

## St. Cecilia Morning Book Group 2018-19

Second Wednesdays of month, St. Monica Room

9:45 AM to Noon

For info, contact: [susanarens@gmail.com](mailto:susanarens@gmail.com)

### Reading List:

- Sept 12      Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship by Gregory Boyle
- Oct 10      Scalia Speaks: Reflections on Law, Faith & Life Well-Lived by Antonin Scalia
- Nov 14      Gratefulness: The Habit of a Grace-filled Life by Susan Auto
- Dec 12      The Inner Experience: Notes on Contemplation by Thomas Merton
- Jan 9        Why Buddhism is True by Robert Wright
- Feb 13      The Depth of God's Reach: A Spirituality of Christ's Descent by Michael Downey
- Mar 13      Silence by Shusako Endo
- Apr 10      Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others by Barbara Brown Taylor
- May 8        Paul, the Apostle: Missionary, Martyr, Theologian by Robert E. Picirilli
- June 12     TBD. 7 pm Wine & Cheese book discussion w/Evening Book Group

### Book Synopses:

**Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship** by Gregory Boyle, 224 pg.

Boyle is an American Jesuit priest and the founder of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, the largest gang-intervention, rehabilitation, and reentry program in the world. He received the California Peace Prize and was inducted into the California Hall of Fame. In 2014, the White House named Boyle a Champion of Change. He is acclaimed author of *Tattoos on the Heart* (2010).

**Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others** by Barbara Brown Taylor, 240 pp.

Taylor continues her spiritual journey begun in *Leaving Church* of finding out what the world looks like after taking off her clergy collar. In *Holy Envy*, she contemplates the myriad ways other people and traditions encounter the Transcendent, both by digging deeper into those traditions herself and by seeing them through her students' eyes as she sets off with them on field trips to monasteries, temples, and mosques.

**Silence** by Shusako Endo, 256 pp.

Seventeenth-century Japan: Two Portuguese Jesuit priests travel to a country hostile to their religion, where feudal lords force the faithful to publicly renounce their beliefs. Eventually captured and forced to watch their Japanese Christian brothers lay down their lives for their faith, the priests bear witness to unimaginable cruelties that test their own beliefs. Shusaku Endo is one of the most celebrated and well-known Japanese **fiction** writers of the twentieth century, and *Silence* is widely considered to be his great masterpiece.

**Why Buddhism is True** by Robert Wright. 336 pp.

From one of America's most brilliant writers, a *New York Times* bestselling journey through psychology, philosophy, and lots of meditation to show how Buddhism holds the key to moral clarity and enduring happiness. At the heart of Buddhism is a simple claim: The reason we suffer—and the reason we make other people suffer—is that we don't see the world clearly. At the heart of Buddhist meditative practice is a radical promise: We can learn to see the world, including ourselves, more clearly and so gain a deep and morally valid happiness.

**The Inner Experience: Notes on Contemplation** by Thomas Merton, 176 pp.

This is Merton's last book, in which he draws on both Eastern and Western traditions to explore the hot topic of contemplation/meditation in depth and to show how we can practice true contemplation in everyday life. Never before published except as a series of articles (one per chapter) in an academic journal, this book on contemplation was revised by Merton shortly before his untimely death. The material bridges Merton's early work on Catholic monasticism, mysticism, and contemplation with his later writing on Eastern, especially Buddhist, traditions of meditation and spirituality.

**Paul, the Apostle: Missionary, Martyr, Theologian** by Robert E. Picirilli, 247 pp.

Author Robert E. Picirilli, who taught college courses on Paul for twenty-five years, found that most books on the apostle were either too technical or too basic, so he wrote a book that strikes a happy medium. His book offers a profile of Paul in his historical context, and explanation of his missionary journeys and analyses of each of his epistles. Used as a text for university study today, *Paul the Apostle* is a great one-stop study of the man who wrote half the New Testament, spread the gospel to the heart of the known world, and gave his life for his message.

**Gratefulness: The Habit of a Grace-filled Life** by Susan Muto, 224 pp.

In a consumer-driven world where we're told we need and deserve more, Susan Muto, executive director of the Epiphany Association, reminds us that gratefulness is a gift from God. In this insightful, inspiring book, she explores how life-changing a spirit of gratefulness can be by using both personal and well-known examples of the struggles and rewards of grateful living. Muto and companions such as Julian of Norwich, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Henri J. M. Nouwen, and Dorothy Day highlight the power of gratitude as a grace from God and walk with us as we learn to practice thankfulness.

**Scalia Speaks: Reflections on Law, Faith and Life Well Lived** by Antonin Scalia. 432 pp.

This definitive collection of beloved Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's finest speeches covers topics as varied as the law, faith, virtue, pastimes, and his heroes and friends. Featuring a foreword by longtime friend Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and an intimate introduction by his youngest son, this volume includes dozens of speeches, some deeply personal, that have never before been published. Christopher J. Scalia and the Justice's former law clerk Edward Whelan selected the speeches.

**The Depth of God's Reach-A Spirituality of Christ's Descent** by Michael Downey. 144 pp.

Renowned author and teacher Michael Downey shows how Christ's descent provides a spiritual foundation that offers both consolation and hope, a spirituality that recognizes Christ's solidarity with us in our own suffering and trials.