

IC ADULT FAITH MONTHLY BOOK REVIEW

If you would like to contribute a book review of an inspirational text please contact Valerie-Smitheman Brown at ybrown@theimmaculate.org.

December 2011 Book Review: I am Najood, 10 years old and Divorced by Najood Ali and Delphine Minoui

This short book, which I read in a single sitting, astounded me with its narrative and left me feeling a mix of anger and incredulity upon completing it. Before reading this book, I'd read about Nujood Ali, who has been described as possessing a "precocious self-assurance." After reading the book, it's clearly an accurate description of a young girl who refuses to accept a situation that she knows is wrong. In doing so it turns out, she opens the door for long-overdue change.

Nujood doesn't live an easy life as a young girl in Yemen, but she still finds time to enjoy her childhood. Her father, who has two wives, seems incapable of supporting them on his meager salary, and the rest of the family must find ways to make ends meet. Her father, in an effort to ease his own burden, agrees to an arranged marriage with a man three times Nujood's age, with the condition that he not consummate the marriage until one year after her first period. The new husband breaks that promise on the very night of their wedding, and from that point forward continues to beat her and rape her nightly. This is not consensual sex, but child rape, pure and simple.

The story that unfolds from that point forward is nothing short of amazing. It's also heartening to learn that right from the beginning of her ordeal, several Yemenese men stepped forward to stand up for her rights, even while knowing that Sharia law and local customs would be working against them. It is also important to realize that educated, empowered women in these countries are also willing to step forward and challenge such destructive customs and laws, and one of them, Shada Nasser, becomes her lawyer and champion.

November 2011 Book Review: The Reed of God by Caryll Houselander

First published over half a century ago, Caryll Houselander's *The Reed of God* is a spiritual classic that deserves to be rediscovered by a whole new generation of readers. Houselander's beautiful and profound mediation depicts the intimately human side of Mary, Mother of God, as an empty reed waiting for God's music to be played through her. She shares her insightful and beautiful vision of Mary on earth, Mary among us, Mary as a confused but trusting teenager whose holiness flowered with her eternal "Yes."

"This wonderful book gives us a privileged peek into the soul of a holy woman as she engages beautiful biblical texts in prayer. In ways witty and winsome, Houselander

teaches us to unite our will with God's will, as the Blessed Virgin Mary did." --*Scott Hahn, author of Hail, Holy Queen*

Caryll Houselander (1901-1952) was an English Catholic mystic, poet, artist and a prolific writer. *The Reed of God*, while one of her earliest books, is her most famous and is still available from Ave Maria Press. --*This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.*

August Book Review: "The Great Divorce" by C. S. Lewis

Only C.S. Lewis can write a story like this. A man takes a bus ride through Hell, then Heaven and witnesses the choices made by others in their lives. The vivid stories within the story show that indecision is still a decision... it underscores the petty things in our lives that we allow to dominate us, things that will still plague us in Hell for eternity if we don't abandon them. Lewis' concepts (fantasized, of course) of the substance of spirit versus the substance of flesh and blood are incredibly thought provoking. There are mental images that are unforgettable. It is basic truth - you choose life, you choose death, or you choose not to choose. You will either give up the things that are holding you down (whether they be bitter resentments, anger, material gain, control, etc.) or you will cling to them until they become your master and you their slave. The book presents these concepts in such a non-threatening way that you've gotten a life lesson that you don't realize until you've finished this short, yet vibrant book.

July Book Review: "All Is Grace" A Biography of Dorothy Day by Jim Forest

Founder of the Catholic Worker movement, Dorothy Day is one of this century's most prophetic voices and has recently been proposed as a candidate for sainthood. Drawing from Day's recently published letters and many other sources, this expanded edition with copious photos and illustrations chronicles in rich detail the life and mission of a social reformer, peace activist and ardent campaigner for social justice. From the turn of the 20th century, it traces her family's struggles, the evolution of her faith, her writings, her religious and literary "heroes," her baptism at age 30 and publication of the first issue of "The Catholic Worker" newspaper in 1933 in downtown New York City. Forest catalogues the many issues taken up in the pages of the Worker: growing racial divides in the United States, Day's widespread travels, the founding and spread of houses of hospitality, her special relationship with daughter Tamar as "a lonely single parent," a deepening spiritual life, protests during world wars, arrests and imprisonment, trips to Rome during Vatican II, and life at Maryhouse, up to her death and funeral. "Dorothy Day: A Personal Remembrance," the author sheds light on lesser known qualities and daily activities of Day and the importance to her of storytelling, music, beauty, books, the Eucharist, devotion to St. Therese of Lisieux, the darkness following the abortion of her first child, the sacrament of confession, her respect for Christians of other churches,

her concern for repairing the schism between the Eastern and Western Christian churches and much more—offering, in effect, a compelling window into the mind, heart and soul of a woman whose life was indeed grace-filled.

