



RECOMMENDED READ:

THE LORD OF THE RINGS, THE HOBBIT | JRR TOLKIEN

Recommendation by Tim McCormick

Over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to see parts II and III of **The Lord of the Rings trilogy** in the theaters with my son, Judah. I hadn't seen them in a theater since they were released over twenty years ago. Judah, who has read all of the books, including The Hobbit and other books by JRR Tolkien, hadn't seen them in theaters, though he has watched all the DVDs many times. So, it was a real treat for the two of us to see The Two Towers and The Return of the King together, most especially because they were the extended editions and ran for over 4 hours each! How glorious it was! One of the things that these movies have done for me is to draw me back to the books.

This is not unlike how The Chosen can be a conduit to reading the Bible. Over Christmas, my son got me a beautiful boxed set of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings. I tend to like smaller books, so this collection was perfect for me. As I started (again) to re-read the trilogy, I am reminded of the fantastic world that Tolkien created and the various Christian virtues that are exhibited by the many characters in the book. Tolkien, who was a devout Catholic, once wrote that **"The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work."** My son and I enjoy reading these books together and discussing them, while also comparing them to the films. So, as we approach the summer time, which is always good for reading fiction, I highly recommend picking up these great tales of Middle-Earth. And read it with a friend or a family member, which always makes the experience far richer. *Forth Eorlingas!*

EXTENDED READ, MOTHERS DAY REFLECTION

Recommendation by Ken Pullis

May is the month dedicated to Mary, Our Blessed Mother. We also celebrate the love & dedication of our mothers during this on Mother's Day. Many parishes and churches have a May Crowning to honor Mary with the beauty of flowers, the praying of the rosary, and Marian hymns. I have fond memories as a child praying the rosary with my family every night at 7 PM, much to my chagrin as I would often miss the first inning or two of the Tigers' games that often started just after 7 PM. I would secretly hope and pray that my dad would lead the rosary because he did the "speedy" version of it, which usually ended in 12-13 minutes. If my mom were leading the rosary, there was a chance that it would take more than 20 minutes to finish with all of the reflections and intentions before each decade. One way or another, we had to finish by 7:30 PM because we would watch **Jeopardy!** together as a family at 7:30 PM. All of this is to say that I am grateful that my parents had us pray the rosary as a family. When asked by someone if he enjoyed praying the rosary, my dad would reply, **"I do not do it for my enjoyment but to please and honor Mary and her Son Jesus."** What a beautiful testimony of faith! Of course, Mary is our model of faith from her "fiat" ("let it be") to the Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation to the birth of Jesus in Tmanager in Bethlehem to her steady yet sorrow-filled presence at the foot of the cross to leading the apostles in prayer before the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost to her final coronation as Queen of Heaven and Earth. I have included a link to a useful guide for praying the rosary. **Happy Mother's Day to all the moms out there and Happy Mother's Day to Mary, our mother in heaven!**



READ MORE >>

**How to Pray the Rosary:
Guide to the Rosary Prayer**

www.hallow.com/blog/how-to-pray-the-rosary/



SCRIPTURE PASSAGE REFLECTION

Recommendation by Steve Petty

Do you have a favorite scripture passage? I think most people do. Personally, I have several, so it would be hard for me to choose just one. That said, one scripture passage that has always intrigued me is John 10:27:

"My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me."

John 10:27

This is an interesting passage because it can leave us asking the obvious question: How do I distinguish the voice of Jesus from all the other voices in my life? The basic answer to that question is simple: we learn to recognize the voice of Jesus through our commitment to prayer.

Modern society offers up so many distractions. There is a great deal of noise in today's world — noise that is not of God — noise that can distract us from God. This is why prayer is so important. Jesus' voice is always there, but we must take ourselves out of the world to hear it. Turning off the volume of the world means simply taking time to pray so that we can recognize Jesus' voice speaking within. The more we become familiar with the voice of Jesus, the easier it is for us to follow Him. And where does Jesus want us to follow Him? Jesus wants us to be evangelizers and follow Him into the world so that others may hear His voice through us.

Baptized Christians are called to be missionary disciples. Having heard His voice, we are now sent on a mission to help others hear Him. Jesus' voice leads us to harmony and light; the voice of the world leads to chaos and darkness. Being a missionary disciple means that we must enter the world of chaos and darkness so that we can bring others to Christ. By no means is this easy, but it is the mission of every Christian. The late Pope Francis puts it this way:

"An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the 'smell of the sheep' and the sheep are willing to hear his voice." *The Joy of the Gospel, #24*

In this Easter Season, reach out to others and do your part to lead them to Jesus. Be the instrument by which they hear His voice and experience His presence.