

## *Canadian Anglican Cursillo*



### **Guide to Reading for Spiritual Development**

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For Christians the primary and foundational texts for reading for spiritual development are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Reading and reflection on Scripture should be a part of our daily life. Other reading and study alongside of scripture is also helpful and important.

Our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ have been reading and studying Scripture and their environments for Christ and sharing their insights in writing for centuries. One of the earliest known scholars was Irenaeus who lived from 130 to 200. There are hundreds if not thousands of wonderful resources available to read and any list of recommended titles would miss resources invaluable to the Christian walk.

Reading is best when it is about something one is interested in and it is engaging, fun and challenging. It is also a very personal endeavour, what one person finds too hard and boring to read another may find insightful and moving. If the first book you try does not inspire you to learn more, try another, or try another medium, there are many wonderful podcasts, audio books and even YouTube videos to consider.

Here are some steps you can take to find the next thing to read:

1. Ask what interests me? There are resources available on almost any aspect of living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Look for something that piques your interest. For example: sharing the faith, living well with less, how to pray, how to read the bible, how to be a good steward of the earth...the options are limitless.
2. Ask what challenges me? Where do I struggle in my faith? What are the roadblocks that are preventing my journey to continue?
3. Ask a friend: What are you reading? We chose friends who share our values, likes and interests and there's a high chance a book recommended by a friend will be a good read.
4. Ask a Church Leader: What are you reading? The leaders in our community are active readers, chances are they can help you find something.
5. Ask the Internet: it's a great tool for finding Christian resources.

If after taking those steps you are still looking for something to read, consider choosing one of the following authors and search for their works. The following is a list of often referenced and frequently quoted Christian authors from across the years.

**Rob Bell(1979- present):** American, Evangelical, popular-evangelist. A brilliant young voice. Good balance, good insights, and an exceptional capacity to speak to a contemporary audience.

**Nadia Bolz-Weber (1969 - present):** an author, [Lutheran](#) minister and public theologian. She served as the founding pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints, a congregation of the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#) in [Denver, Colorado](#).

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945):**Famous anti-Nazi dissident who died in Flossenbug concentration camp.His writing explored Christianity’s role in the secular world.

**Marcus Borg (1942 – 2015):**an American New Testament scholar, known for his work in historical Jesus scholarship.

**Barbara Brown Taylor (1951 – present):** American, Episcopalian, priest, popular-evangelist. Strong literary writer with an audience within secular circles. A unique blend of insight, scripture, tradition, and balance. Always a worthwhile read.

**John Bunyan(1628-1688):**The Non-Conformists, The Pilgrim’s Progress.

**Ruth Burrows**–British, Carmelite, nun. Deep insights into mysticism, faith, and contemplative prayer. Eminent common sense, blended with a deep knowledge of the mystical tradition.

**Joan Chittister (1936 – present):**American Benedictine nun and theologian. Powerful social justice and feminist voice. Knows the tradition of monasticism very well and draws key insights out of its deep wells.

**Dorothy Day (1897-1980):**The Catholic Worker Movement.

**Anthony de Mello (1931-1987):**Indian, Roman Catholic, Jesuit. Brings the insights of Buddhism and Eastern spiritualities into his articulation of Christian spirituality.

**Richard Foster (1942 – present):** Celebration of Discipline; Christian theologian and author in the Quaker tradition. His writings speak to abroad Christian audience.

**Laurence Freeman 1951- present):** British, monk, another trustworthy guide on Contemplative prayer.

**Francis of Assisi (1181-1226):**a founder of numerous Christian orders, guidance on prayer

**Malcolm Guite (1957 – present):** an English poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest and academic.

**Nicky Gumbel (1955 – present):** an English Anglican priest and author. He is known as the developer of the Alpha Course, a basic introduction to Christianity supported by churches of many Christian traditions.

**Rachel Held Evans (1981-2019):** An American Christian columnist, blogger and author. She wrote on various issues including the bible, life as a Christian woman, and liturgy.

**Rabbi Abraham Heschel(1907-1972):** American, Jewish, Rabbi. Exceptional spiritual commentaries on the Jewish scriptures. Widely read and respected.

**Etty Hillesum (1914 - 1943):** Dutch, Jewish, lay woman. Her writings exhibit an extraordinary insight into spirituality, and she backed them up with martyrdom.

**Elizabeth A. Johnson (1941 –present):** a Roman Catholic feminist theologian. She is a Distinguished Professor Emerita of Theology at Fordham University, a Jesuit institution in New York City and a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood. The National Catholic Reporter has called Johnson "one of the country's most prominent and respected Theologians".

