



The Book Reviewer

ST. MARY'S PARISH LIBRARY

NOV 2007

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!

Where is God When it Hurts by Philip Yancey (Grief, Loss, Healing)

Philip Yancey has written an updated edition of his modern classic, *Where Is God When It Hurts*. He addresses questions about how to deal with the difficult times in your life. The Gold Medallion Award-winning book was re-issued after the September 11, 2001 attack on the twin towers in New York.

Suffering is a universal experience, but there is no universal answer behind the causes of pain or how we should deal with pain. Yancey provides a new perspective on pain. He emphasizes that pain is God-centered rather than man-centered. The notion of suffering as a productive experience encourages and challenges the reader to consider the subject of pain in a new way.

The author feels that Paul gave an accurate summary of the role of suffering when he

said, "Pain turned you to God." Yancey believes that this quotation underscores the Bible's emphasis on response, not cause. Yancey looks at pain — physical, emotional, and spiritual — and helps us understand why we suffer.

Some chapters are devoted to sharing interesting stories of people who have overcome handicaps and severe pain and turned it into something that glorifies God. He also notes that pain is not a simple cause-and-effect reflex action. It is perceived, and that perception depends a lot on a person's expectation. Human beings often undergo goal-directed suffering quite willingly, as athletes and pregnant women can attest.

Much of the suffering on

our planet has come about because of two principles that God built into creation: a physical world that runs according to consistent natural laws, and human freedom.

A Christian's final hope is a hope in a painless future, with God. God has promised that a time will come when pain shall be no more:

Listen, I tell you a mystery:

We shall not all sleep, but we will all be changed—
in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet...

Where, O death, is your victory?

Where O death, is your sting?

(1 Corinthians 15: 51-55)

Reviewed by Pat Dalcher

The Problem of Pain by C.S. Lewis (Grief, Loss, Healing)

The "problem" is the perennial one of how a good and all-powerful God can permit the terrible suffering which humanity endures, and has always endured, through the "cruelty" of nature, and especially the cruelty of Man. Lewis offers a variety of answers, carefully thought out and presented in his usual lucid style. His final answer is the not-quite-satisfying one that God brings good out of evil, and that like Job, when God spoke to him from out of the whirlwind, one has only to turn away in awe.

King David, in the 139th

Psalm, finds consolation in his awe before God's creation and omniscient care:

If I should take the wings of the dawn
And fly to the farthest reaches of the sea,
Yet would Your hands guide me,
And Your right hand hold me fast.

St. Paul, with his boundless faith in all of God's works, has perhaps the best answer in Romans 8: 18-25: God has left all of creation

open to confusion ("frustration") that He may finally bring all to Christ. Lewis's answer also depends upon the idea of free will, but with less certainty than Paul.

Lewis himself did not find consolation in his own philosophical ponderings; when his beloved wife died, he wrote *A Grief Observed*. Yet the problem is worth pondering, and must be by all of us who want to know how to live, knowing that we will die.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno



KINDLY
RETURN
YOUR
BORROWED
ITEMS.

IT IS EXPEN-
SIVE AND
SOMETIMES
IMPOSSIBLE
TO REPLACE
MISSING MA-
TERIALS.

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

DVDs:

Life is Beautiful

The Mission

*To Kill a
Mockingbird*

*The Agony and
the Ecstasy*

Scarlet Music by Joan O'Hannesson (Fiction)

This is a novel, but it is also a thoroughly researched life of a very real woman, Hildegard of Bingen. It is classified as a novel only because there are many lapses in historical data concerning Hildegard, and there are people and scenes that could only be imagined.

A visionary, musician and healer, Hildegard led a breath-takingly active life as a Benedictine nun, first as a child postulant and novice, and later as the Abbess of Rupertsberg Convent in Germany.

After many fierce verbal battles with male superiors, her Abbey was finally running smoothly and well-funded, so she launched out on a preaching, teaching, and healing crusade to correct some of the errors and corruptions running rampant throughout Germany, and indeed throughout the Church. This was in the 12th century, four hundred years before the Reformation, in an era dominated by male pomp and pride. Even Hildegard's

faithful friend, confessor and biographer tried to dissuade her from undertaking journeys and preaching that could, and did, enrage prelates and secular dignitaries. Nothing deterred her, and like other great holy women, she balanced the contemplative and the active life with ease.

Hildegard has recently become fashionable as a feminist patron saint, and her hymns and chants are popular on various CDs.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno

For the Time Being by Annie Dillard (Spirituality)

Writer Annie Dillard has always delighted and transported readers with her keen observations of nature and humanity. In *For the Time Being*, she draws our attention to the beauty, wonder, and paradox of human life in relation to earth, time, and God. Every chapter is composed of word images that are alternately shocking and lovely, and all are in the service of penetrating the eternal mystery: "Why are we here?" These vignettes cover such seemingly unrelated subjects as birth, the clay soldiers of Xi'an, clouds, Israel, and sand. Woven among these is the

story of a soul-mate, the Jesuit priest and paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin, who spent his life pursuing an understanding of the natural world, all the while remaining faithful to God, and coming to the conclusion that matter derives from spirit.

Dillard emphasizes points she wishes to make by quoting such diverse people as holy man Baal Shem Tov, founder of modern Hasidism, at one extreme and serial killer Ted Bundy at the other. By forcing us to ponder not only the transcendent, but also the repulsive aspects of life and nature, the

author figuratively shakes us by the shoulders and says, "WAKE UP!" She skillfully opens our minds in a way that allows us to accept her manner of jumping from one idea to another, and we eagerly seek the big picture as the narrative threads are woven together. We are ultimately rewarded with the feeling that we have accompanied Dillard on the journey of a lifetime – physically, spiritually and emotionally – and we want to go back to the beginning and do it all over again.

Reviewed by Susan Triplett

The Faithful Revolution, Vatican II (Video Cassette Series)

The first two videos of this set are about Vatican II, from its inception in 1961 until the last session and signing of the final documents in 1965. The Cardinals and Bishops are shown deliberating, along with observers – visiting Protestants, Orthodox and Jewish clergy – as well as Catholic theologians and various Catholic women. Pope John XXIII is active as creator and chief cheerleader of Vatican II, followed by Paul VI, who was at

first enthusiastic and later rather less so.

The last three parts are about the worldwide results of the Council. Pope John Paul II succeeded brilliantly to open up Poland and Eastern Europe against Communism, with the help of the Solidarity movement. In Africa there was an explosion of faith, where the clergy were welcomed as helpers and friends, not as colonial exploiters. South America

was, and is, a more difficult case. There, the wealthy landowners and the entrenched clergy fight against the inclusion of the indigenous people into full participation in the Church and its sacraments. Lay people from all over Europe, Africa and North and South America witness to their happiness at the new inclusiveness in the Church.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno