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The Book Reviewer

ST. MARY'S PARISH LIBRARY

MAY 2008

The Other Side of Silence by Morton Kelsey (Prayer)

Because we all need, whether we know it or not, to get away from our too busy or too terrifying world, “we must be able to enter into the silence within ourselves, and to come out refreshed and healed, on the other side.” This is the thesis of Dr. Kelsey’s book, and it is an exceptionally healthy way for all types of people to heal their lives, and we all need healing. He is not trying to lead us into practices such as yoga or other eastern meditation tech-

niques, which basically lead us out of a world seen as illusory. Rather, his emphasis is on western meditation techniques for individual prayer, either with images—such as imagining events in the life of Christ—or without any images at all, using a simple prayer word to bring us back from our incessant mental chatter, but both ways using silence. He examines at length the prayer life of numerous saints, from the early Church onwards, through the

great mystics, such as St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, and the experiences and methods of modern prayers.

Dr. Kelsey states categorically that the Christian religion is the only world religion which offers hope, and a real deliverance from despair and the essential meaninglessness of a world without God.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno

Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story (DVD)

This film is a biography of human rights activist Dorothy Day (1897-1980). The title refers to the religious practice of treating all people, no matter how poor or humble, as if they were visiting angels.

Moira Kelly plays Dorothy Day, who was the founder of *The Catholic Worker* and an outspoken champion of the rights of the poor and disenfranchised. Day is often called America’s Mother Teresa.

Dorothy was born into an Episcopal household in 1897. However, during her early adulthood she worked as a Marxist journalist and contributed many articles to leftist journals. She lived as a young bohemian in 1930’s New York, engaging in heavy drinking, chain-smoking, sexual promiscuity, and unconventional activism. Then her life was changed forever after meeting a nun who ran a homeless shelter.

Day eventually converted to Catholicism, a faith to which she would cling strongly for the rest of her life. Religion and altruism became the guiding forces of Dorothy’s life, as she devoted all of her time to helping the poor and homeless. In addition to supplying their physical needs, Dorothy fought for their rights. She was a true champion of the poor and destitute.

Reviewed by Pat Dalcher

Did you know that the Parish Library first opened in 1994, as a way to provide adult Christian formation to parishioners who wanted to expand and deepen their Catholic faith?



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DVD:

Life is Beautiful

Books:

A History of God

*Becoming a New
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Care of the Soul

Scarlett Music

*The Catholic
Children's Bible*

The Twelve: The Lives of the Apostles After Calvary by C. Bernard Ruffin (Church History)

C. Bernard Ruffin is a well-known writer and historian. He has written several articles for *Our Sunday Visitor* plus he is the author of the bestseller, *Padre Pio*.

His book is like having twelve biographies under one cover. He re-creates the lives of each of Christ's apostles by using data from Scripture, Tradition, and historical documents. Peter F. Macaluso, Ph.D. explains that "Ruffin has examined the best sources available and outlines the life of each of Christ's closest followers as thoroughly and

completely as it is possible to do."

The book is divided into chapters which feature each Apostle. Simply identifying all of the twelve apostles was a challenge. The problem in identifying them precisely is that first-century Jews seemed to have had comparatively few given names. Another factor which made the research challenging was the fact that the Apostles' primary concern was spreading the Gospel, rather than recording information about themselves.

Ruffin also distinguishes between the terms, "the

Twelve," "the apostles," and "the disciples." The terms are not interchangeable. "Disciple" is the broadest term, referring to all those who followed Jesus and studied under Him. The Twelve and all other apostles were disciples, but not all disciples were apostles, and not all apostles were members of "the Twelve." The Twelve Apostles were those men who were individually chosen by Jesus.

The value of this well-written book is that Ruffin has put this carefully researched information into one handy reference for the reader.

Reviewed by Pat Dalcher

The Language of God by Francis S. Collins (Theology)

Dr. Francis Collins is an important scientist as head of the Human Genome Project, and in the study of DNA, which he now calls, "deciphering God's instruction book."

He was raised on an experimental farm in Virginia by highly educated parents, who didn't think that religion mattered. The four sons were home-schooled, and Collins didn't enter public schools until he was fourteen. In high school and college, mathematics and chemistry were his strong subjects, followed by research and quantum me-

chanics. Later he was led into biophysics because he sensed in the study of DNA and RNA a mathematical glory beyond his previous studies. About to complete his Ph.D., he switched majors and decided to apply to medical school "in order to make a difference in the lives of real people." One of his patients who was dying asked him about his own faith, or lack of it; and he realized for the first time that, as an intellectual and a scientist, he had never even examined what it was that he did not believe.

He was given a copy of C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*, and gradually he came to believe that faith in God is more rational than disbelief. Of special importance for him was what he came to see as an universal Moral Code. As a doctor, he saw human beings continually engaged in helping others from purely altruistic and selfless motives.

This book is highly recommended for anyone who has ever had doubts about the existence of God, or for anyone who believes that science and religion are incompatible.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno