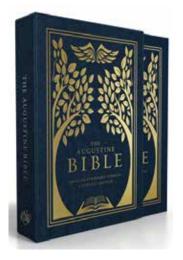
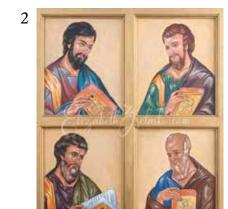
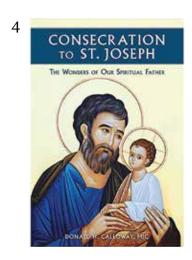


UNSPLASH























For Men

- 1. The Augustine Bible: I love the new ESV-CE translation of the Bible from the Augustine Institute. You can read about it at NCRegister.com to get a better idea of why this Bible is a blessing for our times. It is a truly meaningful gift for the man in your life who desires to follow in Augustine's footsteps and "take up and read"; https://bit.ly/2T42uPX
- 2. Catholic art/iconography from Elizabeth Zelasko: My husband and I love her prints and the prayer, thoughtfulness and meticulous detail that go into her work. Check out *The Four Gospel Writers* and the *Nativity of Christ* Orthodox icon print (which we have in our home). *ElizabethZelasko.com/print-shop*
- 3. Catholic Gentleman watch: Its genuine leather strap and water-resistant quartz make it a classy gift. I also love the logoed collapsible grip and stand (not shown) for phones and tablets that are useful and budget-friendly; https://bit.ly/344V9WA
- 4. Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father: This book by Father Donald Calloway is an invaluable resource that has blessed my own husband and the men (and women!) at our parish so much. Purchase a copy from the EWTN Religious Catalogue to receive a free EWTN Live DVD. Item: 4316, \$14.95; EWTNRC.com or (800) 854-6316
- 5. Handmade Wooden Home Altar: These prayer stands from the Catholic Woodworker make a perfect gift for the office desk, nightstand or for travel; *CatholicWoodworker. com/products/home-altar*

For Women

- 6. Marie Zélie clothing brand: This brand features beautiful and amazingly comfortable dresses, skirts and tops for women. I normally buy solid colors, but feeling daring, I chose some dresses with stylish prints and absolutely love them. This is a Polish-Catholic company featuring modest, feminine style that is also concerned with sustainability and ethical practices; I love to recommend them. They generously gave me a discount for Register readers, too; use code Katielo for 10% off until Christmas at https://bit.ly/3larml4.
- 7. Theology of Home planner: Organize daily life with beauty and inspiration. This planner includes the feast days of the liturgical year, saint days, saint quotes, a full-color interior, space for notes and both weekly and monthly layouts. It is both functional and classy; TANBooks.com
- 8. Catholic jewelry: Saint and Stone has elegant, unique religious jewelry. For a truly show-stopping gift, check out the Queen Mary necklace; *SaintandStone.com*. I also love my pieces (not shown) from Telos Art Shop (I wear my silver Sacred Heart necklace almost daily) at *TelosArtshop.com* and the new rosary bracelet selections (not shown) from Humble Mission beads at *Etsy.com/shop/HumbleMissionBeads*.
- 9. Garden statue: I love the selection of saint and angel garden statues in the EWTN Religious Catalogue. Putting one in the front yard will add beauty to your home (and evangelize the neighborhood, too). See the full selection online at EWTNRC.com/Outdoor-And-Garden-Catholic-Statues; pictured here: El Divino Niño, Item: 90745, \$135; and Guardian Angel, Item: 61317, \$41, at EWTNRC.com or (800) 854-6316
- 10. Refuge Rosaries: These are not just for women, but I may or may not have purchased multiple of these gorgeous, handmade rosaries in feminine colors for my daughters and myself at *Etsy.com/shop/RefugeRosaries*.

CONTINUES ON PAGE B3

Creating the Haven of Home

Theology of Home II: The Spiritual Art of Homemaking Is Edifying Read

BOOK PICK

BY AMY SMITH

ewer sights bring me greater joy than seeing the morning sun illumine fresh flowers on my kitchen table. The sight prompts a grateful prayer as I prepare coffee. "Thank you, God, for simple joys and for home."

That sense of gratitude imbues the second installment of the Theology of Home series.

