BOOK REVIEWS

About Ordinary Folks Who Said We Can: & They Did — Focus on Renewal: the McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania Story
By Paulette G. Honeygosky
Bloomington, IN, Author House, 2004. 197 pages

This book is about the growth and development of a community-based organization which was begun by Father Donald C. Fisher in the Stowe Township, McKees Rocks communities, and first funded by the Diocese of Pittsburgh as the Focus on Renewal Center. Over the past three and a half decades, under the direction of both Father Fisher and Father Regis Ryan, funds were obtained from many sources, and the organization grew into the F.O.R. Sto-Rox Neighborhood Corporation. The corporation has worked to involve citizens of the Sto-Rox communities in grass roots efforts to provide much-needed social and medical/dental services for low income families, senior citizens, and school students. Today it operates a family health center, credit union, local transportation system, adult learning center, and community library, and is currently working on opening an arts and cultural center.

The author was associated with the work of the F.O.R. Center for many years. This book provides an interesting perspective on a community-based group bringing about long-term changes in a community with less than cooperative elected officials who did not share the vision, and who often worked against the goals articulated by the people they were elected to serve.

Father Jim Garvey

The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill — Volume Two: 1945-2002
Edited by Francis de Sales Joyce, S.C.
Published by The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, Greensburg, PA. 504 pages

The chapter headings of this comprehensive later history (1945-2002) of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill provide insight into the spirit of this congregation. Drawn from the words of Mother Aloysia Lowe who came from Cincinnati to Altoona (1870) and then to Greensburg to form the local religious community, one saying in particular sets the stage for this book. “But then, you know,” Mother Aloysia observes, “we ought to like any place we are sent.” This history is about faith-filled women being sent to and being received by schools, religious education centers, health care institutions, pastoral and social ministries and other diversified fields.

As Volume II opens, the sisters’ field of ministry was limited to the Dioceses of Altoona, Pittsburgh and Tucson. It would eventually push past these borders to include other dioceses and archdioceses both here in the United States and beyond (South Korea, Israel, and China). Photos and meticulous chronologies and appendices add to the value of this history. To order, send a check for $18 ($15 + $3 postage) to History Book, Sisters of Charity, 463 Mt. Thor Road, Greensburg, PA 15601. The check should be made out to the “Sisters of Charity.”

Kerry Crawford

Harry, Tom, and Father Rice: Accusation and Betrayal in America’s Cold War
By John P. Hoerr
Pittsburgh, PA, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005. 311 pages ($29.95)

This latest work on Pittsburgh’s “Labor Priest” was authored by a veteran labor journalist who previously issued the much-acclaimed 1988 book And the Wolf Finally Came, a dramatic account of the decline of the steel industry, especially in Pittsburgh. The author focuses on three individuals in his latest work: his uncle and U.S. Congressman Harry Davenport, his uncle’s principal union supporter Tom Quinn, and Msgr. Charles Owen Rice, whose lives intertwined in a clash over Communists in the labor movement. Rice is treated harshly for his efforts to rid unions of Communist “fellow-travelers,” which included cooperation with government investigators as the notorious House Un-American Activities Committee pursued Communist Party connections.

John Bates
The Saint Vincent Basilica, Latrobe, Pennsylvania: One Hundred Years
By Brian D. Boose, Nathan M. Cochran, Philip M. Kanfush, and Omer U. Kline

This lavish publication commemorates the 100th anniversary of the consecration of the church of St. Vincent, the heart of the first Benedictine establishment in the Americas. Hundreds of photographs capture the church’s grandeur; many glass plate negatives were restored to produce a number of photographs which are published for the first time. This work pulls together previously published histories of the parish and the church, which was designated a minor basilica 50 years after its consecration. Accompanying the book is a color fold-out brochure of the basilica, which features a map.

