with its copyright concerns. A final chapter makes an excellent case (no pun intended) for a course in legal topics in the LIS curriculum. Despite the book’s price and its focus on research institutions, this helpful guide is recommended for academic, special, and large public libraries.

*Daniel Boice*

### **The Culture of Digital Scholarship in Academic Libraries**

Ed. by Robin Chin Roemer and Verletta Kern, ALA Editions, 2019, 240 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1897-5, \$71.99 (paper).

This book is a highly focused institutional case study based upon how digital scholarship is performed at the University of Washington Libraries. Chapters are written by the faculty and staff of the University of Washington and represent their tailored viewpoints. Although there are passing nods throughout the book to other institutions and libraries that gave them inspiration, this is an interesting case study. Of particular use are the chapters written by Beth Lytle and Reed Garber-Pearson which show how instruction pairs with digital scholarship and different methods of effective outreach. The associated appendices are useful for designing flexible instruction activities in most classrooms.

The book is divided into three sections: “Values,” “Practices,” and “Environments.” The “Practices” and “Environments” sections give the most applicable information for working librarians eager to add digital scholarship to their practice. This is not to discount the “Values” section, which does give greater theory and discussion of how digital scholarship can be defined and practiced as well. This is a good sourcebook for institutions that are new to digital scholarship or are looking to refresh how they approach digital scholarship. However, some of the obvious limitations are that this is focused on a very well-funded R1 school, and though the authors and editors do make attempts toward showing scalable practices that can be done at smaller institutions, the strength is with its focus on theory that can be applied in other institutions. This is recommended for academic librarians looking for assignments and ideas that could be applied toward their own programs.

*Caitlin A. Bagley*



### ***The Data Wrangler's Handbook: Simple Tools for Powerful Results***

By Kyle Banerjee, ALA Neal-Schuman, 2019, 164 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1909-5, \$67.99 (paper).

Libraries depend upon data of all sorts for their operation and, in today's world, this data generally takes the form of more-or-less structured text stored in computer files, such as spreadsheets, MARC records, or documents rendered in various digital formats. There is no shortage of reasons that librarians may wish to manipulate the data files in their library systems. They include, *inter alia*, the desire to detect and correct errors in the data, the need to convert data from one format to another, or the wish to carry out analysis over large numbers of data files. In *The Data Wrangler's Handbook*, Kyle Banerjee, Collections and Services Librarian at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) and author or editor of several books on the technical handling of data in libraries, presents a handy little guide to carrying out data manipulation using the command line interface.

For most users of computers, who primarily rely on GUIs (graphical user interfaces) to interact with their machines, the command line interface, with its restriction to textual characters, may appear to be an austere and forbidding environment in which to work. However, as Banerjee avers, the command line interface, by virtue of "its ability to easily direct output of programs into other programs and files" (7), provides a venue in which one can carry out quite powerful and sophisticated operations on textual data. After an initial chapter instructing the reader how to find the command line interface in Mac and Windows computers, Banerjee introduces the reader to elementary command line concepts, outlining the structure and syntax of commands; explaining the functions of special characters used to formulate commands; and setting forth the basics of using regular expressions, defined as "special strings [i.e. of text characters—TMD] that allow search and replace based on patterns" (12). These concepts,

he argues, provide the building blocks for all efficient and effective data manipulation. Following a chapter in which David Forero, the OHSU Library's technology director, discusses some of the most common kinds of textual data formats, Banerjee offers advice on how to simplify complicated data manipulation problems. His favored solutions are to "isolate" specific data elements that need to be changed, "convert" data into formats that are easier to work with, and "combin[e] simple tools and methods rather than seeking power user methods" (36). In other words, he adopts the Cartesian *modus operandi* of breaking down processes into a series of simple and tractable steps, a strategy that he illustrates with concrete examples. Banerjee devotes individual chapters to the command line data manipulation of data in different formats, namely delimited text formats, XML (eXtensible Markup Language), and JSON (Javascript Object Notation). These chapters offer valuable analytic descriptions of the formats themselves as well as discussions of specific problems associated with each and particular commands to use in the manipulation of XML- and JSON-formatted data. The following chapters present the rudiments of command line scripting (i.e., the creation of short programs that can automate certain processes) and provide a survey of common problems that can be addressed via the command line, while a concluding chapter gives a summary overview of key points from the preceding discussions and a classified list of commands for particular kinds of data manipulation. Rounding out the book are a short glossary of terms, a list of symbols that perform important functions in the command line, a list of useful commands, and an impressively full index.

Written in a clear and accessible manner and filled with helpful examples, *The Data Wrangler's Handbook* is an excellent, user-friendly introduction to the use of the command line interface for manipulating data in a library setting. Because of its lists of basic

commands, it can also serve as a vademecum for library personnel who have to manipulate data as part of their professional duties, even if it is by no means the last word on the subject. It will be especially useful to persons with little technical experience but an interest in learning the basics of data wrangling. Highly recommended.

Thomas M. Dousa

### ***Design Thinking***

By Rachel Ivy Clarke, ALA Neal-Schuman, 2020, 59 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1792-3, \$24.99 (paper).

The organization of knowledge is why we call library science a science. Science is based on testable situations and predictions about future behavior. Design thinking started in the 1960s as a way to solve problems. Design thinking is a unique way of thinking about the world that targets problem solving. It is particularly effective against problems that are unique, interconnected, and cannot be easily described.

This short book, part of the ALA Center of the Future of Libraries series, will change the way readers think about library administration, how to solve problems, and about *design* and how it can help librarianship create a better future.

This book is highly recommended for library professional collections. It could also help managers in other types of organizations. The book, however, is overpriced. ALA consistently charges high prices for small books.

Daniel D. Stuhlman

### ***Leadership: Strategic Thinking, Decision Making, Communication, and Relationship Building***

By Ann M. Martin and Kathleen Riopelle Roberts, ALA Editions, 2019, 176 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1907-1, \$54.99 (paper).

The authors, both from Henrico County, Virginia, are leaders in the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and have been instrumental in writing documents for the Standards and Guidelines Editorial Board of the



AASL. This book is based on the 2018 AASL *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. Within this document, “Integrated Frameworks are composed of six Shared Foundations and their Key Commitments, along with four Domains of learning, featuring Competencies or Alignments” (ix). As to the authors’ purpose, “This book clarifies how to add capacity to librarians’ overall leadership and management of the school library by revealing the scope of these integrated frameworks and all three sets of standards” (ix). The four parts to the book, listed in the subtitle, seek to lay out guidance for these important skills by cross-matching the above documents with the four domains of Think, Create, Share, and Grow, each of which is further divided into three parts that match up to Shared Foundations.

