
FROM THE CHAPLAINCY



DEAR WOODROSE PARENTS

“Don’t neglect your spiritual reading. Reading has made many saints.” (The Way, 116). St. Josemaria Escriva, the Founder of Opus Dei, encouraged the daily reading of the Gospel and of a spiritual reading book. He considered such reading as nourishment for our Christian life. By reading the Gospels, we get to know the life, teachings and miracles of Jesus. St. Jerome said that “ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” Spiritual reading books complement the reading of the Gospels. They help us assimilate better the teachings of Christ and the Church. We acquire good doctrine through reading, and good doctrine breeds deeper love.

Here are two articles that we hope will inspire you to do spiritual reading. It should not take much of your time. 15 minutes of spiritual reading everyday would be enough to help you keep a healthy Christian life.

5 Reasons to jumpstart your spiritual reading in 2020

Fr. Patrick Briscoe, OP

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Carving out time for print books will change the kind of year you have.

Last year, Forbes magazine [reported](#), “The average adult consumes five times more information every day than their counterpart 50 years ago.” It went on to suggest that Americans can spend 12 hours a day looking at screens! This is no diatribe against technology — after all, these thoughts were penned for a Catholic website. But there is something to be said for books. Reading a print book is contemplative, restful, and inspiring in ways that watching television or scrolling social media are not. So why not start 2020 with a new commitment to spiritual reading? Here are five reasons to consider it:

Prayer is always a grace.

Jesus himself invites us to know and love him through the intimate conversation we call prayer. Nevertheless, in a certain respect, prayer is an input output game. What goes in, comes out. Spiritual reading helps train our minds to think of higher things and allows us to enter more easily into conversation with God. When we engage in reading about the life of Jesus or the mysteries of our faith, it becomes easier to mull them over with God in prayer.

To evangelize, we have to have things to say.

How can I tell someone about my love for Christ without words? Spiritual reading helps shape and color our own experiences of the Lord. By giving words to the faith or considering the experiences of the saints, sharing our own love for the faith will come more readily, with a more natural feel.

We are surrounded by media.

Every website, news channel or radio station has a set of guiding principles that inform the stories they present and the way those stories are shared. Only the Gospel is free from ideology. Only spiritual reading, the Scriptures and the lives of holy Christian men and women, can refresh us and lift us out of the mire which so often drags us down.

God speaks to us in the Scriptures.

We hear excerpts from the Bible each Sunday in Mass. However, deciding to regularly read the Scriptures allows a Christian to hear God speaking directly to one's own heart in a particularly intimate way. The Gospels and the Letters of the New Testament hold pride of place as they offer the heights of the story of our salvation and present in simple terms stories of consolation and joy.

Faith must be real.

We may be tempted to pick up a biography or treatise and force ourselves to enjoy it. "Such and such a saint" is

incredible, we've heard. But we may very well not like every work we come across; Reading a breadth of spiritual works allows us to become more fully ourselves. We must not be afraid to soften the edges of our vices or expand the horizon of our own views. In so doing our faith will become more completely our own.

Looking for some suggestions? Check out [this list](#) from *Aleteia*. Take an hour and peruse the shelves of a local Catholic bookshop. Order a few things online or pick up a couple of books from your local library. You won't regret it!

10 Books to jumpstart your spiritual reading

Fr. Patrick Briscoe, OP | Oct 08, 2019

Turning our minds to thoughts of God by the practice of spiritual reading allows our minds to think of higher things with greater delight and ease.

Why undertake spiritual reading? With so many ways to grow in the faith (undertaking works of charity, joining Bible studies, serving in a parish ministry, prayer) why should I spend time alone with a book?

Catherine of Siena wanted so badly to read that the Lord gave her the gift of learning to read miraculously. Her Dominican friar friends gave her the most precious gifts (after the sacraments!) they could: they shared books with her. The American Jesuit Fr. John Hardon says, "Spiritual reading is necessary as the normal way of nourishing the Christian

faith.” Recognizing that growth in the spiritual life is always due to God’s grace, we can, nevertheless, dispose ourselves to receive his grace.

St. Thomas Aquinas contends: we cannot love what we do not know. Knowledge precedes love, because Christians are not able to unite their will to God as the object of their desire unless he is made known to them! As knowledge increases, love will be nourished.

Turning our minds to thoughts of God by the practice of spiritual reading allows our minds to think of higher things with greater delight and ease. By delving into the mysteries of faith, we more readily think of God, and come to know more about Him.

For Teresa of Avila, a day without a new book is a day lost. Don’t lose a day! Pick up something to read!

The Life of Christ

Many Catholics only think of Jesus through the excerpts of Scripture read in the liturgy. Take the time to read a “biography” of Jesus and meditate more deeply on the mysteries of our Savior’s life.

1. *The Lord* by Romano Guardini
2. *Life of Christ* by Fulton J. Sheen
3. *The Greatest Story Ever Told* by Fulton Oursler
4. *Jesus of Nazareth series* by Pope Benedict XVI:

Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration

Jesus of Nazareth: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection

Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives

Prayer and the Spiritual Life

One of the great temptations in the spiritual life is to become complacent. I've done enough for Jesus or I've heard all there is to say, we're tempted to think. These great modern books on prayer and the spiritual life will rouse you from any slumber and spur you on to more dynamic prayer and contemplation.

5. *Abandonment to Divine Providence* by John Pierre de Caussade
6. *This Tremendous Lover* by Eugene Boylan
7. *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales
8. *Time for God* by Jacques Phillippe

The Virgin Mary

The Rosary is the heart and soul of devotion for many of us. Our tradition is filled with great works about the Virgin Mary to help make praying the Rosary more fruitful. Delve into either of these fantastic reads.

9. *True Devotion* by St. Louis Marie de Montfort
10. *The Reed of God* by Caryll Houselander