

My Top Ten Books for 2024: *Fr. Ronald Rolheiser OMI*

Full disclosure, I don't read enough. A busy, pressured life affords me only small windows of time to read anything not directly related to my ministry. Nonetheless, I try to be faithful to a discipline I set for myself years ago, namely, to read eight to ten pages every day from a book (magazines and newspapers don't count). In a year that adds up to several thousand pages.

Among those pages this year, which ten books would I recommend? Here's my list.

Among books on spirituality, I found each of these meaningful:

Richard Gaillardetz, *While I Breathe I hope – A Mystagogy of Dying*, edited by Grace Mariette Agoli. This is the book that affected me most this past year. Richard Gaillardetz, as you probably know, was a renowned theologian at Boston College who died of cancer in November 2023. These are his reflections during the last months of his life. They show a remarkable faith and an equally remarkable love. He didn't miss the hour of his death, but gave it away as a gift. This book is part of that gift.

Mark Joseph Williams, *Torrent of Grace, A Catholic Survivor's Healing Journey After Clergy Abuse*. A survivor of clerical sexual abuse, Mark Williams comes to grips with this in a way that leads to forgiveness and reconciliation, but only after many years of trauma. He tells his story in a way that doesn't gratuitously spray guilt around but leaves everyone, not least the institutional church, with a needed challenge. Everyone should read this story of healing.

John Mark Comer, *Practicing the Way: Be with Jesus, Become like Him, Do as He Did*. John Mark Comer is an Evangelical Christian with wide ecumenical leanings and solid theological insight. This is an excellent book, a practical guide to deepen anyone's Christian discipleship, irrespective of denomination.

Mirabai Starr, *Ordinary Mysticism, Your Life As Sacred Ground*. Mirabai Starr is a believer and a mystic, even though she does not formally profess faith in any religion. She gives the phrase *I am spiritual but not religious* more depth than is ordinarily found there. And because she is not speaking out of any one religion or denomination, her words offer something for anyone of any religion or denomination.

Peter Halldorf, *To Love Your Neighbor's Church As Your Own – A Manifest for Christian Unity*. Peter Halldorf is a Lutheran, Evangelical, Eastern Orthodox Christian. This book (which was handed to me by an Eastern Rite Bishop at an ecumenical celebration this past summer) outlines a vision for ecumenism and Christian unity which are more insightful and far-reaching than most anything I have read. This little book is a treasure.

Brian Swimme & Monica DeRaspe-Bolles, *The Story of the Noosphere*. Perhaps more scientific than spiritual, this very readable book will help you understand both the origins of our universe and how those origins fit seamlessly into a Christian vision.

Raymond E. Brown – Each year during those respective seasons, I reread Raymond Brown's books on Advent, Christmas, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost. Each of these (five books in all) is a small (under 90 pages) volume which is a major scripture course all by itself.

Donna Freitas, *Wishful Thinking, How I Lost My Faith and Why I Want to Find It*. Known for her books in the area of sexuality, Freitas writes a memoir of her own struggles with faith and how that struggle was compounded by her personal experience of being sexually abused by a priest. What sets this book apart from other memoirs of this sort is the second phrase in her title, *Why I Want to Find it*.

Among academic books, I recommend this one:

William T. Cavanaugh, *The Uses of Idolatry*. Charles Taylor in his classic, *A Secular Age*, speaks of how we now live in an age of *disenchantment*, wherein we no longer see anything behind empirical reality. For us, he submits, there are no angels, no spirits, no demons, and no gods, only empirical reality. We live with what he calls "buffered personalities," that is, the world of spirits and demons no longer affects us. The consequence of this is that agnosticism and atheism now become easy options. Cavanaugh disputes that and argues that we are not disenchanting. Rather we are simply *re-enchanted* with different (empirical) spirits, demons, and gods. *Our problem, he believes, is not atheism but idolatry*. We simply are worshipping new gods and fearing new demons. This is an interesting read, though not an easy one.

Among novels, it hasn't been a banner year for me, both because I didn't find time to read many novels and because I was disappointed with many I did read. But this one stands out:

Anne Michaels, *Held*. Nominated this year for the Booker Prize, this is Anne Michaels at her literary best, though with a storyline that is not always easy to follow. But Anne Michaels is always worth reading. And all of this is offered under St. Augustine's famous dictum: *Concerning taste there should be no disputes*.



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5th January 2025 The Epiphany of the Lord C

4th January Saturday 5.30pm

For all the deceased members of St. David's Parish
(Dea and Eddie Saul)

5th January Sunday 11am

Pauline Carberry RIP (*Peter Carberry*)
Margaret & Tony Smith RIP (*Linda Jones*)



11/12 January: The Baptism of the Lord

Saturday: Michael Greaney RIP (*The Greaney Family*)

Sunday: For People of the Parish

18/19 January: 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time C

Saturday: For People of the Parish

Sunday: Angela and Harry Morris RIP (*Wendy Morris*)

25/26 January: 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time C

Saturday: For People of the Parish

Sunday: Susan Cliff RIP (*Wendy Morris*)

1/2 February: The Presentation of the Lord

Saturday: For People of the Parish

Sunday: Int. Angela Carr (*Brian & Win Egan*)

8/9 February: 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time C

Saturday: Alan McDonald RIP (*Mary McDonald*)

Rebecca Ward RIP (*Jean & Rachel Ward*)

Sunday: For People of the Parish

Our Lady of the Rosary Buckley: Weekday Mass Times

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays: 9am

Wednesdays: 7pm

<https://buckleycatholicchurch.org.uk/newsletters-and-notice>

TAKING THE TREE DOWN

Did you have a Christmas tree? And, if so, how long did you keep it up? Just until Boxing Day or did you leave it for the whole 12 days of Christmas?

