

Allen, Michael. *Grounded in Heaven: Recentering Christian Hope and Life on God*.

Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018.

What is our Christian hope? Since the, so-called, Enlightenment, the answer to this question has been increasingly answered with a this-world orientation. Heaven/utopia, the story goes, can be attained here on earth through human agency. Sadly, this narrative has crept into the Church. Dr. Allen calls us to remember that this was not the teaching of Christ or His Church for millennia; rather, our hope is, in the words of our liturgy, to see Christ Face-to-Face...in the new Heaven and Earth. Although a reformed protestant theologian, Allen draws significantly on the Great Tradition to offer us a thoroughly catholic (i.e., universal) vision of our Christian hope for the life to come.

Dauphinais, Michael and Matthew Levering. *Knowing the Love of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002.

Two excellent teachers and scholars team up to write an introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas' thought aimed at the layperson in the pew. Perhaps no other post-New Testament thinker after St. Augustine has shaped the Church's thinking about who God is, what He has done for us, and who we are because of it more than St. Aquinas. Dauphinais and Levering help us to sit at the feet of this master so that we might better know the love of *the* Master, Jesus Christ.

O'Brien, Michael. *Island of the World*

O'Brien is a Roman Catholic author that writes beautiful stories alive with the presence of Christ and the faith He handed down. In this particular piece of historical fiction, the main character, Josip, represents the biographies of several people compressed into this one character. Through much suffering, spanning from WWII in modern day Croatia through the Yugoslavian/Serbian wars up into our own age, Josip learns to love Jesus as his first love, even in the midst of pain and suffering. This is a beautiful story that will touch your heart on many levels.

Smith, Gordon T. *Called to be Saints: An Invitation to Christian Maturity*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.

Lent is a time to pursue holiness in preparation for celebrating Christ's victory over death. Smith reminds us that becoming saints (holy ones) begins with our union with Christ (being *in* Christ) at our Baptism, but this is only the *beginning*. We are called, in Christ, to grow up into maturity; and not any maturity, but specifically, Christian Maturity, or Christlikeness. Or, in a word, holiness. Smith offers us teaching about what holiness is and practical tips to pursue it.

Wu Song, Felicia. *Restless Devices: Recovering Personhood, Presence, and Place in the Digital Age*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021.

During Lent we look to grow in our Christ-likeness through the spiritual disciplines. In this book, Wu Song explores how our current cultural imagination has been shaped by what she, following prominent tech executives, calls “the Digital.” She argues that the Digital, through addiction to our devices and influencing the way that we inhabit/see the world, has de-formed us and our relationships with others. Here she offers strategies, including the discipline of fasting, to help correct and re-form us back into Christ-likeness. A helpful read to help parents think about their kids use of technology. This book will be touched on in the parenting class.