June Book Review: The Long Yearning's End: Stories of Sacrament and Incarnation By Patrick Hannon

Award-winning author Patrick Hannon returns in his third collection of stories and memoirs, *The Long Yearning's End*. Hannon strongly believes that, to quote Patrick Kavanagh, "God is in the bits and pieces of Everyday." In his latest book he explores our connection to the divine through the lens of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church: baptism, reconciliation, Eucharist, confirmation, holy matrimony, holy orders, and anointing of the sick. In the end, he proves "that God can be tasted and touched and seen and heard and smelled" every day of our lives. The most refreshing aspects of *The Long Yearning's End* are the stories - not just the ones that Hannon puts on the page but the ones that his stories generate in the reader's mind. The book is divided into seven sections, one each for the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Each section carries three stories. Hannon's easy going style makes the reader feel as if he or she is around the dinner table listening to stories of a good friend. With no hubris or contrived insight, Hannon gives the reader continual glimpses of the face of God through the simple telling of his experience at work, home, baseball parks, circuses, seminaries, funerals, and more, and in each of these he finds God and through his telling, opens our eyes to seeing the presence of God in our own stories. Patrick Hannon, CSC, is a Holy Cross priest from Oakland, California. In 2006 he won first place in the Catholic Press Awards for the First Time Author of a Book category. Available at book stores or from ACTA Publications: 800-397-2282 or shop online www.actapublications.com

May Book Review: The Quiet Light by Louis de Wohl

The famous novelist Louis deWohl presents a stimulating historical novel about the great St. Thomas Aquinas, set against the violent background of the Italy of the Crusades. He tells the intriguing story of St. Thomas who – by taking a vow of poverty and joining the Dominicans – defied his illustrious, prominent family's ambition for him to have great power in the Church. The battles and Crusades of the 13th century and the ruthlessness of the excommunicated Emperor Frederick II play a big part in the story, but it is Thomas of Aquinas who dominates this book. DeWohl succeeds notably in portraying the exceptional quality of this man, a fusion of mighty intellect and childlike simplicity. A pupil of St. Albert the Great, the humble Thomas – through an intense life of study, writing, prayer, preaching and contemplation – ironically rose to become the

influential figure of his age, and he was proclaimed by the Church as the Angelic Doctor.

April Book Review: *Same Kind of Different as Me* by Ron Hall & Denver Moore

This is a book that is factual but could just as easily be fiction. It tells the unlikely story of the unlikeliest of friends--Ron Hall and Denver Moore. Told in two voices, the book alternates between telling the story from the perspective of Ron and Denver. Denver is a dangerous, homeless drifter who grew up picking cotton in virtual slavery. Ron an upscale art dealer accustomed to the world of Armani and Chanel. Ron's wife, is a gutsy woman with a stubborn dream. Gritty with pain and betrayal and brutality, this true story also shines with an unexpected, life-changing love. Ron Hall is a wealthy international art dealer who travels the world buying and selling rare and expensive works of art. He has grown rich but has also grown selfish and has grown away from his family. When Ron Hall reluctantly volunteers at a homeless shelter (at the insistence of his wife) he soon comes into contact with Denver, a man his wife is convinced is going to change the city. Denver grew up as a sharecropper in Louisiana, living a life that seemed little different from the life of his ancestors hundreds of years before. He eventually walked away from the cotton fields and found that, while life on the streets of Fort Worth was difficult, it was easier than being a sharecropper. It was here, in a homeless shelter, that the two men met, one serving food and the other being a reluctant recipient of this charity. At first unable to crack Denver's stony personality, Hall eventually prevails and strikes up a friendship with a man worlds apart. They become fast friends who endure a tragedy together and who soon grow in their love, respect and admiration of each other. Each man teaches the other about life and faith. Somehow the story of the relationship between these two men is fascinating and inspiring. It offers a glimpse into two worlds that are nearly opposite and shows what happens when these worlds come into contact with each other. I can still hardly believe this was not a novel. It is a book that is recommended for a stirring and unforgettable story, and for the pure joy of reading it.

MARCH Book Review: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot

Amazon Best Books of the Month, February 2010: From a single, abbreviated life grew a seemingly immortal line of cells that made some of the most crucial innovations in modern science possible. And from that same life, and those cells, Rebecca Skloot has fashioned in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* a fascinating and moving story of medicine and family, of how life is sustained in laboratories and in memory. Henrietta Lacks was a mother of five in Baltimore, a poor African American migrant from the tobacco farms of Virginia, who died from a cruelly aggressive cancer at the age of 30 in 1951. A sample of her cancerous tissue, taken without her knowledge or consent, as was the custom then, turned out to provide one of the holy grails of mid-century biology: human cells that could survive--even thrive--in the lab. Known as HeLa cells, their stunning potency gave scientists a building block for countless breakthroughs, beginning with the cure for polio. Meanwhile, Henrietta's family continued to live in poverty and frequently poor health, and their discovery decades later of her unknowing contribution--and her