The result is an expensive textbook, relatively short but, as illustrated above, thick with jargon and indirect verbs, offering abstruse theoretical advice for putting the AASL guidelines into practice. The occasional guiding questions and welcome examples offer relief, but this is just heavy sledding and unlikely to provide much practical help, let alone “adding capacity,” for busy librarians. Perhaps the best use for this carefully constructed and thorough book would be for daylong workshops on selected chapters, or even School of Library and Information Studies coursework, and so it is recommended to libraries supporting graduate programs in school librarianship.

Daniel Boice

**The Library Workplace Idea Book: Proactive Steps for Positive Change**

Ed. by Heather L. Seibert, Amanda Vinogradov, and Amanda H. McLellan, ALA Editions, 2020, 170 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-4645-9, \$64.99 (paper).

Heather Seibert, Amanda Vinogradov, and Amanda McLellan have collected a variety of essays, case studies, and narratives covering a wide range of topics pertinent to libraries about promoting positive change

within their institutions. Twenty-four chapters are divided among five different sections: “Work-Life Balance,” “Health and Wellness,” “Inclusion and Sensitivity,” “Leadership and Change,” and “Training and Awareness.” The chapters provide real-life details of programs established to improve morale and overall positive changes within libraries, for example, the provision of lactation rooms, not just for librarians, but for nontraditional students, too. Improving personnel health may be as simple as adding some plants to indoor spaces or implementing walking meetings or employer-supported exercise programs. Race and ethnicity issues and gender identities are becoming more fully recognized and understood; libraries and librarians need to be aware and current. Other issues of concern are bullying, diversity training needs, and various culture conversations. This is an excellent book to begin self-reflecting about how your library may need to adjust to a changing society and users. It is important to remember to take care of yourself and your staff as much as your users.

Highly recommended for all libraries.

Shirley J. Martyn

**Mapping the Imaginary: Supporting Creative Writers through Programming, Prompts, and Research**

By Riley Hanick, Micah Bateman, and Jennifer Burek Pierce, ALA Editions, 2019, 232 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1841-8, \$60.99 (paper).

Librarians are the rock stars of guiding information seekers to the best information available. From deep scientific inquiries to reader’s advisory, our patron base is as broad and varied as the questions we are asked and collections we manage. However, one population of library users requires a slightly different sort of support from their librarians: creative writers. Authors Riley Hanick, Micah Bateman, and Jennifer Pierce provide concrete and actionable ways for librarians to introduce, encourage, and expand the relationship between the fledgling and established writers in their communities

with the library resources, services, and spaces available to them. In eight chapters and two appendices, the authors situate the reader in the working world of the creative writer, helping librarians understand the types of questions and challenges writers of various genres from science fiction to poetry may have. For example, under the heading “A Note on Memoir” found in the chapter “Life-Writing,” the authors point out that memoirists can use library resources to effectively fact check their memories against public records, genealogies, and other details of time and place. Regardless of one’s background in creative writing instruction, the writing prompts and resource lists throughout the book are a treasure trove of programming material. *Mapping the Imaginary* is an indispensable guide to understanding and supporting through library resources and programming the ever-growing population of creative writers, emerging and established, in our communities.

This book would be useful to librarians looking to create or support programs for creative writers, as well as those wanting to strengthen their existing collections with current and vetted resources for writers. This book is recommended for public, academic, and special libraries.

Amy Lee Heinlen

**Overdue: A Dewey Decimal System of Grace**

By Valerie Schultz, Liturgical, 2019, 163 pp., ISBN 978-0-8146-6411-7, \$19.95 (paper).

Valerie Schultz reflects on her work in a California prison library in brief essays organized around the Dewey Decimal System. Her felicitous prose is informed by honesty, humor, and humility. Schultz and her husband were volunteers with a parish prison ministry, which led to her employment as a clerk in the records department and then to running the library. “My fourteen years inside were a time of grace and learning. It was no challenge to find God in all things in prison, because God was palpably everywhere” (xii).



Schultz offers incisive portraits of inmates and guards and her addictively readable vignettes convey the monotony and dehumanization of institutional life, as well as moments of sheer grace. "I was always amazed by the lack of bitterness, among some of those I worked with, in response to a major disappointment. ... often stunned by the purity of their acceptance. ... Because even as these men were paying some serious debts to society, they were examples of how to work with the concrete reality of what is" (29-30).

She is careful about boundaries and understands the constraints of her role as a prison employee, but she never loses her spiritual compass or belief in rehabilitation. Self-help and twelve-step programs, college classes, recreational reading, writing groups, inmates who care for wildlife in the prison yard — all yield change and inculcate empathy. This is important not only for prisoners but for society because, as the maxim has it, "today's inmate is tomorrow's neighbor."

"No one knows better than a murderer that he can never give back or fully atone for the life taken. There is nothing a murderer can do or say to bring back the dead or to erase a family's grief. But if we believe in God's redemptive love, we have to believe that every person, every single one of us, can change, can be forgiven, can be redeemed. The power of God's compassion is so much greater than ours" (77).

This wonderful book is imbued by the same spirit that animated her mission, "to recognize the humanity, as well as the divine spark, in each person with whom I came in contact at my job" (86). There is no question that she succeeded in doing that in *Overdue*, a wholly satisfying book that both educates and edifies.

Highly recommended for school and parish libraries.

Rachelle Linner

### **The Public Library Director's Toolkit**

By Kate Hall and Kathy Parker, ALA Editions, 2019, 203 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1859-3, \$56.99 (paper).

Management and administration job skills are all too often learned on the job. *The Public Library Director's Toolkit* helps those interested in learning about library administration gain those skills. Kate Hall and Kathy Parker have many years of experience as library directors, and are well qualified to address this topic.

This book is very well organized, with chapters addressing critical topics such as staffing, working with trustees, managing a budget, legal issues, policies and procedures, insurance, facility management, emergency planning, information technology, strategic planning, and more. Each chapter ends with a section that addresses key takeaways, a self-check (i.e., questions for reflection), and useful additional resources. In addition to being well organized, *The Public Library Director's Toolkit* is written in a clear and cogent style that makes even sometimes dry topics interesting.

The second part of the book provides a compilation of tools, including templates, checklists, and sample policies for common administrative needs. Some examples include a "Library Director Training Checklist," a template for writing a director's report to the board of trustees, a new hire checklist, and a sample job description. These tools will be very helpful not only for new directors, but also those who are more seasoned. They would be particularly useful for directors of smaller institutions, which might not have such policies in place already.

*The Public Library Director's Toolkit* would be a valuable purchase for any public library professional collection, aspiring directors, or students interested in public library work.

