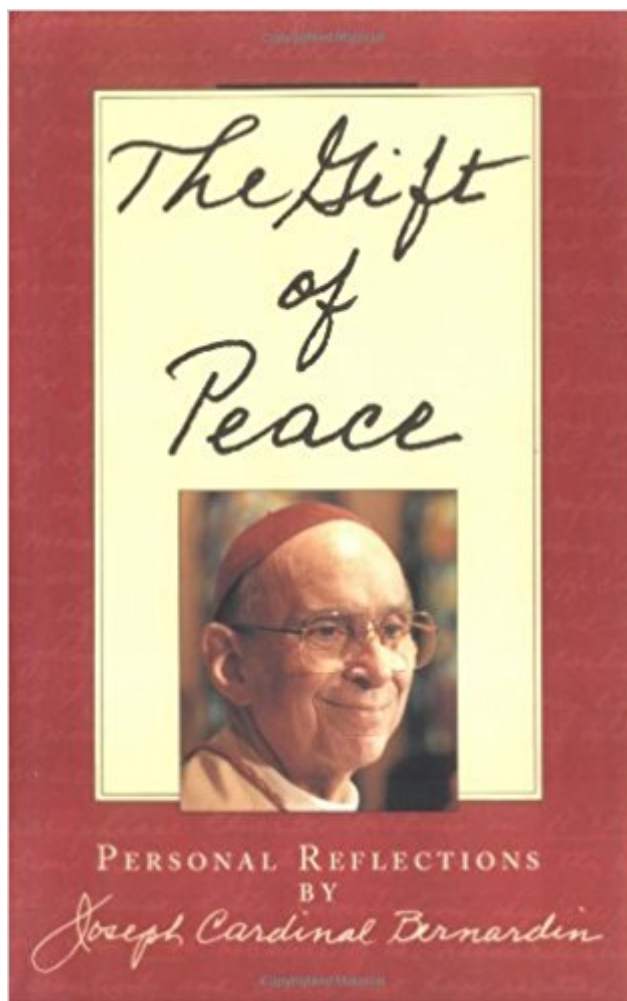


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The Gift Of Peace: Personal Reflections



Synopsis

“I can say in all sincerity that I am at peace. I consider this as God’s special gift to me.”

—Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, announcing on August 30, 1996, that his cancer had returned after fifteen months of being in remission. The Cardinal died November 14, 1996. In the final two months of his life, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin made it his mission to share his personal reflections and insights in this book, *The Gift of Peace*. Using as a framework the previous three years, which included false accusation of sexual misconduct, diagnosis of cancer, and return of the cancer after fifteen months of being in remission, Cardinal Bernardin tells his story openly and honestly. At the end of his life, the Cardinal was at peace. He accepted his peace as a gift from God, and through this book, he shares that gift with the world. *The Gift of Peace* is part of the Cardinal’s pastoral legacy; through this book his ministry lives on. From *The Gift of Peace*:

“The past three years have taught me a great deal about myself and my relationship to God, the Church, and others. . . . Within these major events lies the story of my life” what I have believed and who I have worked hard to be. And because of the nature of these events, I have spirituality and gained insights that I want to share. By no means are these reflections meant to be a comprehensive autobiography. They are simply reflections from my heart to yours. I hope they will be of help to you in your own life so you too can enjoy the deep inner peace—God’s wonderful gift to me—that I now embrace as I stand on the threshold of eternal life.” I invite those who read this book to walk with me the final miles of my life’s journey. Peace and love, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The well-loved cardinal of Chicago completed this book during the last few months of his life. In it he records the personal struggle of his final three years, during which he faced charges of sexual misconduct, later dropped as admittedly false. Eventually, Bernardin made peace with his accuser, helping the younger man reconcile with his Catholic faith before he died of AIDS. Bernardin also accepted his own imminent death from pancreatic cancer as a true lesson of the cross, writing here about his mixed sense of abandonment and hope with a profound awareness of the meaning of shared suffering and Christian love. A very moving last testament, written with simplicity and deep wisdom. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The Gift Of Peace is the final legacy left to us by one of America's most beloved and respected clerics. Preparing The Gift Of Peace was an extraordinary effort which consumed Joseph Cardinal Bernardin's final days, and offers deeply personal reflections about his last three headline-filled years. The Gift Of Peace also reveals the Cardinal's spiritual growth amidst a string of traumatic events: false accusations of sexual abuse; reconciliation a year later with his accuser (who had earlier recanted the charges); a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer and surgery; the return of cancer (in his liver); his decision to discontinue chemotherapy and live his remaining days as fully as possible. Even after Cardinal Bernardin relinquished the day-to-day operation of the Archdiocese in his final weeks, he continued to work on The Gift Of Peace. Cardinal Bernardin was known for his gift of reconciliation, and for a "consistent ethic of life" that urged a reverence for life from conception to natural death. In his final years he made a trip to Israel with Jewish leaders; launched the Catholic Common Ground Initiative to heal rifts among America's Catholics; and sent a letter to the Supreme Court urging them not to approve "physician-assisted" suicide. The Gift Of Peace is a worthy testament to the memory of a Christian life amidst contemporary issues and modern day challenges of life in the last years of the 20th century. -- Midwest Book Review

This touching and insightful little book serves as a poignant reminder to all of us that people of faith do have an extraordinary resource which can allow them to face life's most difficult moments, life's worst surprises, life's most bitter defeats with equanimity and peace and sometimes even an undercurrent of seemingly unshakable joy. Cardinal Bernadin wrote this book in the final two months of his life. In it he reflects on the three years previous in which he was falsely accused of sexual misconduct, and in which he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer which, after a brief remission, reappeared with a vengeance. Through all of this, he maintained his faith and his gentle and loving perspective on life. He admits that his spiritual journey has always been a struggle to become closer to God and that the trials of

the false accusation and his illness taught him how to release his pain, his anger, and himself into God's hands. This is a book that should be of interest to all people of faith and, in particular, to anyone who struggles with serious illness or the issue of forgiveness. Joseph Cardinal Bernadin's legacy is not only his life's work but his ability to forgive fully and to die well. -- From Independent Publisher

Gods gift of peace is available for the asking. One mans journey from success to disaster and back transcends death. This book is armor for anything life can throw at you.

I didn't really know what to expect when I picked up this book years ago for the first time. I was someone who was interested in Catholicism and had attended mass a few times, however I was not Catholic. When I read the book I realized this was not a book about being Catholic, it was just a book about a man with extraordinary compassion. I remember reading and thinking, how can this man be so forgiving, compassionate, and strong. Did it have to do with Catholicism ? I don't think so. It was a man with true faith and who believed in really living his faith. If there was ever a handbook and a first-hand account on how we should live and treat others, this is it.

A must read for everyone. He was an exemplary human being, priest and a man of Faith. A gift to the world.

This book is written in a very simple manner, yet discloses very personal feelings of Cardinal Bernardin. His struggles with the humiliation of being accused of child abuse and then his struggle with the knowledge of his terminal cancer was truly heart rending. One of the things that tickled me was that he honestly admits that during his daily prayers his mind would wander to tasks he had before him for the day - a problem I have myself! His thoughts on cancer and dying were very helpful to me as I have lost family members to this terrible disease. I would recommend this book not only to people that are dealing with cancer, but to family members as well.

A remarkable personal memoir of a remarkable man written within weeks of his death. Bernardin's views on his cancer, treatment, and oncoming death are seen through the lens of a very active life - one which did not look forward to stopping this way. Bernardin did a lot in his life, so there will be some who did not like him - this is the curse of a life of achievement. He also did a lot of good, and his ability to make a good end at peace with all is inspiring.

Wonderful book. Filled with a great message and love. Very inspirational

Seems overpriced since it is not really a full-sized book. But it was lovely to read.

Excellent book, short, sweet and encouraging.

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