

What's New in the Chapel Collection?

Spirited Readings Series Review

From the Adoration Chapel Librarian



Teresa Tomeo is a media woman who lives at the crossroads of popular culture and the Catholic faith. In her new book, **God's Bucket List- Heaven's Surefire Way to Happiness in This Life and Beyond**, she offers a gentle but blunt series of reflections on living out the faith while coping with a frenetic, often self-possessed society. Peppered with her own experiences as a journalist and her journey to faith renewal, Teresa presents a series of eight conscience-tugging ideas to assist the reader in treading the bumpy pathway of discerning God's will in our lives.

The chapter 'Live in the Mess' is strategically positioned midway through the book and targets our overt humanity with its selfishness, anger, embarrassments, betrayals and lusts. In short, the messiness of life and our desire to avoid all the pain and grief. This flight from humiliation and suffering demands analysis for it is a reaction we all share. Teresa comments, "My faith, however, has taught me a thing or two about carrying crosses. I have learned that if the Lord brings us to it, He is going to see us through it. I am also now in the habit of asking the Lord what He wants me to do with the suffering and what I am supposed to learn from it." The chapter continues with quotations from the *Catholic Catechism*, Blessed Pope John Paul II's *Salvifici Doloris* and commentary from Teresa's Detroit pastor, Monsignor Michael Burgarin, intermingled with the story of her professional crisis (being fired from a top TV position) while linking the lives of three saints, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena and Therese of Lisieux to our understanding of human frailty and struggle. "On the surface, suffering and happiness don't seem to belong in the same sentence...Christianity is not only honest enough to tell us the truth, but loving enough to give us *the truth*, as in the person of Jesus Christ, to help us deal with and grow from our pain."

All the chapters begin with the imperative LIVE, but Teresa's new approach to the bucket list quietly asks us to examine that imperative in the light of Christ's love for us. The closing chapter hits the reader with a stunning demand which is at once logical as it at last truthful. Live like you're loved. Teresa reminds us, "We can jump through all the hoops, attend the right vocation seminars and Christian conferences, but if we don't really love God above everything else, it's not going to stick, at least not for very long." The Church provides us with tremendous tools (the sacraments) for increasing and maintaining our closeness to Jesus. Why don't we use them? Worse- why do remain stagnant or crippled in our faith and refuse to return to them? **God's Bucket List** offers a candid way to rethink our steps on life's bumpy road as it intersects with pain, passion and the joyful eternity of Christ's love.

Teresa Tomeo is the author of **Extreme Make Over: Women Transformed by Christ** which is also available in the Adoration Chapel collection.