cells' strange survival--left them full of pride, anger, and suspicion. For a decade, Skloot doggedly but compassionately gathered the threads of these stories, slowly gaining the trust of the family while helping them learn the truth about Henrietta, and with their aid she tells a rich and haunting story that asks the questions, Who owns our bodies? And who carries our memories? A detective story that's at once mythically large and painfully intimate. But what's truly remarkable about Rebecca Skloot's book is that we also get the rest of the story, the part that could have easily remained hidden had she not spent ten years unearthing it: Who was Henrietta Lacks? How did she live? How she did die? Did her family know that she'd become, in some sense, immortal, and how did that affect them? These are crucial questions, because science should never forget the people who gave it life. And so, what unfolds is not only a reporting tour de force but also a very entertaining account of Henrietta, her ancestors, her cells and the scientists who grew them.

En Español: *LA VIDA INMORTAL DE FALTAS de HENRIETTA* Rebecca Skloot

Amazonas Mejores Libros del Mes, 2010 de febrero: De un soltero, la vida abreviada creció una línea aparentemente inmortal de células que hicieron algunas de las innovaciones más cruciales en la ciencia moderna posible. Y de esa misma vida, y de esas células, Rebecca Skloot ha ideado en *La Vida Inmortal de Henrietta Falta* un fascinar y la historia conmovedora de medicina y familia, de cómo la vida es sostenida en laboratorios y en la memoria. Las Faltas de Henrietta fueron una madre de cinco en Baltimore, un emigrante norteamericano, africano y pobre de las granjas de tabaco de Virginia, que se murió de un cáncer cruelmente agresivo a los 30 años en 1951. Una muestra de su tejido canceroso, tomado sin su conocimiento o el consentimiento, como fue la costumbre entonces, resultó para proporcionar uno de los santogriales de la biología de medio-siglo: células humanas que podrían sobrevivir -- prospera aún -- en el laboratorio. Conocido como células de HeLa, su potencia imponente les dio a científicos un componente para adelantos innumerables, empezando con la curación para la polio. Mientras tanto, la familia de Henrietta continuó vivir en la pobreza y la salud con frecuencia pobre, y en sus décadas de descubrimiento luego de su contribución desconocedora -- y su supervivencia extraña de células -- los dejó lleno de orgullo, del enojo, y de la sospecha. ¿Por una década, Skloot reunió compasivamente pero tenazmente los hilos de estas historias, ganando lentamente la confianza de la familia al ayudar ellos aprenden la verdad acerca de Henrietta, y con su ayuda ella dice una historia rica e inolvidable que hace las preguntas, ¿Que posee nuestros cuerpos? ¿Y que lleva nuestras memorias? Una novela policíaca que es inmediatamente míticamente grande e insinúa dolorosamente. Pero lo que es sinceramente notable acerca del libro de Rebecca Skloot es que nosotros también conseguimos el resto de la historia, la parte que se podría haber quedado fácilmente ocultado tuvo ella no pasó diez años lo desenterrando: ¿Quién fue Faltas de Henrietta? ¿Cómo vivió ella? ¿Cómo se murió? ¿Supo su familia que llegaría a ser, en algún sentido, el inmortal, y cómo los afectó eso? Estos son preguntas cruciales, porque la ciencia nunca debe olvidarse a las personas que dieron vida. Y así, lo que despliega es no sólo una hazaña de cobertura pero también una cuenta muy divertida de Henrietta, sus antepasados, sus células y los científicos que los crecieron.

February Book Review: *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks

Amazon Best of the Month, January 2008: One of the earliest Jewish religious volumes to be illuminated with images, the Sarajevo Haggadah survived centuries of purges and wars thanks to people of all faiths who risked their lives to safeguard it. Geraldine Brooks, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *March*, has turned the intriguing but sparsely detailed history of this precious volume into an emotionally rich, thrilling fictionalization that retraces its turbulent journey. In the hands of Hanna Heath, an impassioned rare-book expert restoring the manuscript in 1996 Sarajevo, it yields clues to its guardians and whereabouts: an insect wing, a wine stain, salt crystals, and a white hair. While readers experience crucial moments in the book's history through a series of fascinating, fleshed-out short stories, Hanna pursues its secrets scientifically, and finds that some interests will still risk everything in the name of protecting this treasure. A complex love story, thrilling mystery, vivid history lesson, and celebration of the enduring power of ideas. Like the illustrations in the Haggadah, each of these sections transports the reader to a fully realized, vividly peopled world. And each gives a glimpse of both the long history of anti-Semitism and of the struggle of women toward the independence that Hanna, despite her mother's lectures, tends to take for granted. Brooks is too good a novelist to belabor her political messages, but her depiction of the Haggadah bringing together Jews, Christians and Muslims could not be more timely. Her gift for storytelling, happily, is timeless.

