

a few things, kid.” I appreciate his “Jesuit modesty” (no, the phrase is not an oxymoron) and, after all, humility is one of the ingredients of Fr. Byron’s suggested leadership toolkit. That said, I would have liked to have learned by hearing about some of his home runs and even about the (undoubtedly rare)

strikeouts. But let my quibbles not mislead: the book is a solid base hit in the field of leadership studies.

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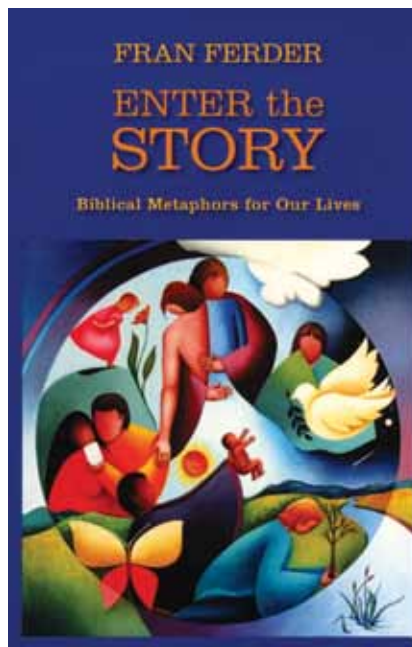
& Co. and currently serves on the board of Catholic Health Initiatives, among other organizations. Lowney founded and is president of Pilgrimage for Our Children’s Future, a nonprofit organization based in Riverdale, N.Y., that funds education and health care projects in the developing world.

CONNECTING OUR LIVES TO BIBLICAL TALES

REVIEWED BY LAURA RICHTER, M.Div.

Ferder’s premise appears early in the preface — biblical stories captivate us and offer powerful points of connection. Though some limit their perception of biblical stories to historical happenings, Ferder suggests they are much more. Biblical narratives are alive, offering meaning and parallels with our lives. If we are open, biblical stories will not only draw us in but will have the power to transform us, connecting our story with the larger story of Christianity.

The first chapter offers basic explanations of central concepts. Due to the transcendent nature of stories, Ferder says, we must look for deeper significance beyond literal interpretation of the Bible and be comfortable with devices like myth, metaphor and symbol. Despite the supernatural nature of some biblical stories (Who of us would be called to carry a savior or share trials comparable to those of Jesus?), deeper reflection shows that many of the stories apply to us, the average reader, because they transcend time and space and apply to our lives. Each of us has a



ENTER THE STORY: BIBLICAL METAPHORS FOR OUR LIVES

BY FRAN FERDER
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188 pages, \$18

birth story, coming-of-age stories, stories of times when we feel like we are in the wilderness and times of suffering and death. The challenge is whether or not we are willing to connect our sacred moments with those found in biblical texts.

After providing a sound framework for biblical interpretation, Ferder launches into a thoughtful consideration of several narratives, including the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Easter and Pentecost. She also provides thorough treatments of themes like baptism, temptation, transfiguration and suffering. Her chapters are predominately Gospel-focused, but they also include Old Testament references. Each chapter begins with a Scripture text that is then unpacked and examined. Her wise blend of critical interpretation of the text and personal application provides reflections on a variety of related issues in each chapter. She offers explanations of Greek terms, their implications and important historic realities that influenced the biblical stories. She also reflects on other figures

EXCERPT FROM *ENTER THE STORY*

Many of the vivid and inviting stories of the gospels are timeless metaphors for the events that unfold each day in our lives. ... As metaphors, gospel stories direct us beyond the biblical characters and acquaint us with the capacity for holy encounter that each of our lives holds.

whose stories intersect with central characters, providing a multi-dimensional consideration of each story. For example, the chapter on baptism centers around the baptism of Jesus, but it also considers the meaning of purity in the prophetic books, the role of John the Baptist and his relationship with Jesus and Ferder's own experience of a young couple baptizing their son.

Ferder uses the Annunciation as a jumping-off point for several topics including artistic portrayals of Mary, the person of Mary and the meaning of her virginity. She then touches upon such themes as what it means to be favored by God and unafraid. In each chapter, she explores relationships, reminding us that though Mary may be the central character in the Annunciation, we also need to consider other characters. Gabriel and Joseph offer different points of view of the Annunciation, while Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Jesus and Zechariah also offer us insight into the Visitation story and relationships in our lives. As we enter into the stories, we see that we, like the angel Gabriel, can provide solace for someone receiving distressing news. Like Mary, we may need comforting words during times of uncertainty.

Stories about Jesus illuminate his person as well as give deep insight into justice and peace. We are invited to ponder the implications of incarnation in the story of the nativity. The temptation story explores the meaning of wilderness and loyalty to God,

reminding us we will all be tempted at some time. The road from Gethsemane to Golgotha invites us to consider the paradox involved in suffering, the importance of remembrance and the sacrifice involved in the paschal mystery. Who among us does not yearn for resurrection when some form of death has taken over our lives? Easter asks us to acknowledge both the sadness and joy of the tomb as we experience the dying and rising in our lives each day.

Ferder's book is an interesting read for anyone looking for deeper insight into the Scriptures. Her writing is easy to understand and provides very thorough treatments of each of the themes. The book is a little scholarly at times and reads like a theology textbook, but that is not unexpected, given Ferder's position as an adjunct college professor. She peppers each chapter with personal experiences and world realities and invites readers to do the same. The biblical narratives are indeed alive, and Ferder's book reminds us that we, too, can enter the story.

For those working in health care, *Enter the Story* could be useful for staff looking to connect their own experiences with the larger story of Christianity. The book also offers points of connection with major life events including birth, death, celebration and suffering, thus could prove useful for patients trying to make sense out of suffering and sickness.

Ferder's book could be a good read for those looking to enter more fully into the paschal mystery that offers us the opportunity to enter the cycle of dying and rising every day. Families may also find meaning as they accompany those giving birth, journey with those desiring transformation or walk with those who suffer.

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