Rebecca L. Mugridge

### **Seamless Youth Services for Every Age and Stage**

By Karis Loop, ALA Editions, 2019, 78 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1925-5, \$39.99 (paper).

Librarians who work primarily with children and young adults may find it difficult to keep children interested in library programs as they age. With *Seamless Youth Services for Every Age and Stage*, Karis Loop has provided a rich collection of strategies and activities that will help librarians keep children interested in reading and other library activities through their teen years.

The book is organized in six chapters that address age groups, starting with infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children, followed by elementary school, middle grades, early teen years, and those transitioning from teen to adult years. Each chapter includes sections that address challenges, solutions, suggestions for how to evaluate existing programs, ideas to help librarians evaluate the existing space devoted to the respective age group, and sample programs and activities. Each chapter also includes a "Time Travel" section that stimulates readers to think about their own childhood experiences in libraries as a way to inform their current services to children and young adults.

This is a slight book at only seventy-eight pages, but it contains many helpful ideas that will help children's and young adult libraries develop programs that will keep children engaged with the library as they age from infants to adults.

Rebecca L. Mugridge

### **Techniques for Electronic Resource Management: TERMS and the Transition to Open**

By Jill Emery, Graham Stone, and Peter McCracken, ALA Editions, 2019, 219 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1904-0, \$56.99 (paper).

The contemporary nature of libraries has evolved from a traditional role of collecting and storing books and related materials for use by patrons to what can be termed an

information center supported by layers of electronic resources. The need to learn and manage the newly available digital materials is greatly aided by *Techniques for Electronic Resource Management*. The authors are, respectively, a librarian at Portland State University, a British researcher dealing with open access processes, and a librarian at Cornell University. The overall approach is TERMS (Techniques for Electronic Resource Management), a librarian's method developed in 2008. A wide range of topics focusing on the technical arrangement of the methodology is covered in logical sequence, how to select the right and the most appropriate system for the facility; going through the required licensing procedure, and ultimately the installation process. Once in place, it is necessary to test the operation and assess the overall usefulness of the method employed. The technical substance of this book makes it almost required reading for librarians to keep up to date with the current thinking on administrative librarianship.

Sanford R. Silverburg

## REFERENCE

### ***The American Women's Almanac: 500 Years of Making History***

By Deborah G. Felder, Visible Ink, 2020, 573 pp., ISBN 978-1-5785-9636-2, \$22.95 (paper).

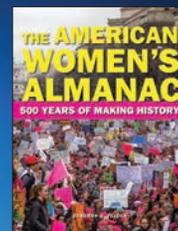
Deborah G. Felder does an amazing job of chronicling women in the United States in the past five hundred years with the arrival of the first (white) women (obviously indigenous women had been here long before the whites, but that is the starting point of this text). She begins each of her sections with a brief historical essay before presenting numerous biographies of women germane to that chapter's topic. The chapters, initially, are arranged chronologically by time period discussed ("The Arrival of Women in America," "The Struggle for Equality: The First Women's

Rights Movement," "Women at Work," and "The Second Women's Rights Movement"). The remainder of the book explores women's roles in various fields: "Literature," "Art and Applied Arts," "Media and the Performing Arts," "Sports Figures," "Science, Medicine, and Technology," "Politics, Government, and the Law," "Religion," "Activists for Social Change," "Education," "Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs," "The Military," and "Explorers."

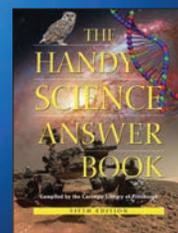
The book is quite informative, though the statistics can be a bit overwhelming and daunting at times. Nearly every biography is presented with a thumbnail portrait of the subject; sadly, some of the images are dark and hard to see. Regretfully, the chapter on the military, in particular, lacked proper proof-editing: page 518 lists Tammy Duckworth as an "Amy Officer" rather than "Army Officer;" the next page refers to "Fort Velvoir" (a typo for "Fort Belvoir" in Virginia); and the entry for Anna Mae Hays switches between spelling her surname "Hays" and "Hayes" (some previous biographical entries had noted spelling changes in names, but no such mention was provided here). Furthermore, the choice of images on the back cover are a bit confusing. Sonia Sotomayor is pictured prominently, but she is mentioned only in passing twice (she does not have an actual biography anywhere). The summary printed on the backcover states this is "[t]he most complete and affordable single-volume reference on women's history available today"—the occasional editing errors are reminiscent of the adage "you get what you pay for." Overall, I believe this is a well-research, well-organized volume, but some errors were apparent. I would still highly recommend this for any library, particularly those supporting a women's studies or history program.

Shirley J. Martyn

## RIVETING REFERENCES!



978-1-57859-636-2



978-1-57859-691-1

Visible Ink Press  
is distributed by  
Publishers Group West

### ***The Handy Christianity Answer Book***

By Stephen A. Werner, Visible Ink, 2019, 400 pp., ISBN 978-1-57859-686-7, \$21.95 (paper).

One wonders about the need for a book of this nature in the twenty-first century with all the easily accessed information available through technology. What with such instruments as "Alexa," for example, and smart phones, most people have quick and easy answers to questions they might have about almost any subject. A book this size is certainly not as "handy" as the smart phone or other technology one can slip into one's pocket.

Stephen Werner has attempted an onerous task in providing answers to over nine hundred questions about Christianity. The resulting book, *The Handy Christianity Answer Book*, is oversimplified and lacks objectivity and selectivity. The author does not specify for whom the book is written and it is difficult to identify who might find the book of interest. Many of his answers are



to areas of Christianity that are most divisive among the various churches and need more than the small amount of information he provides. They have little significance to an understanding of the teachings of the various Christian churches. Many of Werner's answers end with the question, "What do you think?"

The author's biases are couched in the use of such terms as "Some question..." or "Many criticize..." An example of this practice can be found in the material about St. Teresa of Calcutta. In a book meant to be concise and compact, why should we find such an insignificant comment as she "is criticized by some of the conditions of her moves for the dying" (254).

There is a considerable amount of material about Catholic Church history and traditions throughout the book, but Werner also dedicates a whole section to Catholicism. In twenty-four essays, he selectively deals with the Church's structure and organization, the sacraments, teaching on Mary, and "other Catholic topics." Some of the topics here are relics, praying to the saints, and the use of the rosary as prayer. These are all areas of disagreement since Martin Luther and the Reformation. In his description of the sacrament of Confirmation, he writes that it is the Catholic practice to confirm seventh and eighth graders because "...if they were to wait on Confirmation until high school, they just might lose track of some of the students" (326).

