



# The Book Reviewer

ST. MARY'S PARISH LIBRARY

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## WELCOME TO YOUR PARISH LIBRARY!

- Located through the double glass doors in the main vestibule of the church
- The library is open for all masses.
- Find detailed check-out instructions posted on the wall.
- Materials may be borrowed for three weeks
- Donations of edifying materials in good condition are appreciated — just drop them off in the library!

### Introduction to Christianity by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (*Theology*)

Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, was a major participant in Vatican II. As a theologian, he is both brilliant and relevant as he defends our faith and Creed. This is a carefully articulated and lucid explanation of Christianity as a thoroughly rational progression of thought from Jewish faith and Greek philosophy. In both of these systems of thought and worship, God was “awful,” awesome, and transcendent. In Christianity the understanding of God becomes Triune, imminent, and transcendent: Father Creator; Son and Redeemer; Spirit and Love. The Jewish prophets and the

Greek tragedians came close to understanding God as imminent and transcendent, loving and forgiving:

*“In our sleep pain falls drop by drop upon the heart, until we learn wisdom, through the awful grace of God.” - Aeschylus*

It is only through Christ in His teaching and healing, death and resurrection that the enlightenment broke through, with the subsequent coming of the Holy Spirit. St. John’s “Word made flesh” and the Last Supper discourses took a few centuries to be codified, and heresies disputed, by the Councils of Chal-

cedon and Nicea into the three Creeds: the Apostles Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Nicene Creed.

Jesus’ prayer to His Abba illuminates the Creeds:

*“That they may become one, as I in you, and we in them, and they in us.”*

Reviewed by Clare Dinno



### Rome Sweet Home by Scott and Kimberly Hahn (*Church*)

This is a love story—one told with brutal honesty—about the conversion of Scott Hahn, Protestant scholar, teacher, preacher, and hard-core “anti-Papist.”

Hahn, against all odds, studies his way into discovering that the Roman Catholic Church, which he has despised and reviled (he tells of ripping apart his grandmother’s rosary upon her death), is *The Church*, founded by Jesus Christ, and repository of the fullness of faith.

As he finds himself falling in love with this covenantal

Church that makes so much sense to him, he finds that he and his evangelical Protestant wife, Kimberly, are growing apart. Being the daughter of an evangelical minister, and joyfully grateful for her rich spiritual upbringing, Kimberly cannot follow Scott into the “darkness” that Catholicism represents for her.

The couple, through the course of the book, take turns describing the confusion, amazement, horror, anguish, and finally, elation that accompanies each step of their journey toward Rome. Slowly, inevitably,

through studying Catholic texts and re-reading scripture with fresh eyes, questioning experts, praying continuously for God’s clear guidance, and finally experiencing Catholic liturgy and sacraments, first Scott, then four years later, Kimberly, eagerly and with great joy receive the Sacraments of Initiation into the Roman Catholic Church.

Catholics and non-Catholics alike have much to gain by reading the Hahns’ scripturally based arguments for their acceptance of the Catholic Church as the family of God.

Reviewed by Susan Triplett



Are any of these missing library materials hiding on your shelves at home ?

#### Books

*Christian Spirituality*  
by Lawrence Cunningham

*The Practice of the Presence of God* by Thomas a Kempis

*Christian Spirituality*  
by Lawrence Cunningham

*Soul Friend* by Kenneth Leech

#### Children's Videos

*The Story of Peter*

*Abraham*

*The Apostle Paul*

## The Life You Save May Be Your Own by Paul Elie (*People of the Church*)

This is an expert interweaving of the lives of four Catholic writers, who were more or less contemporaries. Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Workers is the oldest of the four, and lived the longest. Always attracted to the poor and oppressed, she was a rebel even in her teens, rejecting her bourgeois roots and religion. After a lost youth spent mostly in bars and flophouses, and a month in jail after joining a protest march, she was converted and became a strong, outspoken woman, actively supporting the poor, peace, and other anti-establishment movements through the monthly publication of *The Catholic Worker*.

The other three — Thomas Merton, Flannery O'Connor, and Walker Percy — were also writers and seekers; always

searching for meaning in their own lives, and meaning and purpose for America. The two women were the most sure-footed of the four — sure of their way, and of how to get there. O'Connor was the only bred-in-the-bone Catholic, and was often misunderstood with her short stories about holy, Christ-haunted freaks. She kept on writing, raising her peacocks, and calmly facing southern racial tension, literary critics, lupus, and an early death at age 39.

Thomas Merton, known as Fr. Louis in the Trappist Order, was highly educated and the most restless of the four. His wanderings from Gethsemane after the first ten years, seeking Truth hither and yon, finally led him to a serious study of Buddhism and his premature

death in Bangkok. Merton and Day corresponded for years, she with postcards and he with lengthy missives, but they never met.

Walker Percy, a doctor and Southerner educated in the North, was also restless and the last to discover his way. As a Catholic writer of several novels, his protagonists were as bland and ambivalent as himself until he finally “found himself” in his last novel, *The Thanatos Syndrome*.

Besides being American Catholics in the same time period, they also shared a remarkable similarity in their favorite authors: Dickens; Tolstoy; Dostoevsky; Maritain—all passionate defenders of the poor and the oppressed.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno

## Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis (*Theology*)

In reading this small book you will learn a great deal about Christianity, and sound reasons for your own faith. Originally written as a series of talks for BBC during WWII, **Mere Christianity** explores our reasons for belief in God, and especially for belief in a personal God.

C.S. Lewis was an atheist during his University years, and much of his writing reads like an apology—or at least an explanation—for his faith, directed toward unbelieving friends who were appalled by his conversion.

Everyone can learn from this book—doubters and even others who have plowed on since childhood with no doubt at all. The faithful, and not just doubters, need to seek an understanding of faith; it is all explained simply and aptly.

Lewis says that Christianity is not a philosophy, or even a theology. It is, rather, a way of life in which, “there are no ordinary people; it is immortals whom you joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit.”

Reviewed by Clare Dinno