John Bates

The Life of Most Reverend Donald W. Wuerl, S.T.D., Eleventh Bishop of Pittsburgh
By John B. McDowell
Pittsburgh, PA, 2005. 125 pages ($15)

This is the latest work of the retired auxiliary bishop of Pittsburgh, who has now treated the lives of 7 of the 11 bishops of Pittsburgh. Placing the life of any living person in historical perspective, especially an active bishop with potentially many more years of service to the church, would be a challenge to any writer. The author candidly admits that his “study provides only a glance” into Bishop Wuerl’s life. The work touches on several controversies such as diocesan reorganization, the decline in the numbers of priests and sisters, and the clergy sex scandal. These and other, untouched themes await a future comprehensive study of Bishop Wuerl’s episcopate.

Anthony Joseph

From Organist to Pastoral Musician: A History of Church Music in the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh 1843-2006
By Rev. James Chepponis, Dr. Fred Moleck, and Sr. Cynthia Serjak, R.S.M.
Published by The Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, 2006.

The recent publication From Organist to Pastoral Musician is a delightful record of the great musical treasury of our diocese. It is filled with colorful and poignant vignettes, making one both aware and appreciative of our rich heritage and leadership in church music.

Having been active in the church music scene here since 1989, I have come to know and befriend some of the “old timers” including Paul Koch and Harold Unverferth. Their stories are all in this book. The legend of the tyranny of Carlo Rossini had come to me early in my ministry, but it wasn’t until I read the book that I discovered that the money realized from Father Rossini’s publications went to the construction and continuation of a boys orphanage in Osimo, Italy. The oral stories circulating about Father Thomas Coakley at Sacred Heart Church reached as far as upstate New York, where as a teen organist I heard about his magnificent church and Skinner organ (larger than that of the cathedral). Its etching in stone came to me from a family friend, Barbara Hatch Beaudry, who attended Mass there during Father Coakley’s tenure while she was in college.

We often look to the distant past and reminisce, but often ignore the more recent past. Sometimes we forget that 10 minutes ago is as far away as the Roman Empire. Fortunately here, our recent past in diocesan music is greatly detailed and not overlooked. I was especially glad to see that the efforts of Father Thomas Jackson and Father Charles Knoll were not forgotten. Too, the work and music of Rick Gibala, Father James Chepponis, and James Noakes are mentioned, although maybe not quite as emphatically as should be. Father Chepponis is a brilliant, prolific composer (just listen to and sing his “Magnificat,” “Life Giving Bread, Saving Cup,” and “We Gather As Friends”). Likewise, I was so pleased to see the recent talents of James Noakes cited. I attended Mass just to hear his virtuosic playing and hear the mellifluous strains of his cathedral choir before I had my own church job.

If you haven’t read this book, by all means go out, buy it, and read it. And by all means attend diocesan and cathedral liturgies at St. Paul Cathedral. You can rest assured that the music is glorious and will continue to flourish under the direction of “crackerjacks” Donald Fellows and Father Chep-
ponis, who make those services both prayerful and powerfully up-
lifting.

J.R. Daniels
Director of Music Ministries,
Ss. Simon & Jude Church
Daily Mass Organist
(Third String),
St. Paul Cathedral

The Great Life: Essays on Doc-
trine and Holiness in Honor of
Father Ronald Lawler, O.F.M.
Cap.
Edited by Michael Aquilina and
Kenneth Ogorek with a foreword
by Bishop Donald W. Wuerl,
S.T.D.
Steubenville, OH, Emmaus Road

Fr. Ronald Lawler (1926-
2003) touched many lives during
his years on earth. He was a
priest, teacher, author, theologian,
catechist, spiritual advisor, men-
tor, and friend. Fr. Lawler lived
“The Great Life” of faith and hol-
iness and always encouraged oth-
ers to join him in this experience.

This book is a collection of
essays written by individuals who
knew Fr. Lawler and are seeking
not only to honor Fr. Lawler but
to continue his outreach to oth-
ers. They challenge readers to
understand and to live Catholic
document. Many of the authors
grappling with issues facing people
today and every reader should be
able to find some essay that is di-
rectly pertinent to his or her life
today. The book begins with an
Introduction and Preface, fol-
lowed by seventeen essays, and
ending with a general reflection
on Fr. Lawler.

