



The Book Reviewer

ST. MARY'S PARISH LIBRARY

MAY 09

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!

Come and see what's new in your library!

For parishioners who are new to our collection of books, DVDs, CDs, and audio tapes, here are some tips for using the library:

1. Fill out a blue registration card, and place in the corresponding holder.
2. Select one or two items to borrow
3. Write your name and the date on the yellow card inside each item, and place it in the appropriate holder.
4. Write the due date (three weeks from the day you are checking out) on the complimentary book mark and tuck it inside the item.
5. Return the borrowed items on time, or renew by calling 395-3737.

Flannery by Brad Gooch (People of the Church)

In an era when the South was producing the most and the best of American literature, Flannery O'Connor stands out and apart. A northern reporter was musing over this when Flannery replied, "We lost the War." The Civil War, that is, which certainly has left an indelible mark upon the minds and hearts of all Southerners.

Mary Flannery O'Connor was born in Savannah, Georgia in 1925 into a Catholic family "of the patron class." Being Catholic in the South was already to be separated from the majority, and with her odd personality, and her sharp eye and wit, she was born to be different. Very early in elementary school in

Savannah, high school in Atlanta, and Georgia Sate Women's College in Milledgeville, she stood out as critic, artist, and cartoonist. Her short story writing developed from her talent for seeing the absurd in everything and everyone. She has left us with several volumes of short stories, and her two novels, *Wise Blood*, and *The Violent Bear it Away* are really collections of short stories organized around a single character and theme. All of her eccentric—to put it mildly—characters are seeking redemption, in one odd way or another. One of her admiring critics noted that it was seeing Protestantism inside, from a

Catholic viewpoint.

On the family farm where she was forced to retire with her domineering mother, she raised exotic birds and wrote obsessively. Lupus, of which she died at the age of 39, kept her grounded, except for numerous speaking tours and private readings of her stories. Sarcastic, prickly, and aloof, she wasn't easy to know or to understand, but those who became her friends adored her. To understand her required tenacity and a "close reading of Thomas Aquinas," which was a bit of an obstacle course.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno



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RETURN
YOUR
BORROWED
ITEMS ASAP!
SOME HAVE
NEVER BEEN
RETURNED,
AND IT IS
EXPENSIVE
AND
SOMETIMES
IMPOSSIBLE
TO REPLACE
THEM.

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

Books:

*Prayers for a Small
Child*

A History of God

Surprised by Joy

Light from Light

DVDs:

*The Agony and the
Ecstasy*

John of the Cross

Life of the Beloved by Henri Nouwen (Spirituality)

Life of the Beloved is about the long friendship between journalist-writer, Fred Bratman and Henri Nouwen. One day, while walking together in New York City, Fred asked Henri to write something about the spiritual life for himself and his friends.

Nouwen realized that he was being asked to write about spirituality in language that could be understood by people who were unfamiliar

with scripture and theology. The resulting answer to this request was the writing of *Life of the Beloved*. The book, which was the last one written by Nouwen, has become one of those most cherished by his admirers. It has sold over 100,000 copies and is used as both private inspirational reading and for group reflection in study groups.

The book's success was surprising to Nouwen. "I had

tried so hard to write something for secular people, and the ones who were most helped by it were searching Christians. I suddenly realized that without Fred Bratman, I would never have found the words that were so helpful to believers. For me there is more than an irony here. It is the mystery of God using his secular friends to instruct his disciples."

Reviewed by Pat Dalcher

Waiting for God by Simone Weil (Spirituality MAG)

This is a classic story of conversion, but a most unusual one. Simone was the brilliant daughter of a French Jewish family who were agnostic, and even intellectually dismissive of all religions.

Her earliest personal inclinations and activities centered around social justice—a sort of French Dorothy Day. She became involved in numerous worker and Marxist movements. In 1936 she briefly joined forces with the Republican Army in Spain against Franco, and from that experience learned the utter horror of war. For brief periods she

taught philosophy at various secondary schools, but all of her appointments ended in illness, or with the call of her revolutionary activities.

Gradually, and "in spite of herself," she was pulled into a spiritual vortex. Never having studied the writings of mystics, such as Teresa of Avila or John of the Cross, she herself became a mystic. "He (God) took me," she wrote to her friend and spiritual director, Fr. Perrin, a Dominican priest, who after her death published her writings.

She refused to be baptized and to enter the Church, be-

cause she identified with all of those forever outside, both her own people, the Jews, and all who were considered anathema to the Church.

She continued "waiting for God" to order her to be baptized. She died in London in August of 1943, still "waiting." The cause of her death was tuberculosis and self-inflicted starvation; again, this was to identify herself with the outsiders, her compatriots in occupied France and the starving people in concentration camps—the anathemized and suffering people everywhere in the world.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno