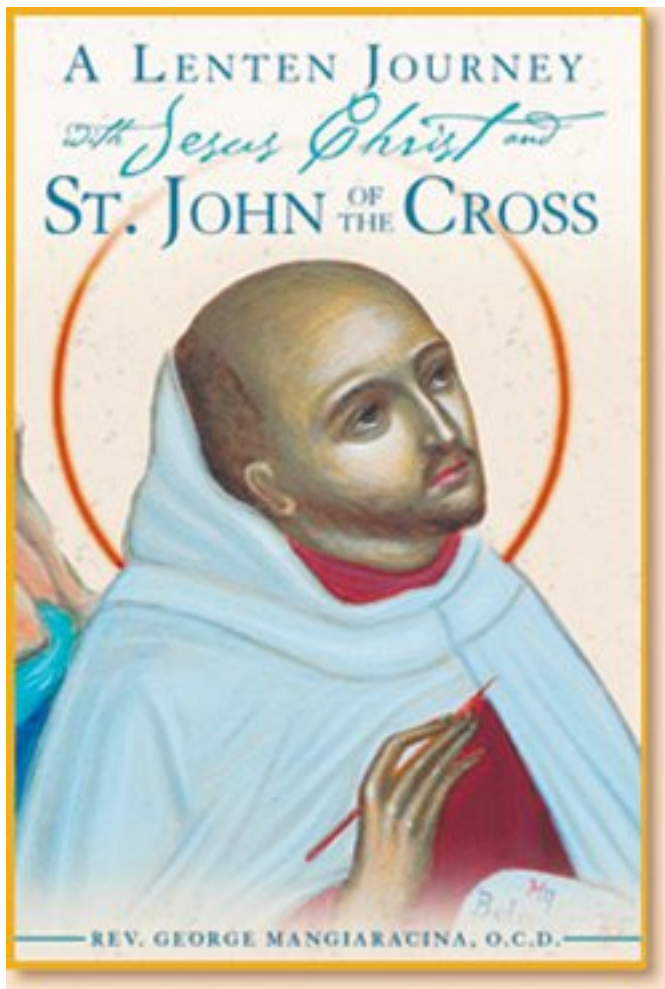




# The Roman Catholic Diocese of Columbus

## Book Review



*A Lenten Journey with Jesus Christ and St. John of the Cross*  
by Rev. George Mangiaracina, O.C.D.

Review by Hugh McNichol

Contemporary Catholics don't often embrace the opportunity to

learn more about the hagiographical traditions of spirituality that are part of the Church's great treasury of saints and spiritual methodologies. This Lent, the inquisitive Catholic should take the spiritual season of Lent to engage in qualitative spiritual reading in order to deepen the experience of faith through meditative prayer.

Christus Publishing Company

(<http://www.christuspublishing.com>) introduces a third book to its collection of Catholic spiritual readings, *A Lenten Journey with Jesus Christ and Saint John of the Cross*. The book's author is Reverend George Mangiaracina, O.C.D., a member of the Discalced Carmelites of Washington.

The book offers an invitation to the reader to take a spiritual journey of renewal with the mentoring of St. John of the Cross. St. John of the Cross was a Spanish mystic and founder of the Discalced Carmelites who lived in the sixteenth century (1542-1591). He was a companion and follower of St. Teresa of Avila. Over the centuries, people have read his spiritual insights in order to seek a deeper relationship with God.

The form the book takes is that of a daily spiritual reflection that incorporates a Gospel reading, a reflection and finally a daily invocation or prayer. The methodology of the book utilizes the *Lectio Divina*, a meditation based on the Word of God, a reflective and meditative period of prayer, where the meaning of God's Word is revealed, a period of personal dialogue with God and an intense period of listening to God's message through His Word. The form then concludes with a reflection taken from the writings of Saint John of the Cross and finally a prayer for the meditations conclusion.

Chronologically the book offers meditations and reflections for each day of Lent. There is also a brief biographical treatment of St. John of the Cross, which helps the reader in appreciating the methodology of St. John of the Cross. What this author found most refreshing in the book, was the truly practical applications of the daily reflections. The daily reflections are written for Catholics on all levels of spirituality as an invitation to more effectively deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ through meditation, prayer and reflection on the Word of God.

Most interesting in the book is the sections that focuses on the days of Holy Week and the Sacred Paschal Triduum. These sections are the first examples this author has experienced that incorporate the qualitative celebration of the Sacred Liturgy as part of the prayerful journey of Catholic faith through Lent. Most evidently, the fact that the book's author holds a doctoral degree in Sacred Liturgy shows very clearly how our Catholic faith is inclusive of both temporal and spiritual aspects of our lives, commonly called kairoitic time, or sacred time.

This book is a great work that takes the Catholic on a temporal and spiritual journey with one of the great saints of the Roman Church. The prayerful attention to the *Lectio Divina* with personal periods of prayerful reflection makes it a book that potentially could become an annual Lenten exercise for the author and hopefully many other discerning Catholics that are seeking to deepen their relationship to God and His Holy Church.

The book is available through Christus Publishing, LLC ([www.christuspublishing.com](http://www.christuspublishing.com) ) and at Amazon ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) ).

Hugh McNichol is a Catholic author and journalist.