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World Book Day: Some Spiritual Reading Suggestions

April 23rd is World Book Day. Here is a list of some worthwhile books, with a link to an online library of good books for spiritual reading.

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The habitual practice of reading a passage from Sacred Scripture and other books to strengthen our spiritual life is commonly known as spiritual reading. Saint Josemaría

included this practice in the plan he recommended to people to help them draw closer to God in their daily life and to develop clear ideas needed to confront complex situations.

Although there are many ways to do spiritual reading, Saint Josemaría recommended dedicating 10 or 15 minutes to this practice on a regular basis, if possible daily. He advised people to do this with true recollection, trying to take advantage of it for our dialogue with God and for improving in the virtues.

FREE E-BOOKS ON OPUSDEI.ORG

► ***New Mediterraneans***: The lives of the saints can act as a light for our path when darkness threatens to overwhelm us. These articles look at some of the discoveries Saint

Josemaría Escrivá made in his prayer during his years as a young priest.

► **Working Well, Working for Love:**

The sanctification of work is at the heart of Saint Josemaría's message. But what does it mean to sanctify our work? How is this done in practice? This book includes sixteen essays on the topic.

► **God Walks With Me: Catechesis on Hope.**

All 38 addresses from the Holy Father's 2017 series of Wednesday audiences on the virtue of hope. A valuable resource for prayer and spiritual reading, in order to live “joyfully in hope” and pass on this joy to everyone around us.

► **Letters to a Saint:** In May, we will celebrate the feast of Blessed Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, whom Pope Francis beatified last year. This book offers an English translation of letters written by

Blessed Guadalupe to Saint Josemaría. The letters are grouped into five chapters, each highlighting a different aspect of Guadalupe's life.

► **God's Tenderness**: This book helps us to meditate on and put into practice the central trait of the Gospel which Pope Francis encouraged us to rediscover during the Jubilee Year of Mercy (8 December 2015 to 20 November 2016). As the Prelate of Opus Dei wrote at the time, the closing of a Holy Year should "not be a destination but rather a point of departure to undertake the path of our Christian progress with renewed eagerness."

► **Summaries of Catholic Teaching**: This book offers brief summaries of the teaching of the Catholic Church on key points of faith and morals, prepared by professors at the

Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

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LINK TO ONLINE LIBRARY OF SPIRITUAL READING BOOKS

OTHER SPIRITUAL READING BOOKS

The following books are available for purchase online in hard copy, paperback, or in e-book format, on Amazon or directly from the publisher. This is just a selection of titles that could be of more general interest due to their topic, timing, or other criteria.

► **Made for Freedom: Loving, Defending and Living God's Gift.** In a fast-paced world overloaded with technology and information, it can be difficult to remember who we are as God's children. Jutta Burggraf offers a penetrating meditation on freedom and its importance in the life of a Christian. She explains that our ultimate happiness is a result of a humble "yes" to God's gift of our very selves, accepting both the light and the darkness of who we are. From there, we can go a step further to accept God's love and invite Him, and only Him, to fill the gaps with love and healing. With this humble but honest perspective, we can choose to love ourselves as God loves us, and in turn, to love others.

► **Deep Friendship: Moving Beyond the Superficial.** Plutarch wrote, "A constant friend is a thing rare and hard to find." This is especially true in today's world, in which we are

constantly surrounded by people, but seldom experience deep friendship. The concept and value of friendship has become, more than ever, a rare treasure. In this book, Francisco Ugarte shares not only how to find a good friend, but how to be one. These attributes of true friendship lead to a more genuine happiness and a greater union with God.

► **Created for Greatness: The Power of Magnanimity**. The founder of the Virtuous Leadership Institute, Alexandre Havard, explains why the virtue of magnanimity is capable of setting the tone of one's entire life: transforming it, giving it new meaning and leading to the flourishing of one's personality. Magnanimity is the willingness to undertake great tasks; it is the source of human greatness. Along with humility, it is a virtue specific to true leaders emboldened by the desire to achieve greatness by bringing out the

greatness in others. Complete with practical steps and points for personal examination, this book will not only inspire you, but will place you firmly on the path to a more magnanimous life.

► **16 Marriages That Made**

History: This book by Gerard Castillo honors the hidden love adventure of some famous people in history. It offers specific examples of how marriage transformed these well-known individuals in deep and personal ways. These are not fairy tale stories of marriages “made in heaven.” Rather they are stories of real people with real struggles who, through marriage, were challenged, strengthened, and encouraged to grow in their capacity for love.

