

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARISHIONERS**  
(published in 2000 or later)

***How to Discover Your Personal Mission: The Search for Meaning*** by John Monbourquette, Novalis, Ottawa: 2001 (\$12.95). [198 pp.] ISBN 1-58595-166-8  
Whether you're approaching graduation, at midlife or retiring, this book will help you focus.

***Full-Time Christians: The Real Challenge From Vatican II*** by William Droel, Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic CT: 2002 (\$10.95). [119 pp.] ISBN 1-58595-177-3  
A spirituality posited by this Rochesterian founder of the National Center for the Laity. Before moving to Chicago, Bill was a member of our St. James Church.

***Aelred of Rievaulx: The Way of Friendship*** edited by M. Basil Pennington, New City Press, Hyde Park NY: 2001 (\$11.95). [168 pp.] ISBN 1-56548-128-3  
This 12<sup>th</sup> Century Cistercian became an abbot in his Christic Year—at age 33. His words on friendships and relationships are uncannily poignant for us today. He starts with our humanness and goes from there. As editor M. Basil Pennington writes before going into Aelred's writings: *He most compassionately draws a picture that embraces the real humanness we all experience, rejects none of it, and shows how it can be the coinage to purchase the ideal for which we long.* [p. 11]

***Self-Actualization and the Radical Gospel*** by Louis Roy, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN: 2002 (\$9.95). [70 pp.] ISBN 0-8146-5107-0  
The author quotes Pascal: " 'One does not give up pleasures except for other greater ones.' " For some (or for all of us sometimes), these may be rooted alternatively in the Gospel or in the greater actualizing of ourselves. Roy traces "rhythms and readjustments" to allow for addressing both.

***100 Names of Mary: Stories & Prayers*** by Anthony F. Chiffolo, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2002 (\$12.95). [210 pp.] ISBN 0-86716-441-7  
This new explanation of 100 of Mary's titles is an eye-opener of details about Mary's various apparitions and intercessions down through the centuries. Great for May or October reading—or on a day of Marian reflection *anytime!*

***A Life God Rewards: Why Everything You Do Today Matters Forever*** by Bruce Wilkinson with David Kopp, Multnomah Publishers, Inc., Sisters OR: 2002 (\$10.99). [123 pp.] ISBN 1-57673-976-7

This book was #1 on the *New York Times* "Advice, How-To and Miscellaneous" book list in late 2002. It's all connected: our decisions now and our destiny later. A nice gift for anyone, especially those needing a good pick-me-up—that is, for ALL of us at some time or another!

***Pathways: Finding God in the Present Moment*** by Jean Maalouf, ACTA Publications, Chicago: 2000 (\$9.95). [95 pp.] ISBN 0-87946-215-9

This one is a little meatier than the previous one—a good one for perking each of us up more to the significance of the Now: “Jesus did not do away with suffering, nor did he explain it or justify it. Instead, he taught us to transform it into a source of joy, as one more way to experience intimacy with God. Isn’t this the meaning of the cross and the Resurrection?” [p. 13] A good book for those (of us) needing hope!

***Against An Infinite Horizon: The Finger of God in Our Everyday Lives*** by Ronald Rolheiser, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York: 2001 (\$16.95). [237 pp.] ISBN 0-8245-1965-5

If you liked this Rolheiser’s *The Holy Longing: The Search for A Christian Spirituality*, you’ll love this one even better: it has many stories which drive home his points. Of these last 3 books on God in the here-and-now, if Wilkinson is meaty and Maalouf is meatier, then Rolheiser is the meatiest. As he writes at the very outset of the book, “there is in the lives of every one of us a conspiracy of accidents that might aptly be called divine providence.” [p. 9]

***Praying Through Our Lifetraps: A Psycho-Spiritual Path to Freedom*** by John J. Cecero, S.J., Resurrection Press, Totowa, New Jersey: 2002 (\$9.95). [126 pp.] ISBN 1-878718-70-3

Jesuit Fr. John Cecero is on the faculty at Fordham. This psycho spiritual book which he began writing on September 11, 2001 brings his presentations on “lifetraps” to everyone: “Help! I Can’t Handle Life on My Own,” “Will Anyone Ever Recognize MY Needs?” “I Can’t Slow Down,” and “Spiritual Direction” are 4 of the 10 chapter titles. The book delivers!

***Father Mychal Judge: An Authentic American Hero*** by Michael Ford, Paulist Press, Mahwah NJ: 2002 (\$19.95). [203 pp.] ISBN 0-8091-0552-7

This 9/11 fire chaplain’s prayer: ““Lord, take me where you want me to go, let me meet who you want me to meet, tell me what to say, and keep me out of the way.”” [p.18]

***God’s World and Our Place in It*** by Fulton J. Sheen, Sophia Institute Press, Manchester NH: 2003 (\$12.95). [159 pp.] ISBN 1-928832-78-4 (pbk.: alk. paper)

A reprint of one of our 6<sup>th</sup> diocesan bishop’s many books. “Divinity,” he writes, “is always where you least expect to find it.” [p. 6]

***Confession: Doorway to Forgiveness*** by Jim Forest, Orbis Books, Maryknoll NY: 2002 (\$15.00). [168 pp.] ISBN 1-57075-386-5

A shot-in-the-arm view of Penance through the eyes of an Orthodox confessor: “A thought that is concealed has great power over us.” [p.17]

***A Concise Guide to Catholic Social Teaching*** by Kevin E. McKenna, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame IN: 2002 (\$12.95). [160 pp.] ISBN 0-87793-979-9

Written by the current pastor of St. Cecilia's Church just north of us, this book is great for all Social Ministry Committee members and, indeed, for *anyone* to read and discuss. "God has a plan for humanity" [p. 72], and it's in this book!

***Living Peace: A Spirituality of Contemplation and Action*** by John Dear, Doubleday, New York: 2001 (\$19.95). [227 pp.] ISBN 0-385-49827-6

"Each one of us wrestles with our own demons. The daily challenge is to befriend those demons, embrace our true selves, make friends with ourselves, disarm our hearts, and accept in peace who we are." [p. 11] Dear is a person of peace to the n<sup>th</sup> degree!

***Preacher as Risk Taker*** by Richard Hart, O.F.M. Cap., The Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN: 2003 (\$9.95). [109 pp.] ISBN 0-8146-2147-3

A good primer for the rookie on the Liturgy Committee and a good review for the vet in the pulpit: the "test of a good homily is not how much the listeners remember, but rather what effect it had on them." [p. 23]

***Pope John XXIII: Model and Mentor for Leaders*** by Rev. Bob (Bernard R.) Bonnot, Ph.D., Society of St. Paul (Alba House), New York: 2003 (\$22.95). [286 pp.] ISBN 0-8189-0916-1

This one was hard to put down. Each chapter ends with several "Questions for You from John's Model." This book would be an excellent reflection tool (one chapter per session) for any support group or parish study group "Effective leaders communicate their vision not only in words and dry plans but in symbolic forms that capture the imagination and engage the energies of those who need to be involved." [p. 267]

***Best Practices from America's Best Churches*** ed. by Paul Wilkes and Marty Minchin, Paulist Press, Mahwah NJ: 2003 (\$16.95). [269 pp.] ISBN 0-8091-4135-3

Fr. Thomas McGread, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi in Wichita, Kansas writes in his chapter titled "The Stewardship Way of Life:" "When I left that parish of two thousand families, the average collection was \$84,500 per week. We had enough for a free Catholic education for every one of our kids, enough to fund our social outreach, and enough to take care of the normal needs of a parish." [p. 34] A good book of examples to prompt discussion (and dreaming) for anyone on Council, on any of our committees, or on Sunday mornings out in the pew!

***Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer—Revised and Updated Edition*** by Richard Rohr, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York: 2003 (\$16.95). [187 pp.] ISBN 0-8245-1995-7

"The last experience of God is frequently the greatest obstacle to the next experience of God. We make an absolute out of it and use it to strengthen our ego, to self-aggrandize and self-congratulate." [p.52] Rohr's words can be applied to the sphere of our personal positions at work and in life: sometimes when all is great, it can make us fearful of moving to anything else because we can't imagine it could be any better.

***When the Lion Roars: A Primer for the Unsuspecting Mystic*** by Stephen J. Rosetti, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame IN: 2003 (\$11.95). [151 pp.] ISBN 0-87793-985-3

“‘Surprise’ is one of the hallmarks of a true manifestation of the divine.” [p. 118] Rosetti’s keen insight is recognized on a daily basis in some of our daily lives: there is a surprise around every corner!

***We Thank You, God, for These: Blessings and Prayers for Family Pets*** by Anthony F. Chiffolo and Rayner W. Hesse, Jr., Paulist Press, Mahwah NJ: 2003 (\$16.95). [192 pp.] ISBN 0-8091-4125-6

Whether you feel like praising God as you relish your young pet’s ambitious antics or are in need of a blessing for your dog or cat that is about to be put down due to sickness in its old age, this book has prayers and reflections for you. As the authors write: “Traditionally, people who have lost their pets have had nowhere to take their grief, no catharsis for their emotional pain, no way to bring closure to their loss.” [p. 69] Now they do.

***Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope*** by Joan D. Chittister, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids MI: 2003 (\$20.00). [111 pp.] ISBN 0-8028-1216-3

“It is a great burden to be perfect. The fear of failure skulks around the perimeters of hubris with irritating constancy.” [p. 66] The author’s reflections offer great insight, comfort and companionship amidst whatever struggles the reader may be experiencing.

***Still Called by Name: Why I Love Being a Priest*** by Dominic Grassi, Loyola Press, Chicago: 2003 (\$19.95). [189 pp.] ISBN 0-8294-1715-X

“We priests receive more attention on a Sunday morning than most of the rest of the world gets in an entire workweek.” [p. 175] These reflections by this Midwest priest offer both humorous and touching views into the life of a parish priest.

***Enjoy Your Precious Life: Spiritual Joy through Faith and Will-Training*** by John T. Catoir, JCD, Society of St. Paul (Alba House), New York: 2003 (\$12.95) [289 pp.] ISBN 0-8189-0937-4

This book by the former director of The Christophers (1978-1995) is truly a shot in the arm. With all that is on the plate of any of us of late, it is a pleasure to be reminded of what is truly most important, for us and for our people. “Father James Moroney, a liturgist for the American Catholic Bishops, wrote this interesting commentary, *‘It doesn’t matter if you have a presider who is a professional liturgist, or even one who understands what the liturgy is all about theologically or ritually. What we need is a priest who believes in loving God.’*” [p. 257] What might Fr. Moroney write about what we need in the minds and hearts of those of us out in the pews?

***The Catholic Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Finding Hope for Its Future in the Wisdom of its Past***, edited by Rev. Michael J. Himes, Liguori Publications, Liguori MO: 2004 (\$12.95). [130 pp.] ISBN 0-7648-1147-9

This is a good book which is really a collection of six essays by six different theologians. They presented their essays as talks to a group of over 500 people on May 31, 2003 (bishops, an abbot, monks, priests, lay women and men, religious men and women, and parish ministers) who had gathered to explore the history of the Church. A snippet of each theologian's writing is presented here:

(1) *What Can We Learn From The Church In The New Testament?* by Rev. Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., of the Weston School of Theology—He writes that “the New Testament, especially Paul’s epistles, shows us that crisis and sin have been part of the Church’s history, and that the paschal mystery can work forgiveness and reconciliation even in the midst of scandal” (p. 8). Salient words for the Church of today!

(2) *What Can We Learn From The Church In The First Millennium?* by Rev. Michael J. Buckley, S.J., of Boston College—“There is nothing in the first thousand years of the history of the Church to suggest that the primacy of the Roman See should entitle or require its occupant to determine who is to be the bishop in every see of the Church” (p. 19). As late as “1914, 73 percent of the world’s bishops had *not* been appointed by the Holy See” (p. 110). Isn’t history fascinating!

(3) *What Can We Learn From The Medieval Church?* by Dr. Catherine M. Mooney of the Weston Jesuit School of Theology—She writes that a mixed form of government “including the pope, bishops, and the laity, is not only in order, but well supported by the Church’s earliest traditions and a long line of theological reflection” (p. 51). Perhaps the next Vatican Council may move in this direction!

(4) *What Can We Learn From The Tridentine And Baroque Church?* by Rev. Thomas E. O’Meara, O.P., of the University of Notre Dame—“The specificity of the presbyter lies no longer solely in the power to consecrate bread and wine but to act in various ways in the power of the risen Christ, precisely for and in Christ as the head of his body” (p. 60). A point for reflection and further discussion!

(5) *What Can We Learn From The Church In The Nineteenth Century?* by Rev. Michael J. Himes, of Boston College—Himes writes that “often in the Church we may not know how to say rightly what we believe, but we certainly recognize when it is said wrongly” (p. 72). He concludes his essay with three suggestions for today’s Church.

(6) *What Can We Learn From Vatican II?* by Dr. Richard R. Gaillardetz of the University of Toledo—“One of the crucial reasons why Vatican II succeeded was Pope John XXIII’s confidence in the bishops” (p. 92). How are we doing today?

The book concludes with 27 pages of the panel discussion which ended the day’s gathering. A good book for a Faith Group’s discussion!

***Songs of Summer Grace: A Teacher’s Prayer Journal*** by Constance L. Goonan, iUniverse, Inc., New York: 2004, \$11.95, 89 pp. ISBN 0-595-32643-9

This local author shares in this “psalm journal” 33 Songs of Teaching, 11 Songs of a Teacher, and 26 Songs of God’s Children which mean to convey to her peer public school teachers how God CAN remain in the public school setting. The 3 R’s of teaching are seen in Song #19 now to be 3 M’s: “Modeling ... Molding ... Mentoring” (p. 24).

***Soul Sisters: Women in Scripture Speak to Women Today*** by Edwina Gateley, Orbis Books, Maryknoll: 2002, \$20.00, 131 pp. ISBN 1-57075-443-8

Using the magnificent artwork of American portraitist Louis Glanzman as a springboard, Edwina Gateley translates his images of twelve women from the New Testament into poetry. As founder of a movement which sends lay missionaries to three continents, and of a residential and outreach program for women in prostitution, the author puts in this Orbis book from Maryknoll's press a powerful portrayal of the inner ponderings and grapplings-with-angst that were projectedly theirs. "But I must look again, sister, impelled by your eyes—brighter than the glinting coins, moist with incipient tears, shining and reflecting a wisdom born of anguish." [p. 41, from "The Widow's Mite"]

***The Lost Art of Walking on Water: Reimagining the Priesthood*** by Michael Heher, Paulist Press, New York: 2004, \$14.95, 178 pp. ISBN 0-8091-4270-8

"A flock has to be going somewhere, and sooner or later even servant-leaders must lead" (p. 127)! This former Vicar for Priests in the Diocese of Orange gives much on which to dwell—for anyone desiring more reflection on the priesthood of our Church!

***We Worship: A Guide to the Catholic Mass*** by Oscar Lukefahr, C.M., Liguori, Liguori: 2004 \$9.95, 149 pp. ISBN 0-7648-1212-2

I strongly recommend Lukefahr's *We Worship* as a text to reflect on for anyone desiring a greater appreciation of the various parts of the Mass. There are discussion questions and activities at the end of each chapter: "At Mass we touch the divine, we reach through the veil that separates time from eternity and grasp the hand of Jesus" (p. 12).