**Kathleen Norris(1880-1966):** American, Presbyterian, lay, Oblate of St. Benedict. Deeply immersed in the tradition of the Desert Fathers and equally attuned to our spiritual struggles within contemporary culture.

**Alan Jones (1946 – Present):** Episcopalian, priest, American. Wisdom drawn from the deep wells of Christian tradition. Practical spirituality with depth.

**Julian of Norwich (1342-1420):** famous for her prayer life and reflections on prayer. Her writings are the earliest woman's writings in existence.

**Thomas A Kempis (1380- 1471):** best known for "The Imitation of Christ", one of the best know Christian devotional books.

**Peter Kreeft (1937 – present):** an American professor of philosophy who has written books on Christian philosophy, theology and apologetics.

**Anne Lamott(1954 -present):** American, Episcopalian, lay woman. A unique blend of insight, Christian commitment, and blistering iconoclasm.

**Amy-Jill Levine (1956 - present):** New testament and Early Christianity Scholar. Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Department of Religious Studies, and Graduate Department of Religion. A self-described "Yankee Jewish feminist who teaches in a predominantly Protestant divinity school in the buckle of the Bible Belt," Levine "combines historical-critical rigor, literary-critical

sensitivity, and a frequent dash of humor with a commitment to eliminating antisemitic, sexist, and homophobic theologies."

**Max Lucado (1955- present):**American author and minister, how to live positively as a Christian.

**Madeline L'Engle (1918-2007):**Best known for her fiction work, she also wrote many memoirs of life as an Anglican artist.

**C.S. Lewis (1898-1963):**British writer and lay theologian. Best known for his works of fiction and his non-fiction Christian apologetics.

**Martin Luther (1483-1546):**best known for his work the 95 Theses and the start of the protestant movement.

**John Main (1926 - 1982):** British/Canadian, monk, a popular, trustworthy guide on Contemplative prayer.

**James J. Martin (1960 - present):** an American Jesuit priest, writer, and editor-at-large of the Jesuit magazine *America*. A *New York Times* Best Selling author, Martin's books include *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life*, *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, and *My Life with the Saints*. He is a sought-after public speaker and media commentator on subjects such as the life and teachings of Jesus and Ignatian spirituality as inspired by the life and teachings of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

**Thomas Merton(1915-1968):**Roman Catholic, monk, one of the most influential spiritual writers in the past 100 years.

**Henri Nouwen (1932-1996):** Books on issues including psychology, pastoral ministry, spirituality, social justice and community.

**Parker Palmer(1939 – present):**Quaker, layman, American, much-respected across all denominational lines. Has written brilliantly on the spirituality of education and on achieving a Christian balance in life.

**David Steindl-Rast (1926 – present):**American, Roman Catholic, monk, had the distinction of being Henri Nouwen's spiritual director. Writes with depth, drawing many of his insights from the richness of monasticism.

**Richard Rohr, OFM (1943 - present):** American Franciscan priest and writer on spirituality, popular evangelist. Numerous books on prayer, masculine spirituality, addictions, overcoming dualism, overcoming sectarianism, finding balance in your life, scriptural commentary.

**Joyce Rupp (1943 - present):** well known for her work as a writer, international retreat leader, and conference speaker. She is the author of numerous bestselling books,

including *Praying Our Goodbyes*, *Open the Door*, and *Fragments of Your Ancient Name*. Joyce has a B.A. in English, a M.R.E. in Religious Education, and a M.A. in Transpersonal Psychology. She is a member of the Servite's (Servants of Mary) community and was a volunteer for Hospice for fifteen years. She currently resides in Des Moines, Iowa.

**St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430):** one of the most influential early thinkers and leaders famous for *The Confessions*.

**St. Patrick (390-460):** Celtic Christianity

**Phyllis Tickle (1934-2015):** American author and lecturer. She was the founding editor of the religion department at *Publisher's Weekly*.

**Rick Warren (1954 – present):** American, Evangelist. Stunningly popular across denominational lines. His book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, has sold over 30 million copies worldwide, and is worth the read.

**Simone Weil (1909 – 1943):** French, Jewish, lay woman. Her writings manifest a spiritual sensitivity and depth that includes her in most discussions about contemporary spirituality.

**N.T. Wright (1948 – present):** English New Testament scholar

**Wendy Wright:** American, lay woman, Roman Catholic. A specialist regarding Francis de Sales and Jane Chantel, but with wider writings, especially about the place of devotions within our spiritual lives.

**Phillip Yancy (1949 – present):** American author who writes about a variety of spiritual issues.