EN ESPAÑOL: *Gente del Libro* Geraldine Brooks

Amazon Mejor del Mes, Enero de 2008: Uno de los primeros volúmenes de judíos religiosos que se ilumina con las imágenes, la Hagadá de Sarajevo sobrevivió a siglos de guerras purgas y gracias a las personas de todas las religiones que arriesgaron sus vidas para protegerla. Geraldine Brooks, el autor ganador del Premio Pulitzer de marzo, ha convertido a la intrigante historia, pero sparsely detallada de este precioso volumen en una rica y emotiva, ficcionalización emocionante que narra su viaje turbulento. En las manos de Hanna Heath, un experto apasionado de libros raros restaurar el manuscrito en 1996, Sarajevo, da pistas sobre su paradero y tutores: el ala de un insecto, una mancha de vino, cristales de sal, y un pelo blanco. Mientras que los lectores la experiencia momentos cruciales en la historia del libro a través de una serie de historias fascinantes, corta carne de espera, Hanna persigue sus secretos científicos, y considera que algunos intereses todavía arriesgarlo todo en nombre de la protección de este tesoro. Una historia de amor compleja, emocionante misterio, lección de historia viva, y la celebración del poder duradero de las ideas. Al igual que las ilustraciones de la Hagadá, cada una de estas secciones transporta al lector a una plena realización, el mundo vívidamente poblado. Y cada uno da una idea tanto de la larga historia del antisemitismo y de la lucha de las mujeres hacia la independencia que Hanna, a pesar de su madre, conferencias, tiende a dar por sentado. Brooks es demasiado buen novelista dediquen a sus mensajes políticos, pero su descripción de la Hagadá que reúne a Judíos, cristianos y musulmanes no puede ser más oportuna. Su don para contar historias, felizmente, es atemporal.

JANUARY'S BOOK REVIEW: *Fatherless* by Brian J. Gail

In the Catholic novel *Fatherless*, author Brian J. Gail takes dead aim at the pervasive denials and chronic weaknesses that afflict men of every age, but especially men of the post-Pill generation. *"I think the greatest contribution of Mr. Gail's book is the honest presentation of real-life scenarios of how much damage the Pill has caused men and their relationships with women. No one thinks that the Pill is a man's issue, but Gail shatters that denial with his insightful rendering of the accounts of woe that follow in the train of the poison Pill. All men, not just Christians, need to read this and weep (in repentance) and then get up and make a difference in the world by taking on themselves once again the role of the virtuous man, father and warrior."* - Fr. Tom Euteneuer, President, Human Life International. *"Fatherless is an exciting, compelling and profound fictional account, but much more importantly, it's also an accurate and profound snapshot of the problems in the Church today, in the midst of a society steeped in contraception and abortion, and a cultural disregard for the sanctity of marriage and family life. This book is a must-read for all Catholics yearning for the end of the culture of death"*. --Judy Brown, President of American Life League. *"A gripping and deeply moving read that is, at the same time, a hauntingly beautiful exploration of man, God, morality, faith and the Church in our contemporary world. Masterfully done..."* --Roy Shoeman, Author, *Salvation is from the Jews*.

EN ESPAÑOL: Huérfano de padre Brian J. Gail

En la novela católica sin padre, autor Brian J. Gail apunta muertos en la negación generalizada y debilidades crónicas que afligen a los hombres los hombres de todas las edades, pero especialmente de la generación posterior a la píldora. Creo que el mayor aporte del libro del Sr. Gail es la presentación honesta de los escenarios de la vida real de los hombres cuánto daño ha causado la píldora y sus relaciones con las mujeres. Nadie piensa que la píldora es cuestión de un hombre, pero Gail rompe que la denegación de su prestación profundo de las cuentas de la aflicción que siguen en el tren de la píldora de veneno. Todos los hombres, no sólo los cristianos, tienen que leer esto y llorar (en el arrepentimiento) y luego levantarse y hacer una diferencia en el mundo, tomando sobre sí mismos, una vez más el papel del hombre virtuoso padre, y el guerrero. - Padre. Tom Euteneuer, Presidente de Vida Humana Internacional Huérfano es un relato de ficción emocionante, atractiva y profunda, pero mucho más importante, es también una instantánea precisa y profunda de los problemas en la Iglesia de hoy, en medio de una sociedad inmersa en la anticoncepción y el aborto, y una cultura desprecio por la santidad del matrimonio y la vida familiar. Este libro es una lectura obligada para todo anhelo de Católicas por el final de la cultura de la muerte. - Presidente Judy Brown, de la Liga American Life Un apasionante y profundamente conmovedor leer que es, al mismo tiempo, una exploración inquietantemente bello del hombre, Dios, la moral, la fe y la Iglesia en el mundo contemporáneo. Magistralmente hecho ... - Roy Shoeman, Autor, La salvación viene de los Judios

DECEMBER'S BOOK REVIEW: *From the Pews in the Back* Kate Dugan & Jennifer Owens

More testimony and cries from the heart than complaint, Kate Dugan's and Jen Owens' eloquent often poetic collection of memoirs from young Catholic women is deeply rooted in their

Catholic identity. These young women are willing to raise difficult questions, but always with an appreciation of a church that for all its failings has nourished their faith and remains for them a home. They represent a significant part of the Catholic community; their story deserves a hearing. These brief memoirs plus the insights of the editors offer a glimpse into what it means to be young, Catholic, and female in today's Church. These women wrestle with the Catholic faith as all do and they ask hard questions of the institution yet are not willing to take easy answers. Ultimately, these women are stubbornly hopeful, claiming a place in the Church and are calling other Catholics to talk with them about this claim.