***You Did It For Me: Care of Your Neighbor As a Spiritual Practice*** by Kevin E. McKenna, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame IN: 2005, \$12.95, 168 pp. ISBN 1-59471-039-2

This wonderfully reflective work by this veteran local author offers much pastoral insight for us all. As Fr. Kevin states right in the Introduction: "I present these themes for reflection as a fellow pilgrim and accept them as a challenge to my own spiritual growth and development, realizing that I have many miles to go in my own journey as a disciple of the Lord Jesus" (p. 18). With its 7 chapters, this would make a great monthly study component for Social Ministry or other committee meetings over the course of a year.

***Here On The Way To There: A Catholic Perspective On Dying And What Follows*** by William H. Shannon, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2005, \$12.95, 153 pp. ISBN 0-86716-596-0

Humorous ("Heaven seems to be the only available way of avoiding hell." p. 116) and comforting ("Death is finding a place to dwell in that is truly home." p. 123), this renowned local author paves the way for dealing with our own finalities.

***Good Old Doctor Mac*** by Robert F. McNamara, Devon Press, Utica NY: 2004, \$12.95, 115 pp. ISBN 0-9701516-1-6

Many of our parish priests had this local author for church history at seminary. Now, through his magnificent lens, we see the tree not far from which this apple fell. His writing style is most engaging, a pure and insightful delight for our own reading. He also well-capsulizes our beloved Southern Tier metropolis of Corning: never very large, it always “remained wholesome and imaginative” (p. 20).

***Watching My Friend Die: The Honest Death of Bob Schwartz*** by Mark Hare, ACTA {Assisting Christians To Act} Publications {The American Catholic Experience series}, Chicago: 2005, \$9.95, 143 pp. ISBN 0-87946-284-1

Most of us know the author from the morning Democrat and Chronicle. Hare recalls a song Bob Schwartz sang at times such as one’s approaching death at a young age. “*Half a Hundred Years* was a tribute to many of the priests he had known over the years. Its author hungers for more time and struggles to accept God’s will” (p. 73—the lyrics to the song follow there in the book).

***Forgotten Among the Lilies: Learning to Love Beyond Our Fears*** by Ronald Rolheiser, Doubleday, New York: 2005, \$21.95, 315 pp. ISBN 0-385-51231-7

This Rolheiser book in some parts echoes some of Mark Hare’s writing about Bob Schwartz’s death in the book above: “We become obsessed with the need for self-expression, with the need for achieving something that is unique and lasting. We fear dying without leaving a permanent mark” (p. 20). (similar to p. 57 of Hare’s book)

***From Maintenance to Mission: Evangelization and the Revitalization of the Parish*** by Robert S. Rivers, CSP, Paulist Press, New York: 2005, \$22.95, 268 pp. ISBN 0-8091-4318-6

This book was so good that we ordered 35 copies for every member of our parish staff and council 2 years ago. “It is better, from God’s perspective, to fail at the mission he has given us than to succeed at one that is not his will” (p. 198).

***Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul*** by Tony Hendra, Random House Trade Paperback Edition (with Reading Guide), New York: 2005, \$13.95, 271 pp. ISBN 0-8129-7234-1

This engagingly written autobiographical text by Tony Hendra first came out in 2004. In this 2005 paperback edition, a special Reading Group Guide is included at the back of the book. Tony’s confession (after 28 years), pages 226-229, is most moving. Fr. Joe says to him at the end: “Tony dear, you will only be able to love when you understand how much you are loved. You are loved, dear, with a limitless . . . fathomless . . . all-embracing love. (p. 229).

***A Voice of Their Own: The Authority of the Local Parish*** by William A. Clark, Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN: 2005, \$24.95, 200 pp. ISBN 0-8146-5218-2

This pontifical doctor of systematic theology draws on Rahner, Kasper, Ratzinger before he was Benedict XVI. The author writes that, if “we can conceive of the universal church and the local churches as mutually present to one another, then the discovery of a genuine authority on the part of local communities does not have to diminish any other authority present in the church under another aspect” (p. 135). Also: “I have aimed to make only one basic claim in this book—that local church communities possess a proper type of authority that makes an essential contribution to the life of the universal church” (p. 187).

***Parish Priest: Father Michael McGivney and American Catholicism*** by Douglas Brinkley and Julie M. Fenster, Harper Collins Publishers, New York: 2006, \$24.95, 211 pp. ISBN 0-06-077684-6

No, this book is *not* a 211-page infomercial about the K of C. Rather, it is really a wonderfully written history of a priest who accomplished quite a bit in his 38 years of life. Historically intriguing and punctuated with occasional wit and humor, it provides a whole new way of looking at the Knights and their founding. “In a less liberal diocese, he would not have dared make any such suggestion” as advocating the creation of a fraternal group outside the control of the Church proper (p. 107). His main concern was the insurance the organization would provide for widows and orphans in a time when there was little public assistance for either. “Michael McGivney was interested least of all in the ritual aspect of the society—the hierarchy of degrees, the design of regalia, the choreography of ceremonies” (p. 120). “As important, though, is that other legacy of his life, as he felt called upon to live it. It is expressed quite simply in the fact that a parish priest is all that he wanted to be” (p. 202). You will not be disappointed with this text! It is a window to our past in American Church history.

***How to Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job: An Invitation to Oblate Life*** by Bro. Benet Tvedten, Paraclete Press, Brewster MA: 2006, \$14.95, 113 pp. ISBN 1-55725-449-4

This delightful little work gives the background of Benedictine Oblates (some of whom are diocesan priests, others of whom aren't even Catholic) in an informative and witty way. It has points of wisdom for us all: “Don't seek God elsewhere. Seek God now, right here, in the routine things that have to be done. Find God in the ordinary circumstances of your life.” (p. 23)

***Your Spiritual Garden: Tending to the Presence of God—A Six-Week Daily Life Retreat*** by Pegge Bernecker, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2006, \$12.95, 143 pp. ISBN 0-86716-716-5

If you want to give yourself (or another) a wonderful 6-week retreat (in Lent or anytime), this is a great new resource. Regarding the movings-on in our lives, she quotes Pope John XXIII upon the death of Pope Paul VI: “We are not on earth as museum-keepers, but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life and to prepare a glorious future. The Pope is dead, long live the Pope.”

***From Wild Man to Wise Man: Reflections on Male Spirituality*** by Richard Rohr with Jos. Martos, St. Anth. Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2005, \$12.95, 180 pp. ISBN 0-86716-740-8

This new re-working of an earlier book of Rohr is well worth the read. A helpful insight: “. . . for every retreat in your life, there should also be at least one ‘confront’ . . . . A lot of spiritual energy is stored in several unique places: loneliness, silence and fear. You can find that energy by going there and staying there.” (p. 114)

***Amending Dreams: Reflections and Meditations of a Widow*** by Joyce M. George, iUniverse Inc., New York: 2005, \$16.95, 177 pp. ISBN 0-595-36913-8

“Very few things in life are extremely urgent, but many things are to be treasured.” (p. 143) This self-help book for young widows was written by yet another local author. She offers many practical pointers for those who find themselves in this state.

