

Summer 2026 Reading Suggestions

Given the break that OLPH Scripture Study takes between our Winter/ Spring study and the start of our Fall study (typically 5-6 months), the Scripture Study Board suggests a few books to carry you through the Summer and reinforce what we studied this past year. Summer reading for the Ministry is completely optional. But if you are looking to continue your study even when we are not formally meeting, you may wish to consider:

FOR THOSE LOOKING FOR A FORMAL “STUDY” TEXT:

Acts of the Apostles: A Catholic Bible Commentary on the New Testament by Trusted Catholic Biblical Scholars - CCSS (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture) – Illustrated, February 18, 2014 by William S. Kurz SJ (Author)

What message was the author of Acts seeking to convey, and what would the original audience have understood? How is God speaking to believers today through Acts as it has been used by the church throughout the centuries?

In this addition to the Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture, respected New Testament scholar William Kurz offers a close reading and explanation of the entire narrative of Acts, grounded in the original Greek but keyed to the NABRE for liturgical use.

The CCSS relates Scripture to Christian life today, is faithfully Catholic, and is supplemented by features designed to help pastoral ministers, lay readers, and students better comprehend the Bible and use it more effectively.

Commentary features include:

- Biblical text from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE)
- References to the Catechism, the Lectionary, and related biblical texts
- Theological insights from Church fathers, saints, and popes
- Reflection and application sections for daily Christian living
- Suggested resources and an index of pastoral subjects

Attractively packaged and accessibly written, the CCSS aims to help readers understand their faith more deeply, nourish their spiritual life, and share the good news with others.

FOR THOSE LOOKING TO DIVE DEEPER INTO A LUKE-SPECIFIC PARABLE:

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming – March 1, 1994 by Henri J. M. Nouwen (Author)

With over a million copies sold, this classic work is essential reading for all who ask, “Where has my struggle led me?”

Recommended reading for Hallow’s 2026 Lent Pray40 Community Prayer Challenge

A chance encounter with a reproduction of Rembrandt’s *The Return of the Prodigal Son* catapulted Henri Nouwen on an unforgettable spiritual adventure. Here he shares the deeply personal and resonant meditation that led him to discover the place within where God has chosen to dwell.

As Nouwen reflects on Rembrandt’s painting in light of his own life journey, he evokes a powerful drama of the classic parable in a rich, captivating way that is sure to reverberate in the hearts of readers. Nouwen probes the several movements of the parable: the younger son’s return, the father’s restoration of sonship, the elder son’s resentfulness, and the father’s compassion. The themes of homecoming, affirmation, and reconciliation will be newly discovered by all who have known loneliness, dejection, jealousy, or anger. The challenge to love as God loves, and to be loved as God’s beloved, will be seen as the ultimate revelation of the parable known to Christians throughout time, and is here represented with a vigor and power fresh for our times.

FOR THOSE LOOKING FOR BIBLICALLY-BASED FICTION:

Dear and Glorious Physician – 1959 by Taylor Caldwell

A biographical historical novel depicting the life of Saint Luke. It explores his journey from a dedicated Greek physician searching for truth to his eventual conversion and recording of the Gospels, lauded for its intense research, vivid, immersive portrayal of Roman-era decadence and spirituality.

Key Aspects of the Novel

- **Detailed Character Study:** The story presents Lucanus (Luke) as a real, complex human, tracing his intellectual and spiritual journey before he meets the Apostles.
- **Vivid Historical Setting:** Caldwell meticulously recreates the atmosphere of the ancient Mediterranean world, including Alexandria and Rome, capturing both the glory and corruption of the era.
- **Themes of Faith and Medicine:** The book explores the intersection of professional healing and spiritual fulfillment, showcasing Luke's dedication to medicine and his search for divine truth.

Review Consensus

- **Praised for Research & Scope:** Many readers consider it a masterpiece of historical fiction and one of Caldwell's finest works, often describing it as inspiring and emotional.
- **Immersive Prose:** Critics and readers alike note the rich, eloquent, and highly detailed style, though some modern readers might find the pace slower.
- **Enduring Impact:** It remains popular for its moving portrayal of faith and its detailed, empathetic look into a biblical figure's life.

Common Criticisms

- **Pacing and Style:** Some readers find the writing dense and the narrative pace slow.
- **Biographical Accuracy:** Some readers and critics note that the portrayal deviates from biblical accounts, relying on imagined scenes for Luke's upbringing, which is largely unknown historically.

Dear and Glorious Physician is best appreciated as a "passionate statement of belief" and a deeply researched, moving story that makes a familiar saint feel profoundly human.