Werner has brought together a vast amount of information, much irrelevant to an understanding of the specific topic within Christianity. Much of the material is oversimplified and already obvious to most educated readers. The author received his doctorate in the historical study of Christianity from St. Louis University and has taught popular courses on Christianity from a cultural, non-theological perspective. I did have some interest in the section of Christianity in the movies and musicals.

Because it is difficult to identify a specific audience for the book, I cannot recommend it as meeting the needs of these readers. The book is certainly not recommended for Catholic libraries.

*Arnold Rzepecki*

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## SOCIAL SCIENCE

### ***Revolution of Values: Reclaiming Public Faith for the Common Good***

By Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, InterVarsity, 2019, 201 pp., ISBN 978-0-8308-4593-4, \$22.00.

Anyone who has worked with the poor and those who suffer injustice, whether professionally or as a volunteer, cannot help but be touched, changed by that experience. People of Christian faith, with the example of Jesus before them, are certainly no exception.

In this book, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, writer and activist, documents the lessons he has learned from his time working for social justice. He devotes a chapter of his book to each of his "mentors," and the issue they symbolize for him. They are the following.

Maria, separated from her husband by the Rio Grande River and current deportation policy; Julia Dinsmore, a Twin Cities civil rights activist; Rosanell Eaton, who worked tirelessly for decades to register the disenfranchised to vote; Pastor Jose Chicas, an undocumented, who was deported back to a dangerous El Salvador with his boys; Ndume Olatushami, who was treated unjustly by the criminal justice system; Alicia Wilson, who was denied abortion funding by her insurance company on grounds of "religious exclusion;" Wendsler Noise, Sr., a Native American who has fought for environmental protection of First Citizen lands; and Basir Bitra, who was discriminated against as a Muslim and not allowed to join his wife in Afghanistan for fear of not being able to return.

For the author, these represent the poor who desperately need a "revolution of values," (the phrase is taken from Martin Luther King). They need to be redeemed from "Christian nationalism" and "white slaveholder's religion." These need a society based on biblical values, especially those of justice and inclusion a la Acts 2:44-45. ("And all who believed were together and held all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as many as had need.")

This work is an articulate presentation of the "Christian Progressive" analysis and agenda. It is forthright in its denunciation of Evangelical pastors ("court theologians"), corporate greed, and everything Trump. If you identify with this view of things, you will be inspired and moved to action. There is no nuance here. There is a lot of generalization and demonizing—however some may legitimately deserve it. Wilson-Hartgrove claims he freed himself, made his exodus from fundamentalist and value-blind conservative religion, and came out on the other side of the political and religious spectrum.

The book has a helpful appendix of faith-based organizations working for social justice and a discussion guide for those wishing to adopt the book for group activity. It is a book that will have appeal to the young and Millennials and those who want insight into the thinking of people they might disagree with.

*Kenneth J. Zanca*

# Children

## FICTION

### ***At the Mountain's Base***

By Traci Sorell, Illustrated by Weshoyot Alvitre, Kokila, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-0-73523060-6, \$17.99.

A moving, lyrical fiction children's picture book about a Cherokee family that lives below the mountain's base in a tiny cabin where they celebrate life's joys and sorrows. The family's activities sprawl across the page, fine illustrations featuring a mixed media of water color, ink, and pencil. Children and adults will delight in experiencing how the illustrations progress from a cabin at the mountain's base into daily activities. Mother cooks delicious food while grandmother teaches her granddaughter how to weave sacred blankets. All come together in love to sing and pray peace and protection for their daughter who is a pilot off fighting in World War II. At home as the family sings and prays, the pilot daughter hears their prayers while flying. She then begins to pray and is joined by the spirit of her ancestors. Together, all join in and pray for courage, protection, and peace, the peace found in family in a little cabin at the mountain's base.

Sorell explains in her author's note that while this story is one about a fictional Cherokee family, many native women served in various ways and in different types of military conflicts throughout history. In most cases, women, like the ones found in this picture book, were supported by their family members back home. Sorell gives the example of Congressional Gold Medal awardee, Ola Mildred "Mille" Rexroat, who was an Oglala Lakota pilot in World War II and in the Korean War. School libraries would greatly benefit from having this multicultural title on their shelves. This picture book gives young readers from ages seven through ten the opportunity to read about a

diverse voice of peace and pride in one's family and one's country.

**A |** 7-10

**V |** COURAGE – LOVE – SERVICE

*Jen Cullerton Johnson*

### ***Count Me In***

By Varsha Bajaj, Nancy Paulsen, 2019, 175 pp., ISBN 978-0-5255-1724-5, \$16.99.

Karina is a second-generation, American-born Indian living in Houston, Texas. Her grandfather, Papa, moves in with her family and, through a variety of circumstances, Papa begins tutoring the neighbor boy, Chris. Karina and Chris are in the same class, but are very different. Karina always has her nose in a book and Chris always has a ball with him and hangs out with the basketball team. However, after hours together with Papa tutoring, they begin to realize they are more alike than they had thought and quickly become friends. One afternoon, as the trio are walking to Papa's car after tutoring, a stranger stops his car and asks if Chris is okay. Then the man pulls a knife and knocks Papa to the ground, where he begins kicking Papa. Luckily, a neighbor happens to see the assault and calls for help. The stranger escapes, but the neighbor snaps a picture of his car and license plate. Karina, Papa, and Chris are taken to the hospital. Papa's femur is broken and will need surgery. Karina and Chris are left grappling with the fear, trauma, and uncertainty of their experience. An avid photographer, Karina has been taking pictures all along and posts an image of her grandfather's glasses crushed on the sidewalk following the attack on her social media feed. Several days and photograph posts later, Karina is interviewed and her images and story have gone viral. #CountMeIn becomes the rallying cry for those who will not tolerate the hate.

With chapters alternating between Karina's and Chris's point of view, the reader is given a more rounded view of the events, but also insight into how

similar middle school students have a desire to be accepted. The underlying themes of immigration, equality, and acceptance are extremely germane in today's political climate and this would provide a fresh perspective for young readers. I highly recommend this book for any public or school library collection.

**A |** 10+

**V |** COMMUNITY – COURAGE  
HOPE – JUSTICE

*Shirley J. Martyn*

### ***Cyril and Pat***

By Emily Gravett, Simon & Schuster, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-5344-3950-4, \$17.99.

Lonely, sad Cyril is the only squirrel in the park, until he meets Pat (who looks kind of like a squirrel except for his long, thin tail). Cyril and Pat have loads of fun playing games and outwitting Slim the dog, while the other park animals try to warn Cyril that Pat is really a rat. Cyril, however, is only interested in the fact that his friend is a "real joker" or a "brilliant sharer." When he does find out the truth, Cyril is back to being alone since everyone knows squirrels can't be friends with rats. Life in the park is much less fun without Pat, and much more dangerous when Cyril finds himself defenseless against Slim. Pat comes to the rescue, and the two renew their friendship. Cyril might still be the only squirrel in the park, but he is not alone thanks to his "brave and clever best friend Pat."

