

Book Reviews

Selected Works of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin

Volume I: Homilies and Teaching Documents
Volume II: Church and Society

Alphonse P. Spilly, ed.

The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 2000. Vol. I: 625 pp.; Vol. 2, 692 pp., \$34.95 per volume (hardback).

ACCORDING TO THE EDITOR, FR. Alphonse P. Spilly, CSSR, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin gave more than 450 major addresses and 1,600 homilies and wrote more than 600 texts of briefer remarks during his years as archbishop of Chicago. Out of this mass of material preserved in the archdiocesan archives, Fr. Spilly has selected the pieces included in these two handsomely printed volumes.

Subtitled "Homilies and Teaching

Documents," the first volume includes four pastoral letters published between 1984 and 1995 ("A Sign of Hope," on health care, would be of particular interest to readers of this journal); three substantial "pastoral reflections" on Christ, the religious life, and religious education; five pastoral statements on the AIDS crisis, charismatic renewal, the permanent diaconate, youth, and parish sharing; and five presentations the Cardinal made at meetings in Rome of the Synod of Bishops. These are followed by a selection of his homilies chosen on the criteria of special occasions, particularly effective use of the Scriptures, enduring interest, and expression of the Cardinal's personal "faith, ecclesial vision, spirituality, pastoral sensitivity, and human characteristics (including his sense of humor)." After three homilies from his first days in Chicago, there follow homilies for the liturgical seasons, various ordinary occasions, and special occasions. The selection ends with nine

particularly moving texts in which the Cardinal addressed the painful experience of the false accusations to which he was subjected in 1993 and, three years later, the knowledge that he was terminally ill.

The second volume is more thematic and gathers texts on "Church and Society." These too address a variety of issues. The eight pieces in the "Peacemaking" section recall the major role Cardinal Bernardin had in the preparation of the 1983 U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter, "The Challenge of Peace." Six texts present, explain, and defend one of the views for which he was best known—a consistent ethic of life. After a collection of seven texts under the rubric of "Religion and Society," five texts on health care are given: "The Consistent Ethic of Life and Health Care Systems," "Spanning the Barriers: Catholic Health Care in a World of Need," "The Consistent Ethic of Life and Health Care Reform," "Making the Case for Not-

BOOK BRIEFS

Always on Call: When Illness Turns Families into Caregivers

Carol Levine, ed., *United Hospital Fund, New York, 2000, 224 pp., \$20 (paperback)*

In the United States 25 million men and women are caregivers to family members. This book offers support, resources, and suggestions for those caregivers as well as health professionals, administrators, policy makers, and advocates. The first section, "Voices of Family Caregivers," offers personal stories of caregiving in which courage, loneliness, and crisis of faith are related. Section two, "The Impact of Caregivers," continues with personal accounts that talk about the financial side of caregiving, payers' and providers' responsibilities, the workplace, and the end of life. The final

section, "Resources," provides valuable information on organizations, web sites, books, and United Hospital Fund's Family Caregiving Initiative.

Managerial Epidemiology

Steven T. Fleming, F. Douglas Scutchfield, and Thomas C. Tucker, eds., *Health Administration Press, Chicago, 2000, 277 pp., \$60 (hardback)*

This book examines how epidemiology can be applied to traditional management functions. Part one introduces managerial epidemiology with essays that cover the principles and concepts of epidemiology, statistical tools, case-control studies, cohort studies, and clinical trials. The second part applies the principles and tools discussed in the first section to health services management. These essays include topics

such as planning, directing, organizing and staffing, financial management, and decision making. As a newly required curriculum topic for health administration programs, this book is perfect for faculty and students as well as current health care managers.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Life Choices: A Hastings Center Introduction to Bioethics, 2nd ed., Joseph M. Howell & William Frederick Sale, eds., Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 2000

Concepts of Alzheimer Disease: Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives, Peter J. Whitehouse, Konrad Maurer, & Jesse F. Ballenger, eds., Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2000

for-Profit Health Care,” and “Renewing the Covenant with Patients and Society.” Six talks on Catholic-Jewish dialogue are followed by three on the effort to which the Cardinal devoted his last energies, the establishment of the Common Ground Initiative to work to overcome polarizations within the Catholic church in this country.