***Vatican II Today: Calling Catholics to Holiness and Service*** ed. by Judy Ball and Joan McKamey, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2005, 10.95, 115 pp. ISBN 0-86716-670-3

This collection of 12 essays (2 by Rochester’s own Monsignor William Shannon) is a group study tool (with questions provided) regarding our Church. Bishop Robert F. Morneau writes: “Having too many irons in the fire makes for an unbalanced life and can cause serious health problems—physical, psychological and spiritual. . . . priests should not be put in a position that will lead to failure.” (p. 54)

***The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*** by Eckhart Tolle, New World Library, Novato CA: 2004 {paperback}, \$14.00, 235 pp. ISBN 1-57731-480-8

Fr. Neal Quartier or Syracuse recommended this work by Tolle as one to help us keep our focus (amidst all our busyness) in the Now. Isn’t it true that each of us can be prone to see the eternal realities in which we believe and which we teach to others as somehow being “out there” and “in the future of eternity?” As Tolle writes: “There is nothing you can ever do or attain that will get you closer to salvation than it is at this moment.” (p. 147) A good book to keep us rooted in the present.

***Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*** by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Hyperion, New York: 2005 {10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition}, \$14.95, 282 pp. ISBN 1-4013-0778-7

This book was most pleasant, and yet most challenging, to read. Things certainly make more sense and fall into place when we take the time to dwell sufficiently upon them. And when we bring this dwelling to our prayer time, we no longer see the basis of our beliefs as coming from outside ourselves but as being already within: “The whole point of mindfulness-based stress reduction—and for that matter health promotion in its largest sense—is to challenge and encourage people to become their own authorities, to take more responsibility for their own lives, their own bodies, their own health.” (pp. 191-192)

***Live, Laugh, and Be Blessed*** by Anne Bryan Smollin, Sorin Books, Notre Dame IN: 2006 (\$12.95). [123 pp.]  
ISBN 1-893732-98-3

This is a book of delightful spiritual humor by a Sister in Albany!

***Deep Conversion/Deep Prayer*** by Thomas Dubay, S.M., Ignatius Press, San Francisco: 2006 (\$11.95). [122 pp.]  
ISBN 1-58617-117-8

“[T]he most important of all human activities is to be immersed in contemplative intimacy with God.” (p. 73)

***Loyal Dissent: Memoir of a Catholic Theologian*** by Charles E. Curran, Georgetown University Press, Washington DC: 2006, \$26.95, 259 pp. ISBN 978-1-58901-087-1

In this most recent work of Fr. Charlie’s (baptized right here in Peace of Christ Parish), he collects his past—both as our brother diocesan and as international theologian—and lays it out for all to see, to ponder, and to assess on merits quite its own. In its pages, one will find Mortimer Adler’s definition of the lecture system as applied to the North American College (p. 7), Fr. Curran’s reception of a papal medal (p. 13), his being the first to receive a doctorate *summa cum laude* from the Alphonsian in Rome (p. 16), and his *fifth* mark of the church as proffered while teaching at St. Bernard’s (p. 19). Noting that “it is possible for people in the church to disagree strongly on specific issues but still share the common bond of faith and grace, and even friendship” (pp. 52-53), Fr. Curran sees “dissent” to be “a positive force and need not carry negative connotations. . . . [It] means speaking the truth in love, and that has always been my intention” (p. 68). Fr. Curran holds parish priests in high regard (p. 125 and p. 259), mentions a humorous anecdote related to our St. Ambrose (p. 129), and notes that “Catholics have often made the common error of thinking that tradition stopped fifty years before any one of us was born” (p. 191). He speaks of *epikeia* (p. 196), what *really* depresses him (p. 225), and the Paschal Mystery (p. 245). “There are times when one cannot passively suffer, but must speak out boldly and resist the wrong that is being done” (p. 245) is a drive that hopefully motivates us all when injustices land on our doorstep. This one is a page-turner.

***A Concise Guide to Your Rights in the Catholic Church*** by Kevin E. McKenna, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame: 2006, \$12.95, 125 pp. ISBN 1-59471-079-1

Another book from one of our hottest local authors, “This book distills in a practical format the rights of Catholics now recognized in the Roman Catholic Church. Its purpose is really twofold: to familiarize Catholics with the rights and obligations written into Church law for all its members and to outline and demystify the procedures that are in place for the vindication of these rights” (p. 16). Kevin points out: “Not only did the Council recognize and encourage use of this right of expression of opinion, it insisted that it be done for the good of the Church (LG 37), if all the Christian faithful are to be ‘fellow-workers for the truth’ (3 Jn 8). The right to express opinions should always be exercised with prudence and in charity.” (p. 33) A resource for every bookshelf in our parish!

***Spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Experiencing God in the Catholic Tradition—A Symposium with Rev. Michael J. Buckley, SJ; Dr. Colleen M. Griffith; Rev. Michael J. Himes; Sr. Mary Ann Hinsdale, IHM; Rev. Kenan B. Osborne, OFM; Msgr. John J. Strykowski*** ed. by Dr. Richard W. Miller II, Liguori, Liguori MO: 2006, \$14.95, 119 pp. ISBN 0-7648-1385-4

This is a collection of the six talks given on June 4, 2005 at the Third Annual Conference on The Catholic Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and their common topic is “Spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” The editor notes in his introduction, “as Pope Benedict XVI has suggested, that there are as many ways to God as there are men and women” (p. vii). The authors address the six dyads of “Spirituality and. . .”: religion, the triune God, the incarnate God, the human creature, redemption, and Eucharist. This is a whole spiritual conference wrapped up in 119 pages!

***Sounding the Silence*** by John Skinner, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago: 2004, \$10.95, 120 pp. ISBN 1-56854-565-7

Inspired by the Carthusian tradition of silent prayer, this text offers four 2-page meditations (a reflection page and a related prayer-poem page) per month, September-August. It would make a good weekly meditation guide or a wonderful gift for teachers or volunteers. If you have a weekly meeting of any type, you could use one page to open and the other to close. “. . .I hold prayer to be the most important human activity that can engage us.” (p. xii)

***What is the Point of Being a Christian?*** by Timothy Radcliffe, OP, Burns & Oates, London: 2005 {Reprinted 2006 [twice]}, \$16.95, 212 pp., ISBN 0-86012-369-3

This text urges our own *kenosis* (self-emptying) as we minister among one another: “People often come to us carrying heavy burdens, with lives not in accord with the Church’s teaching, the fruit of complex histories. We have nothing to say at all until people know that God rejoices in their very existence, which is why they exist at all.” (p. 59)

***My Life with the Saints*** by James Martin, SJ, Loyola Press, Chicago: 2006, \$22.95, 414 pp., ISBN 0-8294-2001-0

“God’s invitation to live out our unique vocations is part of what makes the world so rich” (p. 388). Though saints provide models, we are each first to be our own best person. This associate editor of *America* magazine writes with insight, humor and conviction. You’ll be surprised how fast 414 pages go!

***Seven Last Words for Seven Weeks: Praying with Jesus on the Cross*** by Mary Sweeney, Paulist Press, New York: 2007, \$6.95, 61 pp., ISBN 978-0-8091-4436-5

If you don’t have a Lenten book to read, this could be it. “The format is meant to enable participants to carry one *word* with them for a week, then have an opportunity to talk about how it helped them in prayer.” (p. 2) {In Peace of Christ Parish, we use it as part of our 3-hour period on Good Friday: Stations at Noon, Seven Last Words at 1:00, Service at 2:00.}

***An Archbishop for the People: The Life of Edward J. Hanna*** by Richard Gribble, CSC, Paulist Press, New York: 2006, \$24.95, 292 pp., ISBN 978-0-8091-4405-1  
Co-dedicated to Dr. Jeffrey Burns (archivist of the Archdiocese of San Francisco) and to our own “Father Robert McNamara, archivist and historian of the Diocese of Rochester” (p. v), Hanna is portrayed as the right person for his time and for his priests: “When making parish assignments, he willingly took specific needs into account, and took particular care that priests not live alone for any length of time. He was more than generous in granting sabbatical leaves and periods of rest for priests, especially if a previous assignment had been particularly difficult....” (p. 86)

***Praying with the Benedictines: A Window on the Cloister*** by Guerric DeBona, OSB, Paulist Press, New York: 2007, \$7.97, 55 pp., ISBN 978-0-8091-4443-3  
This new little book collects many gems from the treasury of Benedictine thought on which for us to dwell. Given its number of pages, one could ponder a page a day during the Easter Season, or even but a page a week for an entire year. Just to share three particular nuggets:

Mary Margaret Funk, OSB comments on the connectedness of the parts of our being where she writes that “Bodily work relieves pressures on the mind. Since the major symptom of the malady of *acedia* is that I am not able to pray anymore, work with my hands may help me be productive until my mind returns to concentration. My body restores rest to my overactive mind, and returns them to balance. Work is the back door to pure prayer. For a proficient practitioner, who is working mindfully, there is not distinction between work and prayer. Prayer is work and work is prayer.” (p. 14)

Then for those days when everything seems to be going wrong, Abbess Cécile Bruyère, OSB, writes: “No one ever arrived at sanctity except by that complete and absolute overturning of their projects, their plans, their arrangements. The remarkable thing about the religious life is that, unless we actually break our vows, we become saints either willingly or by force.” (p. 29)

The editor of this collection himself (who is the director of spiritual formation and associate professor of homiletics at St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in Indiana) writes about Holy Thursday: “This is a night without words. We only have memory. Tomorrow we will lie flat on the ground because without Christ there is, in the end, nothing left to say . . . This is a memorial of the act of divine humility that asks only that we do the same. What we do is in remembrance of him who remembered us into this moment.... (pp. 43\44)

***Women in Church History: 21 Stories for 21 Centuries*** by Joanne Turpin, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2007, \$14.95, 214 pp., ISBN 978-0-86716-7764

From Prisca the Evangelist of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century to Sister Dorothy Stang, SSND from Ohio who was martyred in Brazil on February 12, 2005 in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the author recounts the life of one woman saint per century. It is illuminative reading and one could easily read one story each day of any 3-week period. Interestingly, the death of Adelaide, the saintly Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, “came just two weeks before the start of the year 1000. The approach of the millennium brought with it a pervasive mood of fear among the common people that the end of the world was in sight” (pp. 94-95). Sounds like a little touch of “Y1K.”

***Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*** by Pope Benedict XVI, Doubleday, New York: 2007, \$24.50, 374 pp., ISBN 978-0-385-52341-7

This first book by Pope Benedict since his becoming pope focuses us on the Person at the center of our faith, Jesus of Nazareth. Part of the book was written before Joseph Ratzinger became pope, and for *all* of it he emphasizes right from the beginning that “It goes without saying that this book is in no way an exercise of the magisterium, but is solely an expression of my personal search ‘for the face of the Lord’ (cf. Ps 27:8). Everyone is free, then, to contradict me” (pp. xxiii-xxiv). His meditations on the Beatitudes are excellent.

***Crossing the Desert: Learning to Let Go, See Clearly, and Live Simply*** by Robert J. Wicks, Sorin Books, Notre Dame IN: 2007, \$18.95, 176 pp., ISBN 978-1-933495-08-8

Wicks himself writes: “*Crossing the Desert* is about the journey that all of us are called to take—*especially* when we feel lost, under great stress, or during times of desolation. And it is about discovering the true freedom we need to make it successfully” (pp. 15-16). Also, “when grace is present, even our vulnerabilities can teach rather than simply deflate us” (p. 116), and he gives a guide to choosing a spiritual mentor as well (p. 132). He also quotes Parker Palmer’s *Let Your Life Speak*: ““When it is clear—if I have eyes to see—that the life I am living is not the same as the life that wants to live in me...I [start] to understand that it is indeed possible to live a life other than one’s own...I had simply found a “noble” way to live a life that was not my own, a life spent imitating heroes instead of listening to my heart”” (pp. 163-164). A soul-searcher!

***Living your Strengths: Discover Your God-Given Talents and Inspire Your Community—Catholic Edition*** by Albert L. Winseman, D.Min., Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., Curt Liesveld, M.Div., Gallup Press, New York: 2006, \$17.00, 260 pp., ISBN 978-1-59562-012-5

At the diocese’s May 5, 2007 Stewardship Day in Victor, this book was suggested for helping parishioners identify the best match of their gifts for service in the parish. “The fundamental building block of any strength is talent. When you enhance a talent by adding the right skills and useful knowledge, you have created a strength. Again, to live your \ strengths, you must first identify your talents. By taking the Clifton Strengths Finder, you identified your top five themes of talent—your ‘Signature Themes’” (pp. 7\8). A code inside the book’s jacket lets you log on for yourself.

***The Practical Prophet: Pastoral Writings*** by Bishop Ken Untener, Paulist Press, Mahwah NJ: 2007, \$19.95, 278 pp., ISBN 978-0-8091-4429-7

Words of wisdom to address so much: “How does one respond to those who ask why we belong to this imperfect church? My response would be fairly modest, as was Peter’s. When Jesus asked the Twelve if they wanted to leave, Simon Peter answered, ‘Master, to whom shall we go?’ ¶ Where else shall I go? Here is where I was born into the community of disciples, and where I continue to be nurtured in the faith. Here is where Christ has been mediated to me. Here is where the Spirit has been poured out upon me. Here is where I am in touch with Tradition and rich traditions. Here is where I find the fullness of the sacramental life. ¶ To be sure, I have also found here failure, imperfection, and sin. I have found here sexism, authoritarianism, and most of the *isms* I find in the world. But if the church is a seed of the kingdom as I believe it is, then there is within this seed the force to overcome the sins of the world” (pp. 221\222).

***The Lord’s Prayer*** by Gerald O’Collins, S.J., Paulist Press, New York: 2007, \$14.95, 124 pp., ISBN 978-0-8091-4488-4

A brand new reflection on a prayer so automatically prayed—and a good source of reflections: “The plea for forgiveness in the Lord’s Prayer rests on three presuppositions. First, we all have our debts.... ¶ Then a second presupposition lies behind the petition for forgiveness. There is *no self-forgiveness*, since sin involves not only damage to ourselves but also (and even more) some kind of breakdown in our personal relationship with God and usually with on another.... ¶ Third, the Lord’s Prayer implies a solidarity in seeking, accepting and expressing forgiveness” (pp. 92\93).

***Just One Year: A Global Treasury of Prayer and Worship*** ed. by Timothy Radcliffe OP, Orbis Books, Maryknoll NY: 2006, \$20.00, 275 pp., ISBN 978-1-57075-714-3 (pbk.)

This book’s 295 reflections (grouped according to church season) are springboards for fostering our personal relationship to the divine—even when we may get in the way: “God is creatively present, invisibly opening doors to the future even when we close them” (p. 51).

***The Mass Is Never Ended: Rediscovering Our Mission to Transform the World*** by Gregory F. Augustine Pierce, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame IN: 2007, \$10.95, 127 pp., ISBN 978-1-59471-069-8

This is a great book for groups (with questions after each chapter). With regard to how best we can be good stewards and disciples in our Church, it gives guidance for our posture at the end of each Mass: “Leave the church as if you had been shot out of a cannon, embrace your mission to make this world a better world, and develop your own spirituality of work to sustain you” (p. 111). Pierce is president of ACTA Publications.

***Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change*** by Melissa J. Wilde, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ: 2007, \$35.00, 141 pp., ISBN 978-0-691-11829-1

The author's goal is "to take the rich and complex history of the Council, and re-examine it through a sociological lens—to discover the factors that explain its outcome and in doing so, identify the factors that determine religious change more generally" (p. 2). Revelations abound in this book about this historical event of renewal!

***The Battle For Rights in the United States Catholic Church*** by Kevin E. McKenna, Paulist Press, Mahwah NJ: 2007, \$19.95, 168 pp., ISBN 978-0-8091-4493-8

Episcopal authority never had it so bad! Yet the 19<sup>th</sup> century counterparts of our priests today (and the Holy See as the "balancer" in disciplinary issues involving bishops and priests" [p. 3]) emerge from Fr. Kevin's pages relatively unscathed. Further, we read here about a fascinating 19<sup>th</sup> century priest author who writes anonymously under the pseudonym of "Jus" in a clergy newsletter of that era: "The element of mystery is always a potent factor in arousing attention: it not only excites curiosity, but stimulates contemplation and energizes reflection" (p. 85). Unlike Fr. Kevin's earlier "Concise Guide" series books, this one is filled with murder, mayhem and intrigue—a real page-turner for your nights' bedstand!

***Soul Provider: Spiritual Steps to Limitless Love*** by Edward L. Beck, Doubleday, New York: 2007, \$22.95, 290 pp., ISBN 978-0-385-51552-8

Based on St. John Climacus' *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, this book meditates on each of the ladder's 30 steps. Beck's personal stories will engage you, make you laugh, make you cry—and there are 4 reflection/discussion questions at the end of each step's chapter if you want to read this in a group. Beck calls Climacus' steps "a clearcut structure for a book on spiritual mastery" (p. 5). What more could we need?

***Make Room For God: Clearing Out the Clutter*** by Susan K. Rowland, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2007 (\$10.95). [128 pp.] ISBN 978-0-86716-778-8

A great book for the start of any year or any time of renewal or personal resolve. Together with *Soul Provider* above, these two books would be great for any Lent.

***Sacred Space: The Prayer Book 2008***—from the website [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie) by Jesuit Communication Centre, Ireland, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame IN: 2007 (\$14.95). [379 pp.] ISBN 978-1-59471-138-1

This book comes out each year from Ave Maria Press. It gives meditations for each day, largely based on one of the Mass texts from each day's liturgy.

(As of 1/1/07, new books have had 13-digit ISBN numbers with the first 3 digits being 978— see <http://www.isbn.org/converterpub.asp> re how to convert 10-digit to 13-digit ISBNs.)

***How Big Is Your God? The Freedom to Experience the Divine*** by Paul Coutinho, SJ, Loyola Press, Chicago: 2007 (\$18.95). [161 pp.] ISBN 978-0-8294-2481-2

As Edward Beck's *Soul Provider* was earlier recommended for daily Lenten reading, I strongly recommend this for daily Easter Season reading—for *anyone*. Its 48 daily 3-4 page chapters can be done between Easter and Pentecost. This Indian Jesuit's slant on things will stretch readers, but inspire them. Great for prayer groups! Too busy? "Chaos is often the shortest path to our spiritual core." (p. 143)

***Pope John Paul II's Gospel of Work: With Introduction and Commentary*** by William Droel, Twenty-Third Publications, New London CT: 2008 (\$16.95). [112 pp.] ISBN 978-1-58595-585-5

This book was produced by a former member of Peace of Christ Parish's St. James Church. Bill Droel is currently an instructor at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, Illinois, and Pastoral associate at Sacred Heart Church in Palos Hills. He is also a founder of the National Center for the Laity in Chicago. Papal documents can be rather dry, but Bill punctuates them every few pages with "For Reflection" sections which consist of a few comments on the passage being read and a few questions for discussion. This would be an ideal book for a group of workers (especially those in management) to use for a lunch hour prayer-discussion group.

***The Bible Made Easy: A Book-by-Book Introduction*** by Timothy P. Schehr, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2006 (\$16.95). [246 pp.] ISBN 978-0-86716-598-2

Bible Study programs will be encouraged in Year Two of *Spirit Alive*. A simple, albeit challenging, one would be to buy a good Bible and this book. Start on the feast of the Transfiguration (8/6/08) and read one book of the Bible each week. You'll conclude on the last week of 2009 (Year Two). Yes, it's a push. But think of all the times you've said (or heard others say) how nice it would be to read the *whole* Bible. This will get it done. Schehr takes each book of the Bible and—in just 4 pages or so—gives a summary of it, an outline of its structure, the main characters, the timeline of both its content and its authorship, reflection questions for group discussion, and three spiritual lessons from each book. A plan!

***Redeemed: A Spiritual Misfit Stumbles Toward God, Marginal Sanity, and the Peace That Surpasses All Understanding*** by Heather King, Viking, New York: 2008 (\$24.95). [238 pp.] ISBN 978-0-670-01863-5

Written by a lawyer-turned-writer who now is a commentator on NPR's *All Things Considered* and is a regular post-RCIA communicant at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Los Angeles, Heather King covers many bases starting with the same wonder as that of many new to the Church: "I had always secretly suspected that everyone but me had been handed a rule book at birth." (p. 12) Humorous, thorough, engaging—a winner!

***Founding Faith: Providence, Politics, and the Birth of Religious Freedom in America*** by Steven Waldman, Random House, New York: 2008 (\$26.00). [208 pp.] ISBN 978-1-4000-6437-3

Written by the former national editor of *U.S. News & World Report* and the current editor in chief, president, and co-founder of Beliefnet.com, we learn much about our country's religious roots from these pages. Ben Franklin "spent countless hours trying to find a path that connected him with the divine while avoiding the parts of religion he found repellent" (p. 23). John Adams wrote that "Church law enslaved people by 'reducing their minds to a state of sordid ignorance and staring timidity'" (p. 48). James Madison wrote "one of the most important documents in the history of American religious freedom his fifteen-point 'Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments'" (p. 119). Washington said in his farewell address: "'Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports'" (p. 162). And Thomas Jefferson, in a 1/1/1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists, wrote that "the American people had approved the Constitution 'thus building a wall of separation between Church & State'" even though these words "'appear in no official document'" (p. 173). Well-documented, this provides a good election year reminder of who we were when we began.

***Crazy Talk: A Not-So-Stuffy Dictionary of Theological Terms*** ed. by Rolf A. Jacobson, Augsburg Books, Minneapolis: 2008 (\$12.99). [183 pp.] ISBN 978-0-8066-8037-8

This little book—though more Lutheran in origin than Catholic—is one to have on your coffee table for interesting discussion-starting. Who says religion can't have a funny bone? Presented in a humorous format—e.g. from the Introduction: "Ever listened to two theologians talk? If so, we hope the damage wasn't permanent" (p. 1).—this text (gotten at our Catholic Newman Bookstore in Washington [[www.newmanbookstore.com](http://www.newmanbookstore.com)]) will get theological conversations off to interesting starts (we Catholics should have thought of this!):

- Absolution: "A series of words that, when spoken to a repentant sinner, result in that sinner's complete forgiveness—much to the chagrin of the self-righteous." (p. 3)
- Agnosticism: "The intellectual stance of doubting everything except one's own opinion." (p. 6)
- Council: "A huddle of the entire Church's bishops for the sake of clarifying some puzzle that was probably caused by one or more bishops." (p. 45)
- Inclusive Language: "The arrangement of the grammatical furniture in such a way that no one sits comfortably." (p. 94).
- Ministry: "An office instituted by God for work in God's world, the holders of which often spend too much time in their offices." (p. 116)
- Sermon: "A series of mono-, bi-, and polysyllabic sounds that (1) made more sense the night before, (2) can bore to death, and (3) can raise the dead to new life." (p. 159)
- Tongues (Speaking in): "An iftgay of the Olyhay Iritspay." (p. 173)
- Trinity: "In theological circles, the doctrine of the Trinity is like the 1975 World Series or the 1957 Chevrolet Bel-Air Hardtop—a classic and the embodiment of truth." (p. 175)

***Liberating the Bible: A Guide for the Curious and Perplexed*** by Linda M. MacCammon, Orbis Books, Maryknoll NY: 2008 (\$24.00). [256 pp.] ISBN 978-1-57075-775-4

Authored by a St. John Fisher College faculty member, this could be a good text for use in Year 2 of our *Spirit Alive* spiritual renewal in the diocese. There are “Questions for Reflection and Discussion” and additional “Recommended Reading” references at the end of each of the book’s 9 chapters (a chapter a month from September to May!). The author “aims first to make the Bible less intimidating and more accessible to all the Bible-curious” (p. 2) providing a good overview.

***The Paradox of Power: From Control to Compassion*** by Michael H. Crosby, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York: 2008 (\$19.95). [178 pp.] ISBN 978-0-8245-2470-8

Father Crosby led our Eastertime 2008 retreat on this theme here at Peace of Christ Parish. His “Power Chart” on page 8 outlines the 2 basic life paths of “The Way of Violence” and “The Way of Compassion.” The power we have is never neutral. It will either be positive or negative in all our relationships (p. 44). The book elucidates positive pathways for us all. A good refresher on what we heard last April.

***Sacred Compass: The Way of Spiritual Discernment*** by J. Brent Bill, Paraclete Press, Brewster MA: 2008 (\$19.95). [182 pp.] ISBN 978-1-55725-559-4

Though a Quaker, Bill’s book kept popping up in Catholic bookstores ‘til I bought it at Notre Dame Retreat House. His 3 stages in following one’s compass (“sensing, waiting, and acting” p. 69) guide discerners.

***Big Russ & Me—Father and Son: Lessons of Life*** by Tim Russert, Hyperion, New York: 2005 (\$13.95). [336 pp.] ISBN 1-4013-5965-5

I had received this book quite a while ago. When the author, NBC’s Tim Russert of *Meet the Press* fame, died on June 13<sup>th</sup> (2008), I dug it out of my “to read” pile and read it. Tim Russert was as real off camera as on it. Many will identify with his everyday existence in our neighboring Buffalo. You’ll find familiar references within its pages as well: Loblaws and Crystal Beach (pp. 32-35), Genesee Beer and Hemlock Lake (pp. 94-95), Luke Easter and our Rochester Red Wings (p. 108). Russert’s father-son relationship (with both his father and his son) will provide inspiration to gnaw on in one’s own parenting or offspring role. His seeing it as a “two-way street” reminds anyone in any relationship of the 50-50 (make that 100-100) nature of things when it comes to giving of one’s self on a daily basis. You’ll not be disappointed with this read.

***The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America*** by James M. O'Toole, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA: 2008 (\$27.95). [370 pp.] ISBN 978-0-674-02818-0

Our history as Catholics here in the states is rich indeed. Even way back in 1823, there was a bicameral-legislature type convention held at St. Finbar's Cathedral in Charleston, South Carolina involving 10 laymen in the House of the Laity and 4 priests in the House of the Clergy. They met separately, then together, to pass proposed legislation on to the bishop. (p. 51). The author quotes our Rochester Catholic paper in 1870 (pp. 131-132), explains how monsignors worldwide formed the court of the pope when the real court disappeared with the seizing of the Papal States (p. 137), quotes a 19<sup>th</sup> century pastor in Oswego, New York as he decries the lack of church organizations for men (p. 149), shares how Father McKenna (make that Father Charles Hyacinth McKenna) fostered Holy Name Society membership (p. 150), mentions local Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt (p. 247), and even shares some humor regarding earlier liturgical changes: "Some were shocked at the conclusion of the service to hear the priest say, in English now, 'Go, the Mass is ended,' to which they were expected to reply, 'Thanks be to God,' a statement that might be misinterpreted to imply that they had not been entirely happy about being there in the first place." (p. 209). An enjoyable read.

***A Grace Given*** by Kent Gilges, Cider Press Publishing, Canandaigua NY: 2008 (\$17.00). [260 pp.] ISBN 978-0-615-17626-0

This book grabs you right from the first page of the Intro: "This is a book about hope. And love. It is about sorrow, anguish, joy. It is about a dying child named Elie. Most of all, though, it is about hope" (p. 1). Written by a native-Zambian-now-Upstate-New-Yorker, I bought this book at Notre Dame Retreat House. Indeed, it was published not too far from there, right at Cider Press Publishing in Canandaigua, New York. Be sure you have a box of Kleenex™ nearby when you read it! He, a non-Catholic, quotes our 6<sup>th</sup> bishop: "There are not over a hundred people in the U.S. that hate the Catholic Church. There are millions, however, who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church" (p. 16). He also has his own words of wisdom: "I now know that desperation comes not because men \ suffer from loss or grief, but precisely because they are afraid to suffer and so fear to try anything. Suffering wakes us from the torpor that leads to desperation. Grief makes us aware enough to experience beauty and joy" (pp. 42\43). Their 6<sup>th</sup> child was named Avery for Avery Cardinal Dulles (p. 185). Well worth the read, especially for parishes with (or needing) a bereavement group.

***The Last Lecture*** by Randy Pausch, Hyperion, New York: 2008 (\$21.95). [206 pp.] ISBN 978-1-4013-2325-7

I won't belabor this one. His main point (posed 3 times on pages 52, 79 and 174) is worth the book: that "brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something." Long on the best seller list, this is a good book for ones just graduating or graduated as they head out into the work to make their mark.

***Finding the Monk Within: Great Monastic Values for Today*** by Edward C. Sellner, Hidden Spring Books, Mahwah NJ: 2008 (\$24.00). [272 pp.] ISBN 978-1-58768-048-9

Monks teach us elements for the spiritual development of Christian leaders (pp. 138-141) and about good monks (anchorites & cenobites) and bad monks (sarabaites & gyrovagues) (p. 220). Bought this one in the newly enlarged gift shop at the Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard (great books and great bread—well worth the drive!).

***Conversing with God in Scripture: A Contemporary Approach to Lectio Divina*** by Stephen J. Binz, The Word Among Us Press, Ijamsville MD: 2008 (\$11.95). [145 pp.]

ISBN 978-1-59325-126-0

Scripture “becomes a means for God to feed, heal, and love us” (p. 12). Excellent for our diocesan *Spirit Alive’s* move from Year 2 (2009) to Year 3 (2010): through lectio divina we evangelize ourselves (p. 95). Those who have discovered for themselves the rich resource that daily Bible reading can be (even just a few verses each day) will find this book to be helpful.

***The Shack: Where Tragedy Confronts Eternity*** by William P. Young, Windblown Media, Los Angeles: 2007 (\$14.99). [248 pp.] ISBN 978-0-9647292-3-0

Long on top-ten lists, here are creative reflections on the activity of the Trinity in our daily lives—lives which, when we imagine fearful futures, rarely include God in the picture (p. 142). As you read it, remember that this is not a catechism—so don’t judge it like one. Rather, it is like a parable. What lessons for life might God be trying to teach each of us through the instrument of this popular, modern book?

***In This Place: Reflections on the Land of the Gospels for the Liturgical Cycles*** by Marianne Race, CSJ and Laurie Brink, OP, Wipf & Stock Publishers, Eugene OR: 2008 (\$26.00). [215 pp.] ISBN 978-1-55635-906-4

Whether we’ve ever been to the Holy Land or not, this will take us there by book, and help us better to see those places we hear named each Sunday in the Mass readings and in the words of the homily—not as tourists moving *from* our center, but as pilgrims moving *toward* it (p. 200).

