



The Book Reviewer

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The Shoes of the Fisherman (DVD)

The Shoes of the Fisherman is based on Morris L. West's bestselling novel. The film, like the novel, is a fascinating look at Vatican procedures and tradition. It is a graphic account of intrigue, which has potential to have an impact on the entire world. The film includes a remarkable cast of actors: Anthony Quinn, Sir Laurence Olivier, Oskar Werner plus several other notable stars.

The story takes place during the height of the Cold War. Kiril Lanka is a Russian priest and a longtime political pris-

oner of the Soviet Union. After spending 20 years in a Siberian labor camp, he is released by his long-time captors. Kiril is sent to Rome, where he is soon installed as a cardinal for his faithfulness to the church.

Shortly after he arrives in Rome, the pope dies and an election for a new pope takes place. After a series of events, Kiril is surprisingly elected pope. The film accurately shows the rituals of the conclave process and the pageantry of the coronation ceremony.

What makes the film so remarkable is the inadvertent prophecy of what actually occurred a decade later. In the 1960's it was considered very shocking to consider not only a non-Italian pope, but in addition, selecting a candidate coming from behind the Iron Curtain.

As history shows, this is exactly what happened -- Karol Wojtyla from Poland became Pope John Paul II on October 16, 1978.

Reviewed by Pat Dalcher

Experiencing God by Thomas Green, S.J. (Spirituality)

This book, by a very popular spiritual writer, has been published posthumously: Green died in 2009 in the Phillipines, where he had lived and taught for more than thirty years. It contains the essence of his many books, which had been written about prayer, and as guides to the spiritual life. Most of his life had been spent guiding seminarians and retreatants toward an encounter with and experience of God. "A personal encounter with God in love" is his definition of prayer.

Working with people from both Catholic and Protestant traditions, he had discovered that most people had been comfortable with prayer as petition and adoration, prayers read from prayer books, or learned by rote in childhood. To many of these people Fr. Green's definition of prayer came as an exciting revelation: listening to God rather than talking to God!

He describes the three stages of prayer as understanding, i.e. gaining knowl-

edge about God; experiencing the presence of God; and as transformation, from loving to really loving. He defines the final stage of prayer as being "when God takes over." We will not be actively doing anything, "floating in God without a raft." That will be our ultimate goal: rejoicing in whatever penances God sends, and learning to see ourselves as God sees us—acting in God's eyes as in God's eyes I am.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno



PLEASE 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:

The Fifth Mountain

Gandhi the Man

Heightened Consciousness

Audio Tapes:

Fr. Tom Allender presentations

DVDs:

Life is Beautiful

Thoughts Matter by Mary Margaret Funk, O.S.B. (Spirituality)

Are you feeling rather secure in your prayer life? Perhaps you have the notion that you are already practicing the spiritual life. You won't get very far into this handbook of practical spiritual advice before feeling quite humbled as you realize that Sr. Mary Margaret Funk is speaking directly to you as she describes the eight themes or "thoughts" that plague all of us who seek unity with God: food, sex, things, anger, dejection, acedia, vainglory, and pride.

Drawing chiefly from the writings of John Cassian, a fourth century monk who compiled the teachings of desert hermits, the author systematically identifies and explains each of these obstacles to purity of heart and how to

best deal with them. She points out that the first three pertain to the body, the next two are afflictions of the mind, and the last three, acedia, vainglory, and pride are spiritual sicknesses of the soul. Each type requires a different disciplined approach to overcome it, and Sister's direct language makes you sit up, pay attention, and want to begin the interior work that is demanded.

The chapters on the thoughts related to the soul are the most fascinating, as both acedia (weariness of the soul) and vainglory are words and concepts that are not commonly known in our time, but that are working insidiously against our best efforts to be in right relationship to

God, just as surely now as in the time of the desert fathers and mothers.

The essence of the rich teachings presented here is that we must work very hard and continuously to lay aside the eight thoughts, and turn our mind to God. We are told that "There is no corresponding list of eight virtues to replace the eight thoughts" but that by laying "aside one's thoughts.....all the virtues emerge." A discerning and loving heart will be the fruit of this mindful and consistent turning away from distraction and focusing on God through meditation on scripture, ceaseless prayer, and the work of your hands.

Reviewed by Susan Triplett

Eucharist as Touchstone by Richard Rohr (CD)

Franciscan monk and spiritual director, Fr. Richard Rohr, has made it his life's work to help people, particularly men, to come to an authentic, life-giving Christian faith that is grounded in the joys and sorrows of reality.

Over the course of this 60-minute CD, recorded in 2000 at the New Mexico Eucharist Congress, Fr. Rohr reflects on the profundity of the mystery of the Eucharist—that something as humble and commonplace as bread would be the place where Christ is perfectly hidden and at the same time perfectly revealed. He tells us

that Gandhi once said that with all of the starving people in the world, God *had* to come to us as bread—food that could fill our emptiness and satisfy our longing for meaning and identity that no worldly position, power, or relationship could ever provide. Not only that, but if we eat this bread of life as our primary source of nutrition we will be indestructible, as Jesus explained to his disciples in John 6: 51-58.

Rohr expands his discussion of Eucharist as the touchstone of orthodoxy to include, among other intriguing ideas,

thoughts on the role of suffering and what it has to teach us, saying that unless pain is transformed by placing it before Jesus in the Eucharist, then that pain will be transmitted to others.

Rohr's words are sometimes startling, but always challenging and life-affirming. You will likely want to ponder and absorb his ideas by replaying sections. Each time you listen you will receive new insights about surrendering to God's great love for your truest self, and you will feel a deepening hunger for Jesus, the Bread of Life.

Reviewed by Susan Triplett