Theology of Home II: The Spiritual Art of Homemaking (TAN Books, October 2020) by co-authors Carrie Gress and Noelle Mering continues the conversation of what home is, sharing through lovely vignettes and photographs (by Kim Baile and Dori Greco Rutherford) what makes a house a home through the enduring efforts of homemakers. One lovely line in particular kept coming back to me: " ... in the midst of our specific responsibilities in the here and now, we can find Christ." Finding Christ in the present moment is truly at the heart of it all, contemplating the eternal amid the earthbound, for faith and fellowship should be rooted within all that is "home."

It's far more than the décor or furniture, though creating a cozy, pretty ambience is part of it. But whether your home is modern farmhouse, midcentury modern or colonial in style, a homemaker should have "a heart attuned and attentive to the needs of loved ones," the authors write — what a beautiful way to describe how the feminine genius helps women, whether physical or spiritual mothers, cultivate the domestic arts well.

As a fan of flowers, and one who recognizes how they can bring cheer and augment a seasonal aesthetic, I appreciated the section on "Decorating with Fruit and Flowers," which discusses how "deco-



rating with flowers and fruit is an easy and attainable way to inject simple moments of beauty into our homes. ... Their presence suggests a harmony with the outdoor world, with the seasons of locale, as well as a connection with the vibrancy of life." The afterword also includes insights into the floral connection between Mary and the saints and underlines their role in adding to

"A bouquet of flowers can draw the eye and bring beauty to a room. We offer them to those who are suffering, celebrating, and mourning. They communicate love, and a good beyond that of mere use ..." The floral photographs that adorn these pages attest to this truth.

the harmony of home:

As I made my way through each section, I kept thinking of a beloved quote from Jane Austen contained in the first Theology of Home: "There is nothing like staying at home for real comfort." This volume has a few photos that look like they are straight out of an Austen novel, underscoring the idea that home is ultimately about cultivating care and comfort in order to create a happy haven for souls. That sense of being home, in all that encompasses, is vital to living well.

"Fruitfulness in making a home emanates from being in a filial relationship with God," the book emphasizes. Our faith life can and should envelop our homes, from the crucifix, Marian image or Scripture verse on the wall to that to-be-read spiritual book on the stack to above all how we nurture the people within and those welcomed in.

The book delves into the need to cultivate silence to help us become better at our relationships with God and others. Personal stories round out the lovely lessons.

There is discussion of how "real charity springs from a heart of love for Christ" and what tenderness and care mean within the confines of home, fostering a space filled with the things of life and faith.

And there is even a reference to the "thin places" that Emily Stimpson Chapman wrote about in her review of the first volume for the

As a coffee person, I also enjoyed the "Daily Mass and Daily Coffee" reflection, for its last line well notes "that we are made to be in friendship, first with God and then with one another."

The examples and wisdom of the saints abound in this volume, too, including Padre Pio, Zélie Martin and her daughter Thérèse, Elizabeth Ann Seton, Mother Teresa and Edith Stein/Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, not to mention the supreme example of motherhood and womanhood, Mother Mary.

There are also excerpts from such classics as Anne of Green Gables and a section on the scenes of domesticity contained in the film A Hidden Life, which is about the heroic witness of martyr Blessed Franz Jägerstätter and the love he and his wife shared that extended to the life they created for their chil-

Ultimately, the book highlights that we discover our purpose at home, as elsewhere, "by following the will of the Author of our lives"; as a writer who has written about the hopeful promise of Jeremiah 29:11, this struck a particular chord with me; such focus is beautifully witnessed in the book's reflections on holy lives like Mother Teresa —



COZY CONTENT. Theology of Home II contemplates the eternal amid the earthbound and shows snapshots of the things of daily life. Theology of Home II photos by Kim Baile and Dori Greco Rutherford photographed from the book by Amy Smith/Register

"in her service to God, St. Teresa of Calcutta reflected him, and in seeing her, we saw the source of all beauty."

Like Mary, as we go about our daily duties, may it be said that we, too, "pondered all of these things" and elicit her aid.

"At all times seek Mary's intercession ... She will never abandon you," reminds a handwritten note on a fridge decorated with Marian magnets, as captured in yet another photograph.

Readers will find that a particular sentiment, passage or point will connect with them personally as they make their way through this book, which underscores the necessity of creating a home that exudes love and protects beloved memories of loved ones past and present by using cherished dishes or other "domestic souvenirs,"

whether cooking a good meal from recipes near and dear to the family tree or going about the to-do list's daily tasks.

