

Spring Holiday Reviews

Adult Books

LENT

THE JOURNEY TO PEACE: Reflections on Faith, Embracing Suffering, and Finding New Life

JOSEPH CARDINAL BERNARDIN, EDITED BY ALPHONSE P. SPILLY AND JEREMY LANGFORD. Doubleday, \$17.95 (176p) ISBN 0-385-50101-3

★ Bernardin (1928–1996) touched the hearts of many with his bestselling book, *The Gift of Peace*, released two months after his death from pancreatic cancer. Here more than 30 of his unpublished homilies have been carefully edited and framed in the context of the Stations of the Cross, allowing readers “to enter more deeply into the mystery of Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection.” Editors Spilly and Langford perceptively connect the Sixth Station (in which Veronica wipes Jesus’ brow) to a homily on personal service, and interpret the Tenth Station (in which Jesus is stripped naked) to Bernardin’s poignant reflections on the Holocaust. This short book is a perfect aid for meditation during Lent or any time in the liturgical year. (Mar.)

IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS: The Deeper Meaning of Calvary

RAY PRITCHARD. Broadman & Holman, \$19.99 (256p) ISBN 0-8054-2341-9

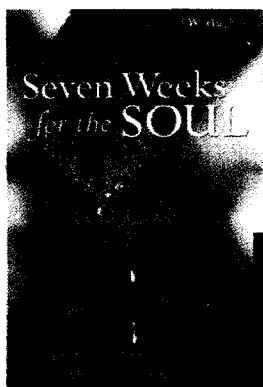
What is the meaning of the cross? Illinois pastor Pritchard examines its significance from seven perspectives: what it meant to God, to Jesus, to Satan, to the world, to the church, for human sin and in heaven. But all of this comes after Pritchard analyzes a totally different list of seven: the seven sayings of Christ on the cross. These are both fine topics (with the analysis of Jesus’ words making for a more original book), but they are in competition here. Lenten readers may wish to do what Pritchard should have done: divide his careful ruminations into two shorter devotionals, using one this Holy Week and one next year. (Mar.)

SEVEN WEEKS FOR THE SOUL: A Reflective Journey for Lent or Other Times of Renewal

GERARD W. HUGHES. Loyola, \$12.95 paper (272p) ISBN 0-8294-1511-4

Hughes compares the 40-odd days of Lent

Adult reviews by Jana Riess; children’s review by Elizabeth Devereaux.



Holiday titles from Loyola, Doubleday and JPS.

to the rebellious Israelites’ 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, noting that such periods of spiritual exile constitute important stages on the journey of faith. Emphasizing that Lent is a time for repentance, Hughes puts forth ancient penitent practices such as fasting and almsgiving to promote introspective contrition. Throughout, Hughes characterizes Lent as a time of quiet celebration, arguing that great joy is not antithetical to self-denial and mortification. The book is thoughtful, but Hughes does himself a disservice by claiming that the seven-week program can be useful for “two-minutes-a-day people” as well as those with several hours to spare; these spiritual exercises justifiably require time and careful attention. (Feb.)

FAITH ODYSSEY: A Journey Through Lent

RICHARD A. BURRIDGE. Eerdmans, \$15 paper (226p) ISBN 0-8028-3897-9

This book definitely charts a new frontier. Burridge does the scripture-a-day approach of most Lenten devotionals, but adds the unique twist of also drawing from sci-fi outlets such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars* and *The Matrix*. Weaving themes of self-sacrifice and cosmic conflict, Burridge dances eloquently between faith and fiction. He is particularly drawn to Arthur C. Clarke’s 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (as evidenced by the devotional’s title) and the various *Star Trek* manifestations. It’s a privilege to encounter Christian theology that undertakes a serious dialogue with the imagi-

nation of popular culture, and is as informed by the likes of Tolkien and Asimov as by the usual religious suspects. (Feb.)

EVEN AMONG THESE ROCKS: A Spiritual Journey

STEVEN D. PURCELL. Paraclete, \$22 (104p) ISBN 1-55725-273-4

★ This unique, wholly original volume traces Purcell’s own spiritual journey through Lent, beginning with a chapter on temptation and ending with “The Final Act” of the crucifixion. Purcell cautions that “we should expect that the journey of Lent will never deliver us to a plateau of power. Rather it will consistently lead us back to the powerlessness of the Lamb.” The book’s design is simply gorgeous, with art from the likes of Rembrandt, Caravaggio, Dürer and Grünewald blending seamlessly with Purcell’s own effusive watercolors. Purcell draws meditative texts from the Gospels and the Psalms, and reproduces 20th-century poetry by W.H. Auden, Denise Levertov and T. S. Eliot. The entire text is hand-lettered by Purcell, making readers feel as though they have just received a personal letter from a cherished friend. (Feb.)

EASTER

WHY CELEBRATE EASTER

STEVE RUSSO. Broadman & Holman, \$9.99 paper (144p) ISBN 0-8054-2424-5

Many faithful Christians struggle to keep the theological message of Easter in the center of their celebrations, not hidden and scattered like so many Easter eggs. Russo (who became something of a holy-day hero through his book *Keeping Christ in Christmas*) gives them a load of practical suggestions for doing so, drawing upon centuries of liturgical traditions. Russo’s brief historical backgrounds are fascinating (whoever heard of Quinquagesima Sunday, the Sunday before Ash Wednesday?). The book points to a treasure trove of Christ-centered celebrations that can help Christians focus more on Easter’s theological message than its various cultural trappings. (Mar.)

HE WAS HERE: Those Who Knew Jesus Speak

IVAN J. KAUFFMAN. Brazos, \$14.99 (176p) ISBN 1-58743-005-3

The well-worn literary device of this devotional is to trot out a few dozen people who knew Jesus personally and “let” them tell the stories of their encounters with Jesus.