EN ESPAÑOL: Desde las bancas en la espalda Kate y Owens Jennifer Dugan

Más testimonios y gritos desde el corazón de queja, Kate Dugan y Owens Jen "elocuente menudo colección poética de las memorias de las mujeres jóvenes católicos está profundamente arraigada en su identidad católica. Estas jóvenes están dispuestos a plantear preguntas difíciles, pero siempre con una apreciación de una iglesia que, para todos sus defectos ha nutrido su fe y sigue siendo para ellos un hogar. Representan una parte importante de la comunidad católica, su historia merece una audiencia. Estas breves memorias más los puntos de vista de los editores ofrecen una idea de lo que significa ser joven, católica, y la mujer en la Iglesia de hoy. Estas mujeres luchan con la fe católica como todos lo hacen y hacen preguntas difíciles de la institución todavía no están dispuestos a asumir respuestas fáciles. En última instancia, estas mujeres son obstinadamente esperanzado, reclamando un lugar en la Iglesia y los católicos están pidiendo otros a hablar con ellos sobre esta afirmación.

NOVEMBER'S BOOK REVIEW: Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Journey to Promote Peace Greg Mortenson & David Oliver Relin

Some failures lead to phenomenal successes, and this American's unsuccessful attempt to climb the world's second tallest mountain is one of them. Dangerously ill when he finished his climb in 1993, Mortenson was sheltered for seven weeks by the small Pakistani village of Korphe; in return, he promised to build the impoverished town's first school, a project that grew into the Centra Asis Institute, which has since constructed more than 50 schools across rural Pakistan and Afganistan. Coauthor Relin recounts Mortenson's efforts in fascinating detail, presenting compelling portraits of the village elders, con artists, philanthropists, mujahideen, Taliban officials, ambitious school girls and upright Muslims that Mortenson met along the way. As the books moves into the post 9/11 world, Mortenson and Relin argue that the United States must fight Islamic extremism in the region through collaborative efforts to alleviate poverty and improve access to education, especially girls. Captivating and suspenseful, with engrossing accounts of both hostilities and unlikely friendships, this book will win many readers hearts.

EN ESPAÑOL Tres tazas de té: El viaje de un hombre para promover la paz Greg Mortenson y David Oliver Relin

Algunos fracasos conducen a éxitos fenomenales, y el intento fallido de este americano de subir del mundo segunda montaña más alta es una de ellas. Gravemente enfermo cuando

terminó su ascenso en 1993, Mortenson fue protegido durante siete semanas por la pequeña aldea paquistaní de Korphe, a cambio, se comprometió a construir la primera escuela del pueblo empobrecido, un proyecto que se convirtió en el Instituto Centra Asis, que desde entonces ha construido más de 50 escuelas rurales a través de Pakistán y Afganistán. Coautor RELIN Mortenson narra los esfuerzos de detalles fascinantes, presentar retratos convincentes de los ancianos del pueblo, los estafadores, los filántropos, muyahidines, los funcionarios de los talibanes, las niñas de la escuela ambicioso y musulmanes en posición vertical que Mortenson se reunió a lo largo del camino. A medida que los libros en el puesto 9 / 11, Mortenson y RELIN argumentan que Estados Unidos debe luchar contra el extremismo islámico en la región a través de esfuerzos de colaboración para aliviar la pobreza y mejorar el acceso a la educación, especialmente las niñas. Cautivadora y llena de suspenso, con las cuentas fascinante de las hostilidades y amistades tanto poco probable, este libro va a ganar los corazones de muchos lectores.

SEPTEMBER'S BOOK REVIEW: *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak

This is a story told by Death. An interesting point of view perhaps, but as it is set in Germany during World War II, perhaps it is entirely appropriate. It is also a story of a young girl, who in spite of having a life that no one would wish on anyone, still manages to have glimpses of pleasure through many small things, including the few books that she manages to acquire (or shall we say, steal). Death, it turns out, is not proud. The narrator of *The Book Thief* is many things -- sardonic, wry, darkly humorous, compassionate -- but not especially proud. As author Marcus Zusak channels him, Death -- who doesn't carry a scythe but gets a kick out of the idea -- is as afraid of humans as humans are of him. Death meets the book thief, a 9-year-old girl named Liesel Meminger, when he comes to take her little brother, and she becomes an enduring force in his life, despite his efforts to resist her. As Death lingers at the burial, he watches the girl, who can't yet read, steal a gravedigger's instruction manual. Thus Liesel is touched first by Death, then by words, as if she knows she'll need their comfort during the hardships ahead. Stolen books form the spine of the story. Though Liesel's foster father realizes the subject matter isn't ideal, he uses "The Grave Digger's Handbook" to teach her to read. "If I die anytime soon, you make sure they bury me right," he tells her, and she solemnly agrees. Reading opens new worlds to her; soon she is looking for other material for distraction. She rescues a book from a pile being burned by the Nazis, then begins stealing more books from the mayor's wife. And it is the book she is writing herself that, ultimately, will save Liesel's life. Death recounts all this mostly dispassionately -- you can tell he almost hates to be involved. His language is spare but evocative, and he's fond of emphasizing points with bold type and centered pronouncements, just to make sure you get them (how almost endearing that is, that Death feels a need to emphasize anything). "A NICE THOUGHT," Death will suddenly announce, or "A KEY WORD." Death, like Liesel, has a way with words. And he recognizes them not only for the good they can do, but for the evil as well. What would Hitler have been, after all, without words? As this book reminds us, what would any of us be? To add extra punch to the story, it appears that it is the true story of the author's grandmother. When you consider this, you realise how truly resilient we humans are, and how occasionally, and with a bit of luck, we can hold off death for a time Reviewed by Elizabeth Chang Copyright 2006, The Washington Post.

EN ESPAÑOL EL LIBRO LADRON *Marcus Zusak* Esto es una historia dicho por la Muerte. Un punto de vista interesante quizás, pero como es puesto en Alemania durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, quizás es enteramente apropiado. Es también una historia de una joven chica, que a pesar de tener una vida que nadie desearía en cualquiera, todavía logra tener vislumbres del placer por muchas pequeñas cosas, inclusive los pocos libros que logra adquirir (o ir decimos, robamos). La muerte, resulta, no está orgulloso. El narrador de El Ladrón de Libro es muchas cosas -- sardónico, retorcido, en enigma humorístico, compasivo -- pero no especialmente orgulloso. Como autor Marcus Zusak lo acanala, la Muerte -- que no lleva una guadaña pero se refocila la idea -- está como atemorizado de humanos como humanos son de él. La muerte encuentra al ladrón de libro, una chica de 9 años de edad denominó Liesel Meminger, cuando viene a tomar a su hermanito, y ella llega a ser una fuerza duradera en su vida, a pesar de sus esfuerzos de resistirla. Como la Muerte demora en el entierro, él mira a la chica, que todavía no puede leer, roba manual de la instrucción de un sepulturero. Así Liesel es tocado primero por Muerte, entonces por palabras, como si sepa que necesitará su consuelo durante las dificultades adelante. Libros robados forman la espina dorsal de la historia. Aunque padre adoptivo de Liesel se da cuenta de que el tema no es ideal, utiliza "Guía de La Excavadora Grave" enseñarla leer. "Si me muero en cualquier momento pronto, usted se asegura de que me entierran derecho," la dice, y concuerda solemnemente. Leer abre nuevos mundos a ella; pronto busca otro material para la distracción. Rescata un libro de una pila para ser quemado por los nazis, entonces empieza robando más libros de la esposa del alcalde. Y es el libro que se escribe eso, últimamente, guardará la vida de Liesel. La muerte recuerda todo este en su mayor parte de modo desapasionado -- puede decir él casi odios para ser implicados. Su idioma es sobrante pero evocador, y es aficionado de acentuar los puntos con negrita y declaraciones centradas, para asegurarse de sólo que los consigue (cuán casi atrayendo que es, que Muerte se siente que una necesidad de acentuar algo). "Una NIZA PENSO," la Muerte anunciará de repente, o "UNA PALABRA CLAVE". La muerte, como Liesel, tiene una manera con palabras. Y los reconoce no sólo para el bueno pueden hacer, pero para la mal también. ¿Qué habría sido Hitler, después de todo, sin palabras? ¿Como este libro nos recuerda, qué hace cualquiera de nosotros es? Para agregar puñetazo extra a la historia, parece que es la historia verdadera de la abuela del autor. Cuando considera esto, usted se da cuenta de cómo sinceramente resilient nosotros los humanos somos, y cuán ocasionalmente, y con un golpe de suerte, nosotros podemos rechazar la muerte para un tiempo Revisado por Derecho de autor de Elizabeth Chang 2006, El Poste de Washington.