The little things of home life matter, for they point to bigger truths.

Women of all life stages and circumstances will discover much to ponder here as they go about the true art of homemaking, for it reminds readers that home should be comfortable and foster comfort, pointing all within its walls to heaven while reaping the good harvest of a spiritually grounded hearth and home.

> Amy Smith is the Register's associate editor.

READ

Theology of Home II is available at EWTNRC.com or (800) 854-6316: Item: 2883, \$34.95.



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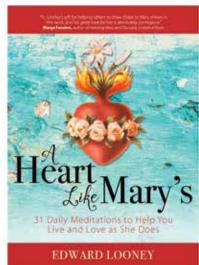
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For Catechists, Teachers or Friends

11. Corda Candles: I'm obsessed with both the Catholic theming and the scents of these candles. I recommend these candles on pretty much every gift guide I put together; CordaCandles.com

12. Mug from Rose Harrington: The different prayer-themed selections are all classy and cozy. I always love giving and receiving mugs in the winter; RoseHar-

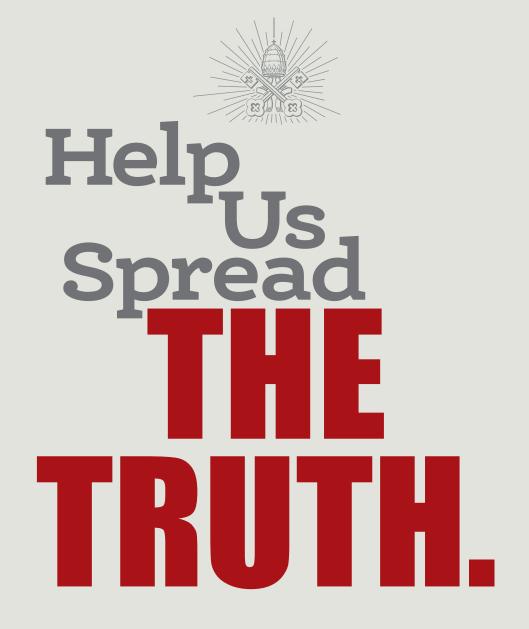
13. A Heart Like Mary's: This book by Father Edward Looney has 31 days' worth of beautiful meditations. I love giving daily devotionals as gifts for friends and teachers. Item: 17833, \$13.95; EWTNRC.com or (800) 854-6316

14. Catholic art from Ti Spark: I love Ti's art. I have her print of St. Josephine Bakhita in our entry way and several of the other saint prints on my wish list. Check out her beautiful Star of the Sea print; Ti-Spark.ca

CONTINUES ON PAGE B4

"Mankind is a great, an immense family. ... This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas."

— Pope St. John XXIII





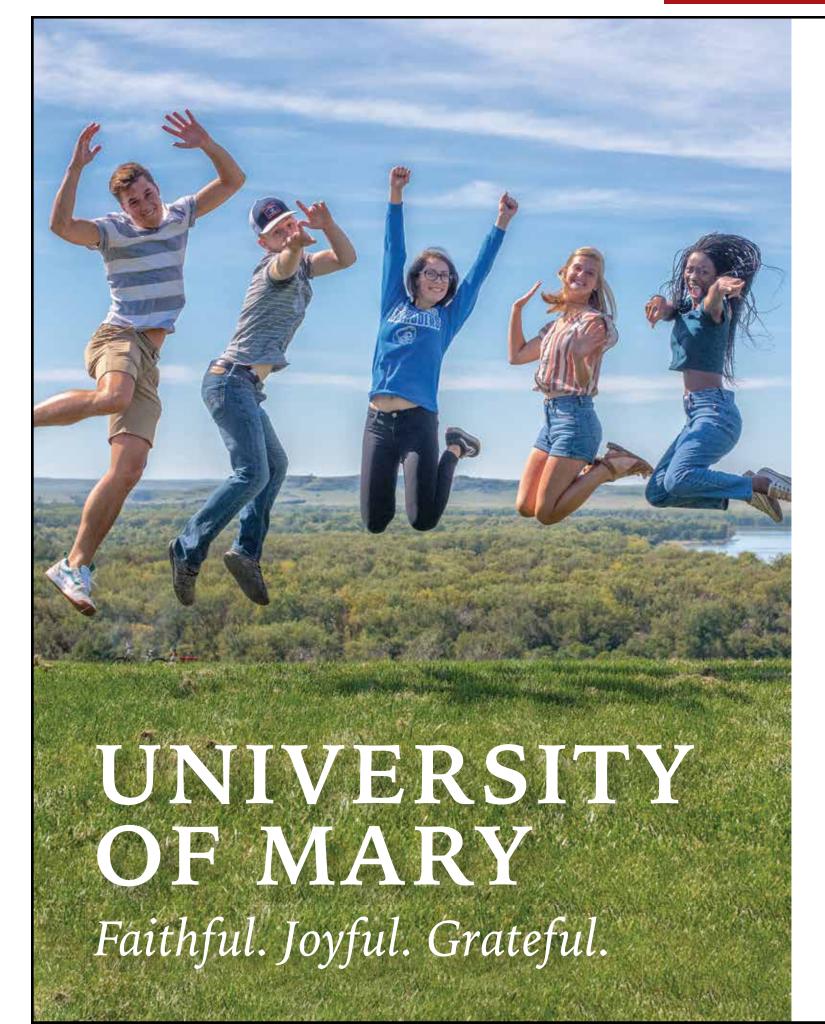
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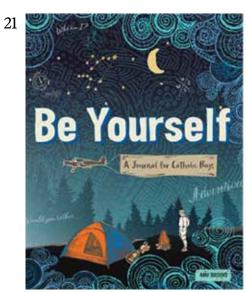
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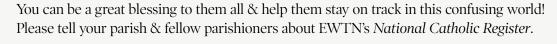






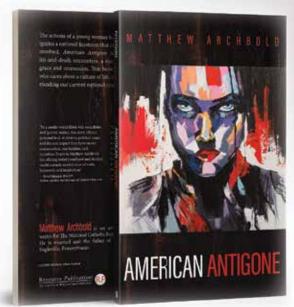
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"Just finished American Antigone
and I honestly loved the book...
I have read a lot of books books
about abortion, fiction and nonfiction,
and AMERICAN ANTIGONE is one of
the best." -Judie Brown, President
American Life League Inc.













For Children

15. Mass set from Worthy of Agape: With both DIY and upgraded/painted versions, these lovely wooden altar kits are a beautiful way to help your children learn more about and fall more in love with the Mass; WorthyofAgape.com

16. First Faith Treasury books.* This Is the Church (new release) and Lily Lolek, Future Saint are currently read aloud multiple times a day in our house. Both are delightful to read and the illustrations are incredible; FirstFaithTreasury.com

17. Doll from The Little Rose Shop: While you're perusing the adorable saint dolls, check out the Catholic baby blankets, too (available with personalization options; not shown); LittleRoseShop.com

18. Rosary blanket from Fiat to Halo: These "cozy rosaries" are just genius. I love both styles and have them on the "wish list" for my little ones; *FiattoHalo.com*

19. Catholic Family Crate: My kids get so excited when a box from Catholic Family Crate arrives in the mail. They love the activities, prayers, prints and table toppers, and I love how easy and fun it makes liturgical living at home; CatholicFamilyCrate.com

20. Catholic children's apparel from Brick House in the City: I love the "Strong Like My Mom" (featuring the Blessed Mother) and "Pray, Hope, Don't Worry" (homage to St. Padre Pio) tees ... well, actually, just browse all of them (including the "Small Thing" one). You might have a hard time picking a favorite, though; BrickHouseintheCity.com. Also be sure to check out Meadow Cress Boutique's selection of handsewn, saint-inspired items for babies and children (not shown). I love all of the original, fun patterns and theming; MeadowCressBoutique.com

21. Be Yourself! journals for Catholic girls and Catholic boys: These are a great resource to inspire your child age 9-plus to become a saint. Both the aesthetics and the content are top-notch; Amazon.com

22. "7 Days of Creation" puzzle: This gift combines two of my kids' favorite things, puzzles and the creation story. It's a fun find from the EWTN Religious Catalogue; Item: H2002, \$19.95, EWTNRC.com or (800) 854-6316

Present Toppers

23. Temporary tattoos by Just Love Prints: Select fun Catholic body art without the permanency; *JustLovePrints.com*

24. Stickers from The Simple Saints: I love the St. Louis and Zélie Martin one; *TheSimpleSaints.com*

25. Prayer journals*: With versions for spouses, parents, teachers, grandparents, godparents and a Spanish edition, these journals help guide you in praying more intentionally and meaningfully for the ones you love in a super-simple weekly format; *Amazon.com*

26. Novena cards: Select from a variety of beautiful prayer cards, Rosary cards, Holy Hour cards and novena cards. Both the concept and the execution of this new business is wonderful; these cards would make truly thoughtful gift toppers (or even solo gifts themselves); NovenaCards.com

Katie Warner writes
from Georgia,
where she lives with her family,
writes children's books
and home educates.
She is online at
KatieWarner.com.
*denotes products by the
guide's author.

