

Letters to a Young Catholic

By George Weigel

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In this remarkable tour of the Catholic world, George Weigel helps us understand how Catholicism fosters what Flannery O'Connor called "the habit of being." Taking the reader by the hand, Weigel embarks on a journey to Catholic landmarks as diverse as Chartres Cathedral and St. Mary's Church in Greenville, South Carolina; the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and G.K. Chesterton's favorite pub; the grave of a modern martyr in Warsaw, and the Sistine Chapel. Weaving together insights from history, literature, theology, and music, Weigel uses these touchstones to illuminate the beliefs that have shaped Catholicism for two thousand years.With clarity and conviction, Weigel examines the foundations of Catholic faith and explores the topics of grace, prayer, vocation, sin and forgiveness, suffering, and-most importantly-love. Putting a dramatic face on this invitation to Catholicism, Weigel introduces some of the figures who have shaped his faith and thought-Michelangelo and Fra Angelico; Evelyn Waugh and Cardinal John Henry Newman; Father Jerzy Popieuszko and Pope John Paul II; Edith Stein and Mother Teresa-as he also shares anecdotes from his own Catholic life. To a world that sometimes seems closed and claustrophobic, he suggests, Christian humanism offers a world with windows and doors-and a skylight.In these letters, George Weigel conveys the power of a faith that is at once personal and universal, timely and eternal. His book will inspire not only the young generation of Catholics whose World Youth Day celebrations have launched an era of renewal for the Church, but also the faithful, the doubtful, and the searchers of every age.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
In this spiritual memoir-cum-travelogue, Weigel writes with the same beauty and clarity that characterized his biography of Pope John Paul II, Witness to Hope, merging reportage with personal insights about Catholicism. He takes readers on a journey from Maryland to Europe and Israel, visiting sites that are whimsical (G.K. Chesterton's favorite pub) as well as those that are renowned as holy (the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem, St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome). Writing in a conversational, epistolary form aimed at young Catholics, Weigel offers a book that simultaneously is, and is not, your grandmother's catechism: he affirms the core doctrines of the Church, but he does so in a way that is refreshingly contemporary and—because of his emphasis on Church sites around the world—catholic as well as Catholic. Weigel opens the book with an entertaining description of his childhood in the Catholic stronghold of Baltimore, and invites young readers to entertain the idea that Catholicism is not just a creed but an "optic," a rooted way of viewing the world. In the rest of the book, he introduces that world and offers them new lenses with which to understand it. This book is simply first-rate.
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From Booklist
Growing up in Baltimore, one of the most Catholic U.S. cities, Weigel knew Catholics were different. They identified with their parish, not their neighborhood. Their school uniforms made them distinctive, and Sunday mass gave them a rich ritual life. But the real difference, he says, is that Catholics had a particular way of looking at the world, based on what he calls a sacramental imagination. In the Catholic worldview, everything matters. Writing directly to young Catholics and for anyone curious about Catholicism, Weigel discusses what it means to be Catholic now. He tours the Catholic world that has shaped his own understanding, and particular places he visits range from Milledgeville, Georgia, deep in the Bible Belt but home of Catholic novelist and apologist Flannery O'Connor, to the Vatican, Chartres Cathedral, St. Stanislaw Kostka Churchyard in Warsaw, and even the Olde Cheshire Cheese tavern in London, a favorite haunt of G. K. Chesterton. This is a luminous work that would appeal to anyone interested in faith, hope, and life itself.
June Sawyers
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Review
"An engaging, lucid, and informative introduction to the teachings and traditions of Catholicism." -- *Wall Street Journal*

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Noel Klein:

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Joel Newsom:

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