AUGUST'S BOOK REVIEW: *The Shack Wm. Paul Young*

William P. Young's book has an intriguing premise. Years ago, a father name MacKenzie Phillips took his children camping and lost one of them to a man who has kidnapped and killed others. Mack has grieved since then. His marriage has struggled. Understandably, his relationship with God has suffered. Then, one wintry day, he receives a note in his mailbox

inviting him back to the woods, to the shack in which his daughter's dress and bloodstains were found. The note, it would seem, is from God. From this simple yet effective premise, Young leads Mack Phillips back to his point of despair and anger. The encounters he then has with God there in "The Shack" serve as thought-provoking moments for both Mack and the reader. This is not the God of stodgy Sunday school classes. This is not a flannel-graph Jesus. This is not limited to a fluttering dove of the Holy Spirit. The descriptions here are startling, while remaining true to the nature of God's love and grace as portrayed through Scripture. Not only are they startling, they're wise and moving and beautiful. Some might argue that "The Shack" has little theology or accuracy to it, but the very argument is what Young is trying to melt away. The majority of Mack's godly encounters could be wrapped up in biblical theology: redemption, grace, forgiveness, propitiation, etc. The words spoken by God in this book are full of vibrancy and life.

En Español El libro de William P. Young. William P. Young 's tiene una premisa intrigante. Hace años, un padre de nombre MacKenzie Phillips llevó a sus hijos de campamento y perdido a uno de ellos a un hombre que ha secuestrado y matado a otros. Mack ha llorado desde entonces. Su matrimonio ha luchado. Es comprensible que su relación con Dios ha sufrido. Entonces, un día de invierno, recibe una nota en su buzón de correo a quien invito de nuevo a los bosques, a la choza en la que se encontraron vestido de su hija y manchas de sangre. En la nota, al parecer, viene de Dios. A partir de esta premisa simple pero eficaz, conduce joven Mack Phillips regresó a su punto de la desesperación y la ira. Los encuentros que se tiene con Dios existe en 'La Cabaña' servir como momentos invita a la reflexión tanto para Mack y el lector. Este no es el Dios de la pesada clases de escuela dominical. Esto no es un Jesús gráfico de franela. Esto no se limita a un aleteo paloma del Espíritu Santo. Las descripciones que aquí son alarmantes, sin dejar de ser fiel a la naturaleza del amor y gracia de Dios tal como es representado a través de las Escrituras. No sólo son alarmantes, que es sabio y el movimiento y belleza. Algunos podrían argumentar que 'The Shack' tiene poca teología o la precisión a la misma, pero el argumento es muy joven lo está tratando a desaparecer. La mayoría de los encuentros piadosos Mack podría concluirse en la teología bíblica: la redención, gracia, perdón, expiación, etc las palabras pronunciadas por Dios en este libro están llenas de vitalidad y vida

JULY'S BOOK REVIEW: *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* by Paulo Coelho

This first United States paperback of *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* comes after huge worldwide sales of the novel of faith, romance, miracles, and the importance of following the heart's true path. The inspirational tale follows Pilar, a young woman from the Spanish countryside who, sparked by the teachings of a now-mysterious man she has known and loved since childhood, leaves her graduate studies and embarks on a spiritual pilgrimage through the Pyrenees Mountains and reevaluates her life and her future. Its' heroine is Pilar and she learns over the course of seven days that "the spiritual path is traveled by means of the daily experience of love." The Brazilian author Coelho's works speak to our spirit and our soul, to a

part of us that some pejoratively call our naiveté. Those who have been disillusioned and enthralled by reason and who no longer believe in anything except the things they can see and touch won't appreciate Coelho's stories of Personal Legends and the heart's call, of angels' tidings and the Soul of the World. Yet for most of us who still bask in our childlike inheritance of imagination and fantasy and intuition, Coelho is an elixir in a world that adulthood daily turns into a dreary desert.

En Español: Por Piedra del río Sentado y Llorado Paulo Coelho

Esta primera edición en rústica de los Estados Unidos de *Por Piedra del río Sentado y Lloré* viene después de ventas mundiales enormes de la novela de fe, romance, milagros, y la importancia de seguir el camino verdadero del corazón. El cuento inspirador sigue a Pilar, una mujer joven del campo español que, provocado por las enseñanzas de un hombre ahora misterioso ella ha conocido y ha amado desde la infancia, deja sus estudios de graduado y emprende una peregrinación espiritual por las Montañas de Pirineos y reevalua su vida y su futuro. Su heroína es Pilar aprende sobre el curso de siete días que "el camino espiritual es viajado por medio de la experiencia diaria del amor." Los trabajos del autor Brasileño Coelho hablan a nuestro espíritu y nuestra alma, a una parte de nosotros que algunos pejoratively llaman nuestro candor. Aquellos que han sido desilusionados y cautivados por la razón y quiénes ya no creen en algo excepto las cosas que ellos pueden ver y toque no apreciarán las historias de Coelho de *Leyendas Personales* y *llamada del corazón*, de las noticias de los ángeles y el Alma del Mundo. Aún para la mayor parte de nosotros que todavía tomamos sol en nuestra herencia infantil de imaginación y fantasía e intuición, Coelho es un elixir en un mundo que la edad adulta diariamente convierte en un desierto triste.