► **Compass: A Handbook on**

Parent Leadership. Author James B. Stenson relates thirty years' experience with parents who have

lived as great leaders in family life and have succeeded with their sacred mission: to raise their children right. How they did it and why they did it are the focus of this book: forming character, countering the consumer culture, understanding discipline and dealing with the influence of mass media. In *Compass*, Stenson shares his insights about leadership in family life and why parental guidance is so important.

► *Whatever Happened to Friendship? Reclaiming the Adventure*. This short book trumpets the joys, benefits, and absolute necessity of real friends. An architect and Catholic convert, Henry Menzies takes you on a tour of friendship through famous figures of history, recent writers, and ancient scholars. When you finish reading this book, the names, phone numbers, emails, birth dates, and anniversaries that make up the glue

of real life will seem more sacred and life-giving instead of dreary duties. In essence, this little book shows the value of a good friend.

► ***Encountering Christ***: This book gives the reader a glimpse into the heart and mind of Pope Francis. It offers a selection of homilies, letters, and addresses delivered from 2009-2013 as archbishop of Buenos Aires. These texts contain many of the themes that have already emerged as central to the Pope's pontificate: love for the poor, the dangers of a self-referential Church, and the need to “go out” to bring Christ to the world.

► ***Last of the Romantics: St. Josemaría in the Twenty-First Century***. St. Josemaría Escrivá sometimes referred to himself as the “last of the Romantics.” Under this title, Mariano Fazio portrays the founder of Opus Dei as a passionate

defender of freedom. As he does so, Fazio offers an orderly, clear, and attractive presentation of many of St. Josemaría's key teachings. These teachings will challenge his readers and hopefully awaken in them the same love of freedom that St. Josemaría bore in his heart. "Don't let me be 'the last of the romantics,'" he would say. "This is Christian romanticism: to love the freedom of others, with love and affection."

► ***Big Hearted: Inspiring Stories from Everyday Families***. Co-authors Patti Armstrong and Theresa Thomas give you an inside look into the triumphs, struggles, joys and sorrows of ordinary families with generous hearts. They invite you to witness extraordinary love in ordinary moments, like the simple cooking of a meal or the hug between a teenaged brother and his baby sister. Just like your family, these families experience pain, setbacks,

and challenges. But they also experience love and immeasurable blessing through their commitment and care for each other.

► **Self-Esteem Without Selfishness: Increasing Our Capacity for Love.**

We've all been exhorted to cultivate self-esteem and nurture a positive self-image. But we also know that God calls us to humility. Many well-intentioned Christians have it in the back of their minds that being humble means living their lives in a haze of discouragement, anxiety, and preoccupation with their own sinfulness. After all, the only alternative our culture seems to offer is a vacuous "I'm OK, you're OK" relativism: the false peace the world gives. We know that can't be right. In these pages, Fr. Michel Esparza leads the way out of this conundrum. Bringing together the best of classic spiritual wisdom and the insights of contemporary psychology, he

distinguishes between self-esteem in the shallow, pop-psychology sense and the rightly ordered self-love that is anything but self-centered.

► ***Be Who You Are: Developing Your Christian Personality.*** As Saint Catherine of Siena so aptly stated, "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire!" Despite our fallen natures, we have the ability, through the solid Christian understanding of the human person—body and soul—to rise above it all. These authors guide us towards spiritual maturity, by teaching us how to improve one's personality, self-esteem, and virtue, without imitating models that distract us from our own identity. We learn how to live a happier and more coherent life, and how to acquire greater empathy with others—especially with our own family members and those in our immediate environment.

► *Through Wind and Waves: On Being a Spiritual Guide*. A guide is a welcome addition on most any journey. So it is with the greatest of all journeys: the journey to God. One of the Church's most long-standing and fruitful traditions, spiritual direction is an instrument of God's glory in the world. The act of clearing the way for the Holy Spirit is a delicate yet challenging matter, and one that requires humility, patience, and charity, among other virtues. This is a guidebook for those undertaking this task. It offers wisdom for both the supernatural and the practical elements of spiritual direction. It shows that being a spiritual guide is not simply a matter of prayer and meditation, but one of a firm interior life, genuine friendship, and the daily realities of living one's life for the Lord. That life will be marked by adventure, since every soul is unique and is led by the Spirit to blaze new paths to holiness.

► ***Interior Freedom***: In this much-loved book, Fr. Jacques Phillipe shows that each of us possess a space of freedom inside of us that no-one can take away. Despite the most unfavorable outward circumstances, we can claim our freedom because God is its source and its guarantee. Without this, we will always be in search for something else to fulfill us, and we will never understand true happiness.

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