The last half of the second volume is devoted to talks on the life of the church grouped under the topics of ecclesial vision and mission, evangelization, Catholic education, religion and spirituality, pastoral ministry, and pastoral outreach. An appendix sketches important moments in the life of the Cardinal and gives a brief bibliography of earlier publications of his works and the five biographies that have been written about him. Each volume includes a helpful index, combining names and themes, which makes it easy to locate items of interest in the considerable amount of material in both volumes.

These volumes are a worthy tribute to the Cardinal and will remind readers of how much the church lost at the death of this intelligent, committed, and peaceful archbishop.

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Faith, Healing, & Miracles

Frederic Flach, MD, KHS

*Hatherleigh Press, Long Island City, NY,
2000. 230 pp., \$22.95 (paperback).*

AN ANALOGY TO A GLASS HALF-FULL OR half-empty is appropriate for *Faith, Healing, & Miracles* by Frederic Flach, MD, KHS, a book whose value depends on the reader's perspective. For the casual reader, the book splen-

didly chronicles a history of miracles from early biblical times, through the life of Christ, to present-day experience. The book also prompts the discussion of what properly fits the arena of faith and what requires parapsychological investigation. In an era of positivism, Flach attempts to construct a complement to the writings of Larry Dossey, Norman Vincent Peale, M. Scott Peck, Bernie Siegel, and Andrew Weil from a faith-based perspective.

The book's premise is that through time, humanity has focused on extraordinary miracles—the rolling back of the Red Sea, Lazarus rising from the dead, the appearance of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes—at the expense of those synchronous events that Flach calls everyday, ordinary miracles. He distinguishes the impossible (extraordinary miracles) from the improbable (ordinary miracles) from a scientific viewpoint. Flach, a well-known psychiatrist, spends the remaining chapters trying to establish a link between the role of faith in psychotherapy and the presence of the scientific within the mysterious power of faith. The text concludes with Flach's guidelines for building a body-mind-spirit resilience.

From another viewpoint, however, the book is not as promising as it appears to be. I had a sense that the publication was just another mainstream book marketed in the lucrative genre of new-age spirituality. As with so much “wanna be” literature, the book is long on raising the issue of miracles but offers little on anchoring this issue beyond the anecdotal. It is in this context that the publication attempts to cover too much ground and ends up wandering from topic to topic without doing any of them justice. All too often, I found sound bites instead of substance and paragraphs instead of pages as Flach attempts to capture some key aspects of faith, healing, and the role of God's hand in miraculous events. I wanted him to convince me by throwing in a quote by St. Thomas Aquinas or St. Augustine, or at least giving some divine base for miracles. Healing and miracles should

not be secularized to a point requiring apology about God's providential hand.

Perhaps I might explain my disappointment differently. I read book jackets. The front and back jacket covers for *Faith, Healing, & Miracles* try to convince the reader that some final earthly authority exists on these matters. The front cover states that the book is “a brilliant link between faith and science that should dramatically increase miracles of all kinds.” The back cover notes, “Miracles are all around us. Sometimes it takes an *expert* to point them out.” These statements imply that Flach has taken the authority and mystery out of the divine and placed them under the scientific domain.

My point is simple. Even though you can't judge a book by its cover, the cover creates one of the compelling arguments to read a book. The jacket for *Faith, Healing, & Miracles* promises something that the book does not provide. Flach suggests that the book is about faith, healing, and miracles, but it does not live up to those expectations, at least in any in-depth level. Given the current spiritual hunger that dominates America, this book is only going to leave the reader wanting or disillusioned: a little bit like having a candy bar to satisfy the need for a full meal. Perhaps eliminating the commas in the title to suggest “faith healing and miracles” would more appropriately reflect what the reader will find in the ensuing pages.

Faith, Healing, & Miracles will whet the appetite of readers who are new to the topics of spirituality and healing. Avid readers of spirituality and holistic healing will likely find Flach's latest publication to be lacking and just one more publication in an overpopulated sea of material. The book, while doing some things well, simply does not sustain either the believer or the scientist in the long run.

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