Bishop Donald Wuerl’s Intro-
duction and Michael Aquilina’s
Preface provide the reader with
background information on Fr.
Lawler. The main concept that
emerges from both writings is that
Lawler was a teacher seeking to
pass on his faith. Wuerl’s reco-
collections of Lawler stress the need
for a catechetical renewal today, a
continuation of the focus of Fr.
Lawler’s life. Aquilina provides a
biographical sketch of Lawler,
whose life was wrapped in educat-
ing others. Both authors set the
stage for the essays to come.

The first three essays are a
bird’s eye view of the faith, the
church and catechesis. After
reading Wuerl’s and Aquilina’s
essays, the reader can’t help but
feel that these first three essays
are a direct extension of Fr.
Lawler himself. Archbishops
Charles Chaput’s focus is the
church as mother and teacher and
not as a religious corporation.
Archbishop Sean O’Malley looks
at the difficult task in today’s
secular culture of passing on the
Faith. Finally, Fr. Thomas
Weinandy focuses on the nature
of Christian doctrine, with emph-
sis on catechetical importance
with some specific examples of
the Liturgy of the Eucharist and
Transubstantiation.

The following eight essays
deal with more specific issues fac-
ing Catholics, such as sacraments,
politics, and daily life. The first,
Katrina Zeno’s essay on Con-
firmation, is an extensive look at
the catechesis of Confirmation, in-
cluding a curriculum based on the
theology of the body. Vocations
are discussed in both Russell
Shaw’s and Scott Hahn’s es-
says. Shaw explains why “there is
no vocation shortage in the Catho-
lic Church” but rather a “shortage
of vocational discernment,” delv-
ing into the various levels of the
concept of vocation. Hahn’s focus
is on the continuing education of
priests. Hahn parallels the role of
a father with his children with the
role of the priest and his parish.

The next two essays deal with
issues that are more politi-
cal. Janet and J. Brian Benestad’s
and Robert P. George’s essays
deal with social teaching and po-
litical candidates, respect-
ively. The Benestads provide an
extensive examination of human
dignity in relation to issues such
as bioethics, and the reader will
have a better understanding of
Catholic social teaching through
this informed view of digni-
ty. George’s essay delves into
the political arena, focusing on the
role of moral issues in the voca-
tion of public service.

The final three essays under
the umbrella of specific issues are
on homeschooling, human sexual-
ity, and Natural Family Plan-
ing. Gerard V. Bradley provides
an analysis on homeschooling,
exploring the role of Catholic
schools in relation to homeschool-
ing and defining when
homeschooling would be benefi-
cial. The essay by William E.
May argues that “the Church’s
teaching on human sexuality and
sexual ethics, far from enslaving
persons, liberates them and en-
able them to become fully them-
selves.” The next essay naturally
falls in line with May’s, with Eve-
lyn and John Billings providing an
historical analysis of the Billings
Ovulation Method.

The next two essays involve a
look at catechesis today. Fr.
Augustine J. DiNoia’s essay is an
extensive study of the relationship
between the Catechism of the
Catholic Church and the General
Directory of Catechesis, showing
that the catechism provides the
subject matter while the Directory
provides the vehicle for the catechism to "proceed" and the organization behind that. Fr. Kris Stubna relates in his essay the importance of catechism to evangelization, i.e., evangelization hinges on knowledge of the faith.

Finally, in the final four essays we return to Fr. Ronald Lawler. Patrick G. D. Riley details the evolution and a brief assessment of Fr. Lawler’s The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults. William Saunders writes a personal testimony to the impact of Fr. Lawler on his life. In the next essay, we hear directly from Fr. Lawler himself, in "Has Christ Only One Church." Robert Lockwood wraps the whole book together with an acknowledgement of the impact of Fr. Lawler on the lives of all he encountered, both young and old.

Kathy Washy

Continued from page 5

request that you get in touch with us by the end of December 2007 regarding board membership.

The CHS Board of Directors joins with me in thanking you for your continued support of our efforts and in assuring you of better things yet to come for CHS.

Please note, for clarification, the two addresses below for the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

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BOOK NOTES


Look for reviews of these books in the next issue of *Gathered Fragments.*