More ideas:

Check out last year's gift guide at https://bit.ly/347rQmq.

"We desire to be able to welcome Jesus at Christmastime, not in a cold manger of our heart, but in a heart full of love and humility, in a heart so pure, so immaculate, so warm with love for one another."

— St. Teresa of Calcutta

Marian Consecration for Children, in the Spirit of St. Thérèse

New Book Inspired By the Spirituality Of the Little Flower

BOOK PICK

BY JOSEPH PRONECHEN

hen Blythe Kaufman started the first Children's Rosary group in her parish in West Hartford, Connecticut, in 2011 to answer a call for help from the pastor, she had no idea it would soon spread to parishes throughout the United States - and worldwide (in 34 countries). Now her effort to have children consecrate themselves to Jesus through Mary is likely to spread even further, with the release of her book, Child Consecration: To Jesus Through Mary — Following in the Spirit of St. Thérèse, the Little Flower.

Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, calls it "a wonderful means by which children can come to know God's Blessed Mother in an easy and accessible way. I commend this book to parents and teachers, who will find here a solid and ready means to develop the spiritual and devotional life of children ..."

Cardinal Raymond Burke recommends it to "parents who wish to introduce their children to Marian devotion and thus help them to give their hearts, one with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, completely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Cardinal Willem Eijk, wrote the preface; and Bishop John Keenan of Paisley, Scotland, penned the foreword, stating, "As a pastor of souls I pray many parents will take it up, confident it has within it the grace to bring a great harvest for the Church and the world in the generations that lie ahead." He calls it "a story that engages the imagination and senses and that is complemented by quite exquisite illustrations that lift the spirits with their innocent joy." He adds that it is "a delightful book that seems effortlessly to helps parents and children to scale to great heights in a consecration to Jesus through Mary as real as that proposed by Saint Louis de Montfort to the most mature of Christian souls."

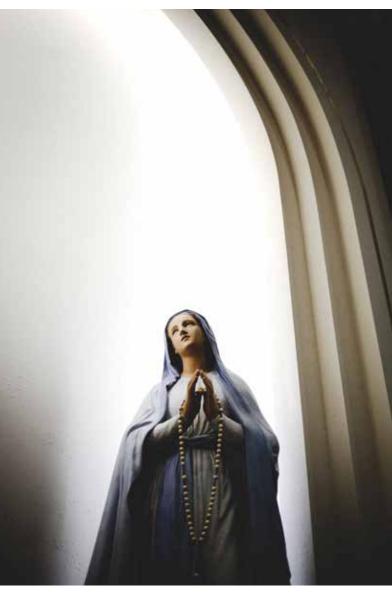
St. Thérèse and an Allegory

Kaufman's approach is unique, weaving the principal components of the St. Louis de Montfort consecration through spirituality connected with St. Thérèse, the Little Flower. "It is characterized by simplicity, confidence and trust."

The book is an allegory, telling of a mother helping a child to grow a garden for the father. And "while this book can be understood by very young children, it is also well suited for older children," Kaufman explained to the Register. "The lessons which can be learned in the book are timeless and relevant to even adults." She sees that great benefit in having it "read aloud by a parent, grandparent or teacher to a child or group of children."

Inspiration for Formation

"The souls of children are a most fertile soil," Kaufman explained, "and as most gardeners know, having good soil is critical to yielding a bountiful harvest.



CLOSE TO MARY. A new book will help families aid their children in growing closer to Jesus through Mary. Unsplash and Courtesy of Blythe Kaufman

Keeping soil free from disease and toxins is important. Children are pure and innocent, but many things today put this purity in jeopardy. It is a most challenging time to raise holy, pure children."

Child Consecration gives youngsters "the opportunity to entrust themselves to Jesus through their Heavenly Mother while their life stands before them," Kaufman pointed out. "The idea of preciousness of time, the importance of purity and trust in God are all addressed in turn in the book. Parents, catechists and teachers may find that in reading these stories to children they themselves are drawn closer to Our Lord and can find great spiritual benefits."

Kaufman believes grandparents, too, are well-suited to share this book. "This consecration journey is an opportunity for grandparents to give their grand-children a great spiritual gift that can serve as a spiritual rudder for them throughout their life."

"The vocation of each of our children is to holiness," she said, "and this time in prayer and entrustment to Jesus through Mary is an investment in their vocation to become future saints, something to which we are all

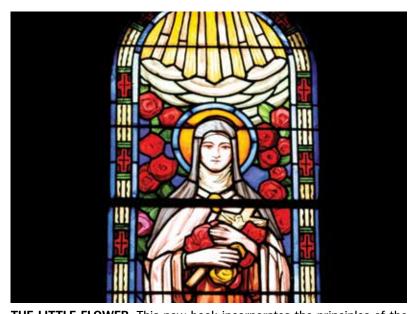
called." Kaufman emphasized, "Our Lord always drew attention to the simplicity of children and emphasized this as the way we can reach heaven."

Already, teachers and catechists are planning to make timely use of it.

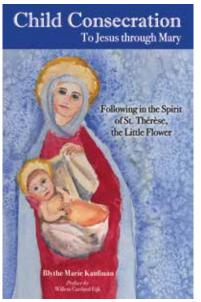
At St. Francis Xavier Catholic School in Birmingham, Alabama, Julie Cannova will be using the consecration book with her first-grade class. "This book is amazing and so vital at this moment," she said, adding that already four other teachers are also ready to use it.

Cannova strongly sees the school's "children drawing their families back to the faith," she said. "I can see the children lovingly leading their families to this consecration, which we could read each day at school. The children are going to bring their families back. The beauty and simplicity of the prayers and trust in Jesus in the eyes of a child are powerful and life-changing for the family."

At St. Katharine Drexel Church in Cape Coral, Florida, director of religious education Rose Talbot-Babey, former head of the catechism program in the Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut, finds



THE LITTLE FLOWER. This new book incorporates the principles of the St. Louis de Montfort consecration and the spirituality of St. Thérèse. Shutterstock



this children's consecration "so exciting."

She sees this as a "unique opportunity to ground the families and children in their faith in these times we're living in. I really want to introduce this as part of our faith-formation program here to the children and adults to ground them to Our Lord through Our Lady."

Because she's done consecration with adults for several years in parishes, she said, "I know the life-changing power this can have in a person's life and how much more needed today [it is] with our children." She said the consecration "will keep our children and families close to Our Lord through Our Lady and give them all a greater devotion to the Rosary, a life of virtue and holiness as we all strive to become saints."

Talbot-Babey will also implement the children's consecration book at nearby St. Andrew Catholic Church and make it known to the Diocese of Venice.

Catechesis is foundation. Bishop Keenan detailed how this children's consecration also weaves Catholic teachings into its daily readings.

He wrote, in part, about how it unfolds "day by day through the consecration journey: the panorama of the Scriptures; the wisdom of the Church; its elementary catechesis; its treasury of Holy Mass and the Sacraments; its essential prayers and devotions" and much more, making it "a quite exceptional manual for leading today's children safely to Jesus around the pitfalls and temptations that abound in our modern culture"

On a final note, Kaufman draws attention to the beautiful illustrations done by 11-year-old Abigail Ryan, a member of the Children's Rosary community. "She began with the cover illustration at age 9 and painted the remaining illustrations over a span of two years," Kaufman said. "There is something very special about having illustrations done by a child to accompany the book. The sweet beauty and simplicity of the illustrations give a testament to the hearts of children and all they can give to Our Lord."

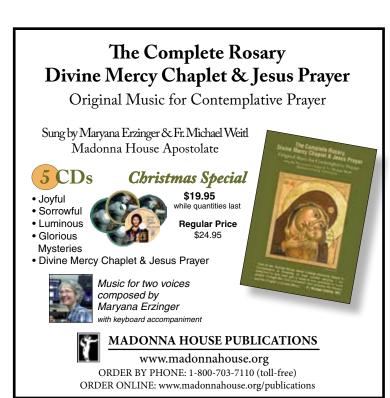
> Joseph Pronechen is a Register staff writer.