***Help My Unbelief*** by William J. O’Malley, Orbis Books, Maryknoll NY: 2008 (\$15.00). [145 pp.] ISBN 978-1-57075-803-4

This book is not just for inquirers into the faith, but for ourselves as life-long believers. Jesuit Father Bill O’Malley of former local fame writes very candidly right to our hearts. Read about imperfection (p. 102), “the pope in one’s soul” (p. 112), and the magisterium (p. 113). As always, his writing gets us to think about what we believe, and why.

***Renewing Parish Culture: Building for a Catholic Church*** by John J. Piderit, S.J., and Melanie M. Morey, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham MD: 2008 (\$29.95). [274 pp.] ISBN 978-0-7425-5904-2

These power-packed pages are filled with helpful strategies for reinvigorating Catholic culture, especially in pastoral circumstances and settings of uncertainty (p. 178)—sound like any place you know? I am grateful to Father Jim Hewes of St. Joseph Church in Rush for suggesting this book for our reading and reflection.

***Angels A to Z: Second Edition*** by Evelyn Dorothy Oliver and James R. Lewis, Visible Ink Press, Canton MI: 2008 (\$24.95). [394 pp.] ISBN 978-1-57859-212-8

It's not often that I read an entire 394-page dictionary cover-to-cover, but this one was hard to put down. Though it comes not from a Catholic publisher and covers much more in the angelic realm than Catholic angelology, it has abundant bibliographical references to Catholic resources and the Doctors of the Church. It covers all nine choirs of Dionysius the Areopagite, and gives examples of each choir and its particular job description. In addition, it tells which named angel is associated with which choir, color, day, month, direction, element, planet, zodiac sign, and tells of the angels of Islam and of an anthroposophical (!) division of angels. Ultimately, angels are another of God's instruments of caring for us mortals in the human sphere here below: "Fear is the most debilitating hazard of mankind that erodes the stability of the emotions. Healing from God through angels eliminates fear and substitutes confidence and direction." (p. 180) A fascinating, comforting, thought-provoking, discussion-starting read!

***Acedia & Me: A Marriage, Monks, and A Writer's Life*** by Kathleen Norris, Riverhead Books, New York: 2008 (\$25.95). [331 pp.] ISBN 978-1-59448-996-9

This Benedictine Oblate posits "that much of the restless boredom, frantic escapism, commitment phobia, and enervating despair that plagues us today is the ancient demon of acedia in modern dress" (p. 3). She quotes the 4<sup>th</sup> century Christian monk, Evagrius Ponticus, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and even our nearby Trappist Abbot-Emeritus John Eudes Bamberger (pp. 31, 209ff, and 330). Ironically, Norris points out that "compulsive productivity can be one of [acedia's] masks" (p. 160). At the more spiritual end of acedia's spectrum, she writes: "When we are convinced that we are beyond the reach of grace, acedia has done its work. John Cassian states that acedia's whole purpose is to 'sever [us] from thoughts of God'" (p. 205). Timely for our times!

***The Gospel According to Mark: Meaning and Message*** by George Martin, Loyola Press, Chicago: 2005 (\$22.95). [477 pp.] ISBN 0-8294-1970-5

Peace of Christ parishioner, the late Dale Smith, came into the sacristy one day in 2008 and said, "Father, here's a book on Mark that even I can understand." Why? First, the boxes on practically every other page explain complex realities in comprehensible language for the average Bible reader; second, the reflection questions that are wonderful meditation points for private readers and great discussion starters for groups. Super!

***Worship: A Primer in Christian Ritual*** by Keith F. Pecklers, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN: 2003 (\$24.95). [216 pp.] ISBN 978-0-8146-2985-7

Jesuit Father Keith Pecklers teaches liturgy in Rome, and yet this book is meant for the person (lay or ordained) in the pew. He does summer workshops for Seton Hall in New Jersey and makes liturgy something one can really grab on to—and see the value of: “For the Christian community, praying in common is a non-negotiable and those who do not pray in common with the rest of the body of Christ cannot rightly call themselves ‘Christian.’ They might be very generous, inspired by the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and trying to do the right thing in life, but if they never pray in common with other Christians, they cannot claim that identity” (p. 12). Further, if some really want to have the old “traditional” Mass, they would have to have it in Koiné Greek since there was no Latin in the Mass until Pope Victor (†203) introduced some Latin prayers into the liturgy in North Africa—but there were no Latin scriptures until about 250 A.D., and only in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century did Pope Damasus I put the liturgy into Latin so people could understand it in their native (vernacular) language since folks in Rome no longer spoke Greek (p. 41). After thoroughly reviewing our ritual’s historical roots, Pecklers concludes that “the credibility and future of the church will depend on its ability to be trans-cultural, contextual, counter-cultural, and its ability to overcome the differences between and among cultures (cross-cultural)” (p. 133). A great book to read as we get ready next year for the release of the newly translated Roman Missal about to be introduced into the English-speaking Church!

***Thank God Ahead of Time: The Life and Spirituality of Solanus Casey*** by Michael H. Crosby, O.F.M. Cap., St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati: 2009 (\$16.95). [256 pp.] ISBN 978-0-86716-919-5

I got this book in a Franciscan bookstore that I happened to visit, but also saw it available locally in the gift shop at the Abbey of the Genesee right in Livingston County. Solanus was a holy Franciscan priest who lived from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup>. “Above all, Solanus believed, whether one would receive a desired cure or not, one should always give thanks to God. Giving thanks ahead of time—whether it be for healing or continued sufficiency—should characterize true believers” (p. 163). As you read this book, you will come to know and love this holy man. We can see things in him with which we ourselves can identify. This will be a book that’s hard to put down. You’ll always be wondering what is going to happen to poor old Solanus next. Let him become your companion for the more challenging aspects of your life!

***A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23*** by W. Phillip Keller, Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI: 2007 {also 1970} (\$4.99). [173 pp] ISBN 978-0-310-27441-4

We use this psalm so frequently. This author IS a shepherd and gives each phrase new meaning for all us non-sheep-herding readers. For example, sheep will not lie down unless they are free of four things (pp. 41-42). Read what they are, and *hear* this psalm for the very first time!

***Generous Faith: Stories To Inspire Abundant Living*** by Sister Bridget Haase, OSU, Paraclete Press, Brewster MA: 2009 (\$16.99). [152 pp.] ISBN 978-1-55725-615-7

Picked this one up at the Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard. A good read for a day of quiet prayer or recollecting: We can “overlook God’s presence if we set the stage each day for the *form* in which God will come” (p. 105).

***This Flowing Toward Me: A Story of God Arriving in Strangers*** by Marilyn Lacey, R.S.M., Ave Maria Press, Inc., Notre Dame IN: 2009 (\$15.95). [200 pp.] ISBN 978-1-59471-197-8

OK, buy this one *for sure!* I recommend this most heartily for Advent. There are 25 days this Advent before Christmas Eve. If you read but 8 pages of this a day (and it will be hard to keep from reading more), you will upon finishing this book know new ways that the Lord can come to you deeply and engagingly through persons perhaps never before acknowledged as channels of His advent. The author writes in ways that are very well-crafted, humorous, tear-inducing, and soul-searching. You will not be sorry for having committed to the reading of these pages. After reading Gabriel’s memoir which she quotes at length, you will know that you do not have *any* problems at all (pp. 100-119). You will get to the meaning of the book’s title in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the book. As she comments on the subversion of the careful ordering of our lives when one takes the Gospel seriously, she quotes Annie Dillard: “‘It is madness to wear ladies’ hats...to church; we should be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews’” (p. 181). Perhaps most Advent-ish of all, Lacey writes: “Imagine how different our world could be if we opened doors in the reckless hope that the unknown outsider standing a bit beyond our threshold of comfort just might be the Holy One for whom our hearts long” (p. 184).