JUNE'S BOOK REVIEW: *How Big Is Your God? by Paul Coutinho, SJ.*

Paul Coutinho is an Indian Jesuit priest with a genial sense of humor and a penchant for asking deeply thought-provoking spiritual questions: Do you have a relationship with God, or do you have a religion? In "How Big Is Your God?" Fr. Coutinho challenges readers to grow stronger and deeper in heir faith by embracing a God whose love knows no bounds. Conversant with India's Hindu and Buddhist traditions, Coutinho effectively uses this story to illustrate the differences between the Western and Eastern understandings of truth. Throughout this volume of short essays, Fr. Coutinho draws on Eastern religious traditions, blending them with his own Catholic practice to deepen the readers' understandings of God. Coutinho focuses on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola to continually shape his reflection and prayer life and yet, introduces readers to his Hindu friends, to his Buddhist teachers, and other enlightened guides who lead him to a more meaningful spiritual life.

Cuan Grande es Su Dios? Paul Coutiho

Paul Coutiho, S.J., es un sacerdote jesuita indio con un sentido del humor afable y una inclinación para preguntar preguntas profundamente thought-provocando de espiritual. ¿En "HowBig Es Su Dios"? Fr. Coutinho desafía a lectores a crecer más fuerte y más profundo en su embrasing de fe B un Dios cuyo adora knws no salta. Coutinno ha vivido mucho de su vida en India. Versado en hindú de India y tradiciones budistas él utiliza efectivamente esta historia para ilustrar las diferencias entre undertandings Occidental y Oriental de la verdad. Throught

este volumen de ensayos cortos, Coutinho utiliza tradiciones Orientales que los mezclan con su propia práctica de Catholic para desafiar y profundizar las comprensiones de lectores de Dios. Todo el hilo los Ejercicios Espirituales de S. Ignatius de Loyola para formar su vida de relectura y oración.

MAY'S BOOK REVIEW: *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis

C.S. Lewis famous for the Chronicles of Narnia series tackled Christianity with eloquence, wit, and charm. His book, *Mere Christianity*, began as a lecture in war torn Britain and applies to today's world also. In 1943 Great Britain, when hope and the fabric of society were threatened by global war, an Oxford don was invited to give a series of radio lectures addressing the central issues of Christianity. The late Lewis, professor, scholar, author, and Christian apologist, presents the listener with a case for orthodox Christianity. This is definitely not the shouting, stomping, sweating, televangelist far so often parodied. Lewis employs logical arguments that are eloquently expressed. He describes those doctrines that the four major denominations in Britain (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic) would have in common such as original sin, the Creator God, and the divinity of Jesus as well as his atonement and bodily resurrection.

En Español: Mero Cristianismo

C.S. Lewis es un autor que no tiene temor a exponer abiertamente sus dudas y preguntas pues para toda pregunta hay con seguridad una respuesta. Me enseñó a no tener miedo a cuestionar y leer con profundidad la Biblia pues únicamente entiendo bien la palabra de Dios es que podemos aplicarla en nuestras vidas.

Mero Cristianismo reúne las legendarias charlas radiofónicas de D.S. Lewis que se transmitieron durante tiempos de Guerra, charlas en las cuales él se proponía "explicar y defender las creencias que han sido comunes a casi todos los cristianos de todos los tiempos." Rechazando los límites que dividen las distintas denominaciones del cristianismo, C.S. Lewis ofrece una inigualable oportunidad al creyente y al no creyente para escuchar un argumento fuerte y racional para la fe Cristiana.

APRIL'S BOOK REVIEW: *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho

A new feature of Adult Faith Formation is to offer monthly reviews of authors and their books that may be inspirational to you. PAULO COELHO was born in 1947 in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Paulo is a Catholic and after a pilgrimage in 1986 to St. James of Compostella he dedicated his life to writing including an account of his pilgrimage. In 1987 Coelho published *The Alchemist* which became one of the best selling books in Brazil. Coelho's books are published in many languages. A short review in English and Spanish follows: THE ALCHEMIST This inspirational fable by Paulo Coelho is a runaway best seller in many countries. The charming tale of Santiago, a shepherd boy, who dreams of seeing the world, is compelling in its own right, but gains resonance through the many lessons Santiago learns during his adventures. He journeys from Spain to Morocco in search of worldly success, and eventually to Egypt, where a fateful encounter with an alchemist brings him at last to self understanding and spiritual enlightenment. The story has the comedic charm, dramatic tension and psychological intensity of a fairy tale, but it is full of specific wisdom as well, about becoming self-empowered, overcoming depression, and believing in dreams.

EL ALQUIMISTA: EN ESPAÑOL

Este es el primer libro de Paulo Coelho que leo y la verdad me dejó un buen sabor de boca. El libro narra la historia de Santiago un pastor español en busca de su "leyenda personal".

Realmente este es un libro muy motivante, el cual desde que comence no lo pude dejar hasta que lo termine, un libro muy recomendable. (Jose Domingo Diaz Weffer)

Paulo Coelho has a large resume of books to his credit. If you like this one you may find that he is an author that inspires you. The paperback editions are not expensive and are easily found in bookstores and on-line. Eventually the AFF would like to start a book exchange. We will give you more information on that as it develops.