Lively pencil, watercolor, and acrylic ink illustrations filled with characters and action perfectly complement the fun story. Friendship is a common theme in picture books, but this title stands out for its exuberance. Recommended for school and public libraries.

**A |** 4-8

**V |** RECONCILIATION

*Blinn D. Sheffield*





## Children's Book Review Feature

Each children's book review is labeled with corresponding virtues represented by the book. The virtues are taken from *A Working Reading List for Catholic School Students* (NCEA, 2003, 2012) and include charity, courage, faith, forgiveness, hope, justice, reconciliation and service. The CLA LibraryThing profile, which includes records of books reviewed in *CLW*, also includes clickable tags applicable for each virtue, so that clicking on a virtue will retrieve a list of books with that tag. Log into LibraryThing.com and search for Catholic Library Association. The display style must be set to show the "Tags/ comments" field to show the virtues. For the journal, the age designations and virtues for each title will be listed as shown here.

**A** | [age]

**V** | [virtue]

### ***If You Played Hide-and-Seek With a Chameleon***

By Bill Wise, Illustrated by Rebecca Evans, Dawn, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-58469-650-6, \$16.95, ISBN 978-1-58469-651-3 \$8.95 (paper).

Readers will enjoy this humorous picture book covering different animals and their strengths at an animal fair. Besides the animals, five children are featured competing with the animals. For example, a hippo eats fifty pies at a pie-eating contest. Each game features an animal, stating one fact about the animal and why it would most likely win. All participants are having fun and the competitions are friendly. The participants try the challenge and congratulate the winning animal. Animals are strong, tall, flexible, and have many different abilities. The book's wonderful and fun illustrations capture each game and have readers witnessing why the animals win their task. The book includes "Fun Facts and Fascinating Feats" and "Take a Closer Look" sections. Readers will enjoy the "More Things to Discover" section. This section challenges readers with questions

to study the images found throughout the book.

Teachers and parents can find additional science, technology, engineering, and math information and springboard suggestions for activities, along with a "table of measurements" for weight, length, and height in both standard and metric units, which is a free download. The text may be difficult for beginning readers. This title would be an option for a read-aloud or a good purchase for a classroom library. It also would be a good book to introduce readers to math and science.

**A** | 4-8

**V** | COMMUNITY – COURAGE – FAITH – HOPE – LOVE

Jo Monahan

### ***The Magical Bookshop***

By Katje Frixe, Illustrated by Florentine Prechtel, Trans. by Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp, Rock the Boat, 2020, 166 pp., ISBN 978-1-78607-866-7, \$11.95 (paper).

This early reader is not part of the *Magical Bookshop* series by Amanda Flower. It is the first book of a translated series from Germany. Simon and Schuster's Rock the Boat imprint has scheduled this book for sale in June 2020. Florentine Prechtel's black-and-white illustrations include paw prints across several pages, a butterfly on the first page of each chapter, and pictures of the main characters drawn in a deceptively simple manner.

What's not to love when there's a rhyming cat, a talking mirror, and an ageless bookstore owner?

At important moments, books themselves come to life on the shelves (this rhyming thing is catching). I wish there was more description of the store, but there's enough to imagine. And, it's fun to read about food, especially with the local sweetshop, bakery, and even grandmother contributing. I do wish that "books cannot be stolen. They always return to their owner," was even remotely true. Ah, well, that must be part of the magic. An important part of the magic is that the owner can always tell what kind of book her customer needs.

Friendships, both new and old, are the backbone of this easily

read chapter book. How does one make friends? How does one deal with a friend moving away? Is it okay to make a new friend when an old friend is no longer around? What if someone likes you and you don't even realize that they do? Another element is the importance of community, which the bookstore represents.

Then there's a threat to the bookstore, a new teacher who brings baggage with her, and mean girls. Clearly, a little magic can't hurt.

**A** | 8-11

**V** | COMMUNITY

Barbara S. Wurtzel

### ***My Shoes and I: Crossing Three Borders/Mis Zapatos Y Yo: Cruzando Tres Fronteras***

By René Colato Laínez, Illustrated by Fabricio Vanden Broeck, Piñata, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-55885-884-8, \$17.95.

In El Salvador a child's new shoes, sent by Mamá from the United States, are strong and sturdy, perfect for the journey that he and his father will soon begin, a journey crossing three international borders by bus and on foot to enter the United States.

No matter the trials, our narrator's shoes are up to the task. Be it running from hungry dogs and stepping on a nail in Guatemala City, enduring heavy rains in Mexico City, or mud, mountains, and a deep river along the Mexico-United States border, the shoes endure. A sweet reunion with Mamá awaits the weary travelers; they and the shoes have survived the journey.

Told in the first person, this autobiographical picture book shares the immigrant journey of author René Laínez. Originally published in English in 2010, this 2019 bilingual edition makes fresh the tragic story of Central American immigrants heading north to the United States. The legality of the act of crossing the border is not addressed—a topic for a different book. The Spanish translation is accurate and placed well within this new edition, though the original 2010 English has been abridged to accommodate the additional Spanish text.



Illustrator Fabricio Vanden Broeck, a professor of design in Mexico City, has created colorful, textured art which aptly portrays this difficult journey and the joy felt by all, including the shoes, at its end. Biographical information on both Laínez and Vanden Broeck, plus an author's note, are included.

This is a story of hope and courage and the desire to seek a safe country in which to live. Keep the 2010 edition if you own it. Purchase this 2019 edition for the Spanish translation as a means of diversifying your library collection and as a vehicle to discuss immigration with children in the light of this very personal story.

**A |** 6-10

**V |** COURAGE – HOPE – LOVE

*Roberta R. Wahlberg*

### **My Wild Cat**

Written and illustrated by Isabelle Simler, Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2019, 64 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-5525-1, \$17.99.

A charming, mischievous, yellow-eyed black cat fills the pages of this heartwarming children's fiction picture book. Watch with glee as the cat leaps, purrs, and parades through these whimsical illustrations and thought-provoking words. Anyone who loves the feline nature or those curious about what cats do when humans aren't watching will fall in love. Children ages five to nine will laugh and snicker as this cat sashays into adventures. Like a wild cat, these gorgeous pencil, pen, and ink drawings spring off the page. Teachers and parents will adore how writer and illustrator Isabelle Simler cleverly wrote and intertwined two types of stories on the same page. The first story is in larger print underneath the main illustration. It tells about the fictional undertakings of the cat. The second text is smaller and at the bottom of the page and offers young readers scientific facts about the feline, such as body weight, its predator characteristics, and its species facts. *My Wild Cat* is smaller than most picture books and can easily fit into a small backpack. Great for children's libraries or school libraries, young cat lovers will pick up the book again and again, reading it for

both a story and scientific research. Everyone will enjoy this tale of one wild cat and maybe wonder what happens to their own pet when the owner isn't watching!

