Book Reviews

As an avid reader, I know that words are a medium that I go to often. I can get deeply engrossed in words which will lead me down many different paths, one of which can be wonder and that wonder can be either questioning or awe. Both books I have chosen to review are ones that have presented the qualities of questioning and awe, but in very different ways and I enjoyed each of them tremendously.

1. Cry, The Beloved Country by Alan Paton

This book, a classic novel from 1948, is the deeply moving story of a Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son Absolom, set against the background of a beloved land and a people riven with racial injustice. It is a story about a black man’s country under white man’s law. Reverent Kumalo lives with his family in Ndotsheni where the land that used to be lush and productive is gradually eroding on the hillsides and the people are gradually leaving and finding their way into the big distant city of Johannesburg. Stephen’s sister, his brother and then his only son at different times go to the city to find their future and Stephen and his wife never hear from them. Stephen finally makes the fearful trip into the city, where he has never been, to find them. What he finds and how he reacts, the kindness and cruelty which he encounters and his perseverance and courage are a testament to his faith and convictions of goodness. This book is remarkable for its beautiful descriptions of the land, its depiction of deep and raw emotion of the humans involved and an incredible ability in storytelling. It is a story that has stood the test of time and is still a classic work of love and hope, courage and endurance, born of the dignity of humans.

It is a book that speaks very much to our present day as we struggle with racism. As I worked my way through the WORDS of this book, I WONDERED why I hadn’t read it 60 years ago!

1. A Continual Feast by Jan Karon

This book is for all of you who have enjoyed the Mitford series of the stories of Father Tim, the aging priest who cares so thoughtfully for his parishioners and is not afraid to take on challenges or to talk about his own faith. It would be a good book for the bedside or coffee table.

“A Continual Feast contains lively ideas, common sense, profound wisdom and plain good humour” from many sources from both the sacred and the secular world. It is an entertaining and useful quote journal that helps us visit again with Father Tim and contains “provocative insight into everything from the righteous to the ridiculous.”

And most of it is done in Father Tim’s handwriting.

Samples: There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come. Victor Hugo

Everywhere I have sought rest and not found it, except sitting in a corner by myself with a little book. Thomas a Kempis

Middle age is when you’ve met so many people that every new person you meet reminds you of someone else. Ogden Nash

New Book Releases

1. The History of Marion Hilliard House by Janet Schneider and Carolynne Leeuw

This book has just been released and is a wonderful meander through the years 1967 to 2002 when the Anglican Church had an active ministry for pregnant, unmarried girls. The Church of Cleopas was particularly involved in this ministry, but volunteers came from a wider area as well. The book includes a history of the place, documentation, letters of appreciation, newspaper articles, pictures and even an explanation of how Marion Hilliard House got its name.

Betty Gore and the Resource Centre both have a supply of books which are selling for $20 each and the money from each book sale will be donated to the parish of the buyer. How’s that for a unique deal?

1. Herby O’Driscoll is launching a new book called I Will Arise and Go

I don’t know anything about it yet but am sure it will be great. Stay tuned.