Epiphany has become associated with the end of the Christmas season, with vacuuming up all the pine needles from the carpet, carefully storing the lights and decorations back in the loft and finding a safe place for wrapping paper that will come in handy next year.

Yet the feast of Epiphany isn't really about endings. It's about beginnings. The word "epiphany" is from the Greek word that means "showing/display/manifestation". When the wise men arrive from distant parts with their gifts for Jesus, the gospel is letting us know that the glory of God, in the baby, is being acknowledged by people from the ends of the known earth. God's

glory is being made manifest.

We can easily fall into the old trap of thinking that this feast is about the past, about events that happened 2,000 years ago. Of course, that's only part of the picture. All feasts are about today, not just the past. But how are we to understand Epiphany?



Quite simply, each of us today is being called to be an "epiphany" for the world. By celebrating this feast we ask God to unite us with Jesus, as shining examples of Christ's love for the world. We ask that we may be so close to Jesus that we become stars leading

others to get to know God's Son.

So the feast of the Epiphany, like all feasts, looks to the future. When the baby was born in Bethlehem, God revealed his eternal plan of salvation and showed us how to live so that we might enjoy everlasting life. Jesus is the light of the world and by following him humanity is able to be refashioned and renewed in God's image. This too is our future. Are we prepared to live in a way that brings light to others? To "display" the type of God we have? To let people see God's glory?

In a nutshell, are we ready not only to celebrate the Epiphany in church but also to "be" an epiphany of God in the world?



QR Code for Today's Readings.

News, Notices and Events

My Home Visit to India

I will be away in India from Monday 6th January to 6th February for my annual home visit. During my absence, Canon Francis Doyle will be in charge and he will kindly celebrate the next four weekend Masses. For weekday Masses, please check the Mass times in Our Lady of the Rosary, Buckley.

<https://buckleycatholicchurch.org.uk/newsletters-and-notice>

My Whatsapp No. 07786853154

First Holy Communion (FHC)

Parents of children in Y3 or above wishing to make their FHC in June 2025 should contact school or **Ruth John**. Sessions will start on **29th January** and will be held weekly on Wednesdays at 3.30 in school.

Mold- Buckley Mass Schedules from 17th February 2025

- Mondays:** 9am Buckley
- Tuesdays:** 7pm Mold
- Wednesdays:** 7pm Buckley
- Thursdays:** 9am Buckley
- Eucharistic Adoration up to 10*
- Fridays:** 10am Mold
- Eucharistic Adoration up to 11am*
- Saturdays:** 5.30pm Mold
- Sundays:** 9am Buckley
- 11am Mold
- 5pm Buckley

Learn to enjoy every minute of the life God has given you. Be happy now. Don't wait for something outside of yourself to make you happy in the future. Think how really precious is the time you have to spend, whether it's at work or with your family. God passes by on every street corner. Every minute should be enjoyed and savoured.

Ellie Heath

200 CLUB 2025

We are continuing the 200 club this year, with your support. So, if you wish to rejoin, or join, I will be in the back of church from the weekend of 11 January 2025 to collect the dues if you would like to take part. If you would like a share, it's £12 for the year. There are 12 draws per year with 3 prizes per draw.

- First prize £50
- Second prize £25
- Third prize £10

(These amounts apply if we get sufficient numbers, (We need 85 to break even), if not I will review the pay-outs and advise accordingly)

And any remaining cash is given to our parish funds.

Payment is Cash or Cheque with cheques made payable to ST DAVIDS 200 CLUB

So, if you would like to join our merry band just have a word with myself after mass and I sort it for you or if you have any questions just ask. Thank you for all your help and support in past years running of the 200 club. God Bless. **Tony**

Let us Pray for the sick:

Deacon David Joy, Tricia Evans, Rianna Taylor, Debra Roberts, Lauren Dunlop, Pam Cox, Anne Jones, and Franciszek Williams

We remember in our prayer

Those whose anniversaries occur this week

(4th Jan) Bernard Vernon, Michael Kasprzyk, Adamo Capiello, Nora Craddock, Lucy Hatfield (5th Jan) Patrick Burke, Michael Nolan (6th Jan) Thomas Renney, Catherine Jones, Mary Stocker, Pauline Carberry (7th Jan) Ellen Williams (8th Jan) William Carney, John Fox, Alice Josephine McHugh, John James Carney, Bridget Cecilia Tyson (9th Jan) Trevor Hynes, Winefride Taaffe, Michael Greaney (10th Jan) Patrick Brennan, Catherine Mulligan, John Roberts, John Raymond Hand, Richard Kavanagh