**A |** 5-9

**V |** N/A

*Jen Cullerton Johnson*

### **Pixie Pushes On**

By Tamara Bundy, Nancy Paulsen, 2020, 227 pp., ISBN 978-0-525-51516-6, \$16.99.

In *Pixie Pushes On* we meet the title character—mad at the world, heavy with guilt, and not willing to accept any kindness from her classmates and teacher. She is new to town, having moved with her father and big sister, Charlotte, to her grandparents' farm after her mother's death. Shortly after arriving, her dear Charlotte is stricken with polio and sent to a hospital far away for recovery. She feels like she is to blame for her sister's polio and is angry with herself. Pixie's anger comes out in school, as she has difficulty making friends and gets in trouble with her teacher.

As time goes by, Pixie learns valuable lessons from living on the farm and from the gentle, loving adults in her life. Slowly, Pixie gets to know her teacher, a few classmates, and a neighbor. It's through her farm life and school life that Pixie eventually understands that she is not the only person missing people and struggling through post-Depression wartime. Along with her community, Pixie learns to push on, to persevere through heartache and struggle, and comes to understand that good times and good friends are worth treasuring.

People lucky enough to pick up *Pixie Pushes On* will get a subtle lesson on this period in history and insight into what it was like to live in America at that time. Pixie's voice is authentic when she's angry, spunky, sad, and contrite. The people in her life are just as authentic, each dealing with their own sorrows and struggles.

**A |** 10-13

**V |** COMMUNITY – HOPE – LOVE – RECONCILIATION – SERVICE

*Jane Kaftan*

### **A Queen in Jerusalem**

By Tami Shem-Tov and Rachella Sandbank, Illustrated by Avi Ofer, Trans. by Tirza Sandbank, Kar-Ben, 2018, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-5124-4441-4, \$17.99, ISBN 978-1-5124-4442-1, \$7.99 (paper).

Translated from Hebrew to English, this is the story of a young girl named Malka, whose name means "queen." Malka is petulant because her mother is too busy to make a Purim costume for her and runs through the streets of Jerusalem. In a courtyard far from home she meets Boris and relates her sadness about her lack of a costume. Boris, it turns out, is in charge of the Bezalel art school, and the art students create a gown, crown, and scepter for her then paint portraits of Malka in her regalia on a throne. As Malka returns home, the townspeople turn and look at her in the royal finery and she excitedly reunites with her mother.

This delightful picture book is a window into the Jewish culture in Jerusalem, taking place the night before the festival of Purim when everyone is preparing for the holiday and all the children are looking forward to celebrating in their costumes. Opening with subtle, muted watercolor and pen illustrations, the colors in the illustrations brighten along with Malka's mood when Boris has weavers and goldsmiths create her costume.

While the story is fictional, the author's note tells us that the character of Boris is based on a real man, sculptor and painter Boris Schatz, who established the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem more than one hundred years ago in addition to a royal school of art in Bulgaria. The name "Bezalel" comes from the artist who helped design the Temple in Jerusalem two thousand years ago.

The NCEA virtue of community is represented as the students come together to make Malka's dream of a beautiful Purim costume come true.

**A |** 3-8

**V |** COMMUNITY

*Robin Spano*



**Thank You!**

By Charo Pita, Illustrated by Anuska Allepuz, Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-0-8028-5524-4, \$16.99.

A nameless grandmother and her granddaughter, Isabella, share a home and a thoughtful afternoon outdoors.

In the face of Isabella’s numerous “why” questions regarding the natural world, such as oceans, the moon, clouds, and the sunlight, Grandma admits that she does not know the answers. But she does know what they must do in the face of “all of these mysteries.” They must perform an act of thoughtfulness by saying “Thank you!” to the sea, the moon, the wind, the clouds, and the sun for their beauty and mystery. After performing this gracious gesture, the two head home, have dinner, and settle in for the night. At bedtime, Isabella has more questions for Grandma that result in yet another “I don’t know.” However, Isabella has learned the afternoon’s lesson well as she offers a heartfelt “Thank you” to Grandma—a lovely ending to a gentle and thoughtful story.

The illustrations in water color, pen, and scattered bits of collage are reminiscent of Patricia Polacco’s joyous children’s book art. Rosy cheeks and simple features reveal the love, kinship, and trust between grandchild and grandmother.

Purchase the book without reservation. It is perfect for story times related to the natural world, gratitude, and family.

**A |** 4-7

**V |** FAITH – LOVE

*Roberta R. Wahlberg*

**Together We Can!**

By Caryl Hart, Illustrated by Ali Pye, B.E.S. Publishing, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-438-050768, \$12.99.

This book features the differences we all have, emphasizing how each of us can offer friendship, compassion, and kindness. Everyone faces problems, and the book prompts readers to think how cheering someone up can make the person feel better. Asking someone to lunch or listening to them are two suggestions. The book suggests that if everyone were to treat each other nicely and care for one another, everyone would be happier. Friendships are important, and people need to make friends and be a friend. Kindness is one method to maintain friendships. Throughout the book, diverse, fun illustrations are presented. The children are racially diverse; one is in a wheelchair; some wear eyeglasses. The rhyming text gives suggestions on how to be an attentive person and make new friends. The illustrations convey the story through bright, colorful images. The text may be challenging for young readers or beginning readers. This book would be a good purchase for libraries wanting to increase books about diversity and getting along with others.

Teachers could also use this book for an introduction to teaching tolerance. Parents could purchase it if their children are just starting school and are worried about making friends. It is an engaging book and would be a good choice for a read aloud or classroom library.

**A |** 4 – 10

**V |** COMMUNITY – COURAGE

COMMUNITY – FAITH – HOPE

LOVE – SERVICE

*Jo Monahan*

**Tomorrow I’ll Be Kind**

Written and illustrated by Jessica Hische, Penguin, 2020, 40 pp., ISBN 978-1-5247-8704-2, \$17.99.

*Tomorrow I’ll Be Kind* is a delightful book that adults will not mind reading to children again and again. This book is pleasantly illustrated by author Jessica Hische. The pictures very nicely depict the virtue introduced; the text is simple, clear, and rhyming.