READ & PRAY

Child Consecration to Jesus Through Mary is available at EWTNRC.com, or (800) 854-6316; Item: 64336, \$12.95; it is also available online through ChildConsecration.com.











Raymond Arroyo Pens Christmas Book for Children of All Ages

The Spider Who Saved Christmas Shines the Light of Christ

BY KERRY CRAWFORD AND PATRICIA A. CRAWFORD

he common thread that weaves through all of Raymond Arroyo's endeavors is his ability to draw out a good story.

Arroyo, founding news director for EWTN (the parent company of the Register) and host and managing editor of the network's The World Over, is the author of a slate of books, including a biography of Mother Angelica and his popular Will Wilder adventure series for young readers in the middle grades. The launch of the Will Wilder series was new ground for Arroyo, who is the father of three children.

"LIKE EACH OF US ... SHE WAS THERE FOR A **REASON."**

In time for Christmas, Arroyo the storyteller does it again.

With the release this week of the touching picture book The Spider Who Saved Christmas, Arroyo reaches back in time to revive a nearly lost legend.

In the new tale, the Holy Family is on the move at night, fleeing to Egypt from Herod's advancing soldiers. As they shelter in a cave, Nephila, a large golden-backed spider, dangles above Mary and the Child. Joseph slashes its webbing, sending Nephila into the shadows to protect her future: her sac of eggs.

As Joseph raises his staff again, Mary stops him. "All are here for a reason," she cautions.

Nephila later hears the far-

THE SPIDER WHO SAVED **CHRISTMAS**

A Legend Written by Raymond Arroyo Illustrated by Randy Gallegos Sophia Press, 2020 40 pages, \$17.95 To order: ewtnrc.com or (800) 854-6316 (Item: 2111)

away shrieks of children in peril. Seeing the Child Jesus, she knows what she must do - and does what she does best.

She spins. She weaves.

Her silken threads knit together into the intricate golden webs for which her family is known. Suspense builds as she and her older children work through the night. Will they finish? What will the soldiers find when they approach the openmouthed cave in the morning? Can she protect this holy trio?

As good legends often do, The Spider Who Saved Christmas tells a historical truth — the Flight Into Egypt — but, delightfully, adds so much more.

Yes, Nephila is whimsical indeed, a welcome addition to the Christmas canon.

However, and this is important for young readers who revel both in elements of fantasy as well as accuracy, her behavior is spot-on. Like those of her descendants, the Golden Silk Orb Weavers, her webs gently lift and anchor in place, setting the stage for her to move back and forth to add the needed threads, both strong and elastic. It is so true to form that readers may wonder, if only for a fleeting minute, "Could this really have happened?"

And, in the next moment, they wish only that it had.

The Spider Who Saved Christmas is at its heart a pourquoi story. French for "why," pourquoi legends are origin stories that explain how things came to be as they are — similar to the "Just So" stories



LEGENDARY TALE. Raymond Arroyo has written a picture book about a Christmas legend. The Flight Into Egypt is the crux of this yarn, which focuses on how the Holy Family encounters a special helper in a dark cave in Egypt. Sophia Institute Press

of Rudyard Kipling.

Why do we hang shimmering tinsel as the final touch to our evergreen boughs? Why do many people in Eastern Europe, where this tale is rooted, still tuck a spider ornament among their tree decorations? Nephila, spinner of glittering webs, holds the answers and begs a question: If a tiny spider like her could sacrifice at such great cost, what can we do to embrace this Child of Mary?

"Like each of us ...

She was there for a reason." Arroyo's text and the illustrations of artist Randy Gallegos work in tandem to present the story as if it were a movie, moving dynamically but subtly from frame to frame.

Gallegos' work is dazzling in its brightness and contrasts.

Readers need only to follow the light — the lantern in Joseph's hand,

guiding his young family into the darkness of the cave; the bright golden back of Nephila hard at work; the shaft of moonlight penetrating the recesses; and the sunlight glancing off the drape of webs in the morning - to be reminded that the light of Christ overcomes all darkness.

This is a theme which young readers may gently absorb and grow in their understanding of as they revisit the story from one Christmas to another.

A good picture book is not for children only. In fact, C. S. Lewis, no stranger to writing for young readers, observed that "a children's story enjoyed only by children is a bad children's story." The Spider Who Saved Christmas, the debut book in a larger "Legend Series," will find a cherished home in the hearts of both parents and children alike.

> The Crawford sisters write from Pittsburgh.

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