

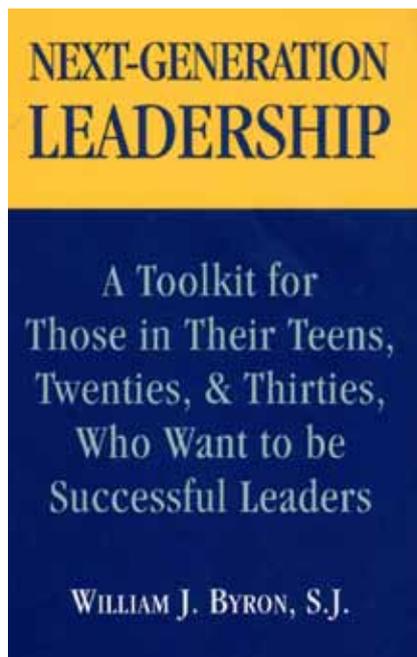
A SEASONED PRO ADVISES YOUNG LEADERS

REVIEWED BY CHRISTOPHER LOWNEY, M.A.

Rev. William J. Byron, SJ, has served as president of three universities, authored 14 books and taught ethics and leadership at various universities. He is, therefore, eminently qualified to address the topic of his latest, fine book. Let me note that Fr. Byron's book will also help those of us in our Forties, Fifties, Sixties (and beyond) who manage people or teach leadership, though I understand why the publisher didn't want to lengthen the book title, already quite a mouthful.

The book opens by defining characteristics of good leadership. Fr. Byron places himself squarely in the tradition of Robert Greenleaf, John Gardner and others who (to oversimplify) see leadership exemplified not so much in stereotypically command-and-control-style managerial tactics as in successfully influencing, inspiring and enabling teams to embrace ambitious and well-conceived goals.

Succeeding chapters then outline a set of skills or habits. Leaders "speak," "listen," "write" and "effect change," to reference a few chapter titles. He appropriately uses the word "toolkit," because he approaches each skill not through woolly platitudes about leadership but with nitty-gritty advice. For example, the "leaders speak" chapter includes pointers on using microphones in public settings, and elsewhere Fr. Byron encourages emerging leaders to maintain a "keeper's file" with clippings of anecdotes or quotes that might prove valuable when preparing written work or seminars. Come to think of it, Fr. Byron's book offers a good head start for anyone's "keeper's file." He quotes from wide-ranging sources including religious figures,



**NEXT-GENERATION LEADERSHIP:
A TOOLKIT FOR THOSE IN THEIR
TEENS, TWENTIES, & THIRTIES, WHO
WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL LEADERS**

BY WILLIAM J. BYRON, SJ

University of Scranton Press, 2010

291 pages, \$25

politicians, business executives and leadership thinkers. Those of us who haven't read as widely as Fr. Byron can jump-start our own "keeper's file" by photocopying some of the choice nuggets he presents.

Rev. James L. Connor, SJ, a veteran of many leadership posts within the Jesuits, is co-author of a substantial appendix offering "Principles of Ignatian Leadership." It unpacks in a helpful way some of the key elements of Jesuit spirituality that have practical leader-

ship relevance. (In the interest of full disclosure, I count both men as friends and have been deeply edified by their lives and work.) Though the appendix doesn't mesh seamlessly with the rest of the book, it is nonetheless valuable in its own right and will greatly help devotees of Ignatian spirituality to make real-world application of its tenets.

Fr. Byron's vision of leadership seems spot-on to me, and a lot of the practical pointers he mentions would have served me and other J.P. Morgan & Co. colleagues well. But reviewers are paid to quibble about something, so I'll offer two. The teens and 20-somethings to whom the book is addressed will have to lead in very difficult environments. Organization structures are more complicated than they were in previous eras; employee tenures have diminished considerably; business conditions change much more rapidly; teams are diverse; and new communication technologies keep proliferating. I don't know of any pundit who has minted foolproof approaches to leadership in today's complicated, fast-changing environments, and I would have liked Fr. Byron to take his own stab at how the emerging leaders he addresses can wield their leadership toolkits well in such challenging environments.

I would also have enjoyed more in-the-trenches, firsthand stories. The book had the feel to me of "here are a few lessons I learned along the way," but the author largely refrains from sharing the stories that helped him learn those lessons throughout his distinguished career. I suspect Fr. Byron didn't want to show off like the home-run hitter who says, "Let me show you

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.

CHRISTOPHER LOWNEY is author of *Heroic Leadership* and *A Vanished World*. A former Jesuit seminarian, he was a managing director of J.P. Morgan

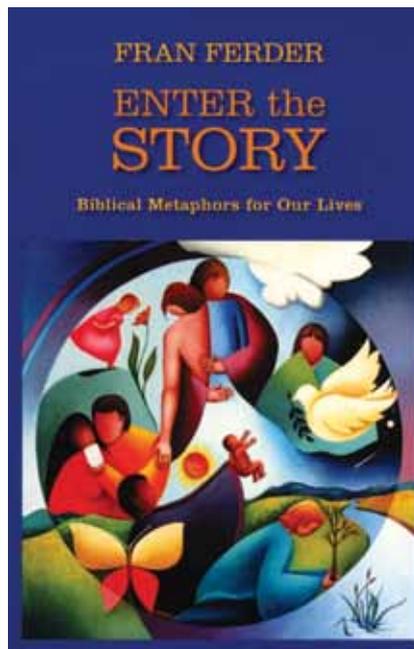
& Co. and currently serves on the board of Catholic Health Initiatives, among other organizations. Lowney founded and is president of Pilgrimage for Our Children’s Future, a nonprofit organization based in Riverdale, N.Y., that funds education and health care projects in the developing world.

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
2010, Orbis Books
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

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