Alternating pages introduce a virtue: helpfulness, patience, gentleness, honesty, generosity, gratefulness, and kindness. The introducing page gives a hint of the substance of the virtue, with the following page giving a clearer idea of it by text and picture. Whether in a classroom setting or on a caregiver’s lap, the illustrations give a double-page spread moving the understanding of the concept along.

The last pages set up the story as a perfect bedtime book—rest for now, aspirations for the next day. It is recommended for parish, school, and family libraries.

**A |** 3-7

**V |** FAITH – COMMUNITY – SERVICE

*Jane Braun*

**Watch This!: A Book About Making Shapes**

By Jane Godwin, Beci Orpin, and Hilary Walker, Scribble, 2018, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-911344-95-7, \$16.99.

*Watch This! A Book About Making Shapes* is a new release in the United States, having been originally published in Australia where the authors live. The simple design of text and photographs combine a diverse group of children wearing black leggings and black tee shirts forming shapes with their bodies through active play.

The background artwork is simple though colorful; it provides a nice contrast to the clothing the children wear. Any pattern in the background reinforces the shape being featured.



For a group of kinetic learners, the physical use of their bodies would probably facilitate their learning style. Applications in a school or family setting might include physical education classes or indoor play in situations with plenty of space to form the shapes while lying down.

There are no specific NCEA values connected to this book, though the cooperative aspects involved in creating the shapes may reinforce a sense of community. It is recommended for school, family, and parish libraries.

**A** | 3-7

**V** | COMMUNITY

Jane Braun

**What If...? Then We...:  
Short, Very Short,  
Shorter-than-Ever Possibilities**

By Rebecca Kai Dotlich, Illustrated by Fred Koehler, Boyds Mills, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-62979-909-4, \$17.95.

This attractive hardcover book supplies an inviting and enjoyable selection of questions to get young children wondering and thinking about what might happen in a variety of different circumstances.

Alternating between double-page spreads for questions with a further double-page for answers, or a double-page spread for both question and answer, children will enjoy being drawn into chatting and imagining a variety of different outcomes for situations both plausible and implausible. The illustrations both spark discussion as well as aiding it. The book can be used equally well at home or in kindergarten/early grades; it is especially good as a time filler for those odd pockets of time that occur throughout the school day.

Warmly recommended.

**A** | 0-8

**V** | N/A

Rudolf Loewenstein, OP

**NONFICTION**

**The Boy Who Touched the Stars/El Niño Que Alcanzó las Estrellas**

By José M. Hernández, Illustrated by Steven James Petruccio, Piñata, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-55885-882-4, \$17.95.

José Hernández has dreamed of being an astronaut since he was a child, when he would stare out the car window and look at the stars and moon and dream of flying into space. José, the son of central Mexican migrant farm workers, toils in the California fields with his parents and dreams of a better life. As farmworkers, the Hernández family often travels long distances, which has kept young José from learning English and keeping up with his studies. José's life changes when his second-grade teacher, Miss Young, convinces his family to stay permanently in one place for the sake of his education.

After being given a copy of *The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars* by his teacher, he is more determined to become an astronaut as he grows up. José is inspired to enroll in college to study electrical engineering when he sees television news reports about Neil Armstrong setting foot on the moon, and when he learns about Dr. Franklin Chang-Díaz, a Costa Rican scientist who spoke very little English and yet was chosen as a NASA astronaut. His studies in college give him further motivation to pursue a career in space exploration. Even after being rejected by NASA eleven times for application into the space program, he does not give up and is finally selected to fly in space on a one-man mission high above the Earth.

José shares his endearing life story through his bilingual English/Spanish autobiography to inspire young readers not to give up on their dreams, to do well in school, and to work hard and never give up. The colorful illustrations by Steven James Petruccio complement the text and story of José Hernández's life journey to become an astronaut.

Pair this book with *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly; *Mae Among the Stars* by Roda Ahmed; *Daring Dozen: The Twelve Who Walked on the Moon* by Suzanne Slade; and *Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream* by Tanya Lee Stone. This is a must-read title for any school or library that will add a multicultural highlight to its collection and teach school-age children about following their dreams.

**A** | 8-11

**V** | COURAGE

Angelina Bair

**From Farmworker to Astronaut:  
My Path to the Stars/  
De Campesino a Astronauta:  
Mi Viaje a las Estrellas**

By José M. Hernández, Piñata, 2019, 325 pp., ISBN 978-1-5588-5868-8, \$10.95 (paper).

When José Hernández was ten years old, he told his father he wanted to become an astronaut. Even though his father had only a third-grade education and was working as a migrant farmworker, he encouraged his son to pursue his dream and gave him a "recipe" for achieving that dream. This book is really well written and tells José's story from working in the fields to flying in outer space by alternating between flashbacks and the "current day" (his 2009 trip to the International Space Station). Written in a conversational tone, Hernández does not gloss over technical details of space suit construction or docking procedures, yet makes it all understandable to a younger reader (or a reader without a technical background, like me).



The book is a two-in-one book: the story is told in English or, if turned around and over, in Spanish, with each half being about 160 pages. A collection of family photos with captions in both English and Spanish also separates the two halves of the book.

I found this a very fascinating, accessible read and would strongly recommend this book to any middle school or public library.

**A** | 7-12

**V** | COURAGE

*Shirley J. Martyn*

### **Like a Lizard**

By April Pulley Sayre, Illustrated by Stephanie Laberis, Boyds Mills, 2019, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-62979-211-8, \$17.95.

Here is a book that is attractively put together and displays information about lizards in an appealing and clear way. Each page is colored cheerfully and accurately, featuring one or more questions about lizards. The pictures give us a clue to the expected answers (some of which will be quite surprising!), and each lizard represented in the book has its species name in smaller print nearby. Many (if not all) of the questions are ones that children would typically ask, and the book begs to be shared either at home or in kindergarten/first grade. The book ends with some surprising but welcome advice for its readers, followed by four pages where all the lizard types in the book are summarized along with additional links and resources.

**A** | 0 - 8

**V** | N/A

*Rudolf Loewenstein, OP*

### **The Middle Ages: New Conquests and Dynasties**

By John Farndon, Illustrated by Christian Cornia, Hungry Tomato, 2018, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-5124-5972-2, \$27.99.

Follow the sweeping changes across the world that took place over one thousand years in *The Middle Ages: New Conquests and Dynasties*. Readers witness the spread of Viking, Mongol, and Arab cultures, sail across the seas during the Age of Exploration, and encounter kings and saints on this illustrated romp through history. A volume in the Human History Timeline series, each chapter in this book encapsulates an important element of this time period.

Ten chapters break the millennia into one-hundred-year chunks, detailing major events and influential historic persons. These display a two-page world map with a timeline along the bottom of each spread. Dense text and cartoonish illustrations overlay each map near the area being featured. These spreads offer a global view, comparing and contrasting civilizations and events by continent.

Two additional chapters add humor and facts to pull readers into the period. "Who's Who" spotlights some of the cultural and ethnic groups presented in previous chapters, fleshing them out for readers. "Well, I Never" tells of Vlad Dracula, Wenceslas I, and other men of interest.

While this slim book is not a resource for in-depth examination of the time period, it can spark interest in middle grade students that leads to further reading on the topics it touches upon.

**A** | 9-12

**V** | N/A

*Robin Spano*

### **Plastic: Past, Present, and Future**

By Eun-ju Kim, Illustrated by Ji-won Lee, Trans. by Joungmin Lee Comfort, Scribble, 2020, 36 pp., ISBN 978-1-9503-5406-1, \$17.99.

The story of a container ship that lost its cargo of bathtub toys on January 10, 1992, in a fierce storm in the Pacific Ocean introduces the topic of plastic. Months, even years, later these bathtub toys wash ashore around the world still largely intact, if a bit sun-faded. The resilience of plastic is largely why plastic has become so pervasive. Regretfully, plastic's resilience also means that it does not biodegrade quickly. The evolution of plastic from the first iteration (celluloid) to present day variations (PET and nylon) is presented. The many benefits of plastic for shipping and packaging have resulted in global increase in use from fifteen million metric tons in 1964 to 311 million metric tons in 2014, just fifty years later. The plastic waste adrift in the ocean, not just the bathtub toys, but plastic bags, straws, and bottle caps, have formed large patches of floating trash; the largest one in the Pacific Ocean is larger than Great Britain. Different courses of action to reduce plastic use and waste are explored. For example, Rwanda has made single-use plastic bags illegal; visitors from other countries must relinquish any bags they may have brought with them before they are permitted admittance. Plastic has proven to have many benefits, which are praised, but the consequences of plastic must be considered as well. This book provides a wealth of useful information for young readers including empowering ways for the reader to make small but impactful changes in his or her own life.

Highly recommended for public and school libraries.

**A** | 6-10

**V** | COMMUNITY

*Shirley J. Martyn*

## RELIGIOUS

### **Brother Lorenzo's Pretzels: Prayer and the Holy Trinity**

By Cornelia Mary Bilinsky, Illustrated by John Joseph, Pauline Books & Media, 2019, 40 pp., ISBN 978-0-8198-1242-1, \$12.95 (paper).

This is a lovely visual introduction to the Holy Trinity. In the seventh century, Italian monk Brother Lorenzo prayed for a new way to teach the village children about God. Then he had a bit of dough left over from making bread one day. He rolled the dough and a vision of the pretzel appeared to him. The pretzel's exterior, with no discernable beginning or ending, represents God's eternal nature. The three holes represent the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The overall shape of the pretzel is reminiscent of a child praying, with his arms crossed on his chest and hands resting on his shoulders. The brightly colored illustrations help bring the story to life.

A recipe is included so that the reader and an adult may make their own pretzels.

Highly recommended for church, public, and elementary school libraries.

**A** | 4-10

**V** | FAITH – LOVE

*Shirley J. Martyn*

### **YOUCAT for Kids: A Catholic Catechism for Children and Parents**

Trans. by Beata Vale, Ignatius, 2019, 236 pp., ISBN 978-1-62164-285-5, \$17.95 (paper).

The *YOUCAT for Kids* is intended for children ages 9-13 to read with their parents or catechists. In the foreword, Pope Francis states, "Thumbing through the *YOUCAT for Kids*, I encounter the questions that children ask their parents and catechists millions of times." He suggests that parents "keep this catechism on hand and find the time to look at it with your children—page by page, mystery of the faith by mystery of the faith, question by question."

Like the original *YOUCAT* designed for teens, it is set up in a question-and-answer format. At the bottom of each page is additional background for parents or teachers. All the major tenets of the Catholic faith are covered in these pages. The introduction focuses on why the world and people exist and how we can come to know God. Part one explores each line of the Apostle's Creed. Part two describes each of the seven sacraments. Part three examines the Ten Commandments. The final section teaches children how to pray.

The *YOUCAT for Kids* is designed to be appealing to children. It is illustrated with cartoon images, photographs, and reproductions of religious paintings. While bright and colorful, it presents the truths of the Catholic faith in an age-appropriate manner without watering them down. For example, there are serious discussions of sin and the consequences of sin. While hell is not mentioned by name, it does state that "all those who say yes to God's mercy go to heaven; those who say no do not. Only God knows who is who." The section on the sacrament of marriage also briefly discusses sex, a fact which parents or teachers of younger children may wish to be aware of.

This catechism helps children gain knowledge of the Catholic faith, but its primary purpose is to help children develop a lifelong relationship with God. It is recommended for Catholic homes, schools, parish libraries, and religious education programs.

**A** | 9-13

**V** | COMMUNITY – FAITH – HOPE – LOVE – RECONCILIATION

*Patrice Fagnant-MacArthur*

## Young Adult

### FICTION

#### **Mean**

By Justin Sayre, Penguin, 2019, 234 pp., ISBN 978-1-5247-8795-0, \$16.99.

Justin Sayre's heroine, Ellen, is extraordinarily mature for her twelve going on thirteen years. After a painful meltdown, she tells her mother, "Life isn't just one thing. And you're not ever just one thing. You're a great doctor and a great mom, but you're not being either when you just get mad or don't give the rest of us a chance to be all the things that we are with you. You're not alone here."

Ellie's first-person narration gives readers a door into this thoughtful middle schooler's thoughts and feelings. She's focused on wanting to be all and live all the ways she's becoming a woman. We travel with her as she reflects on and reacts to her family, her friends, her frustrations, and her joys. She tells her friends, who want desperately to be normal, that "There's no such thing. Everybody is different and screwed up and crazy and beautiful for it."

Readers will learn about Bat Mitzvahs, acquire some Yiddish words, and encounter the concept of Tikkun Olam (repair the world). They will experience family life in an upper middle-class Brooklyn community. Ellen and her friends can walk to school, meet in the park, play video games together, and go out for pizza as a group. Her friends and frenemies come in all shapes, sizes, and genders, and her leadership and kindness are impressive.

Family difficulties, including Ellie's younger deaf sister, her "rock-star" surgeon mother, and grandparental health issues arise. They don't all resolve easily or happily. In this early coming of age novel, Ellen is not mean, after all.

*Barbara S. Wurtzel*



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# REVIEWERS

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**Caitlin A. Bagley**  
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**Kenneth J. Zanca**  
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