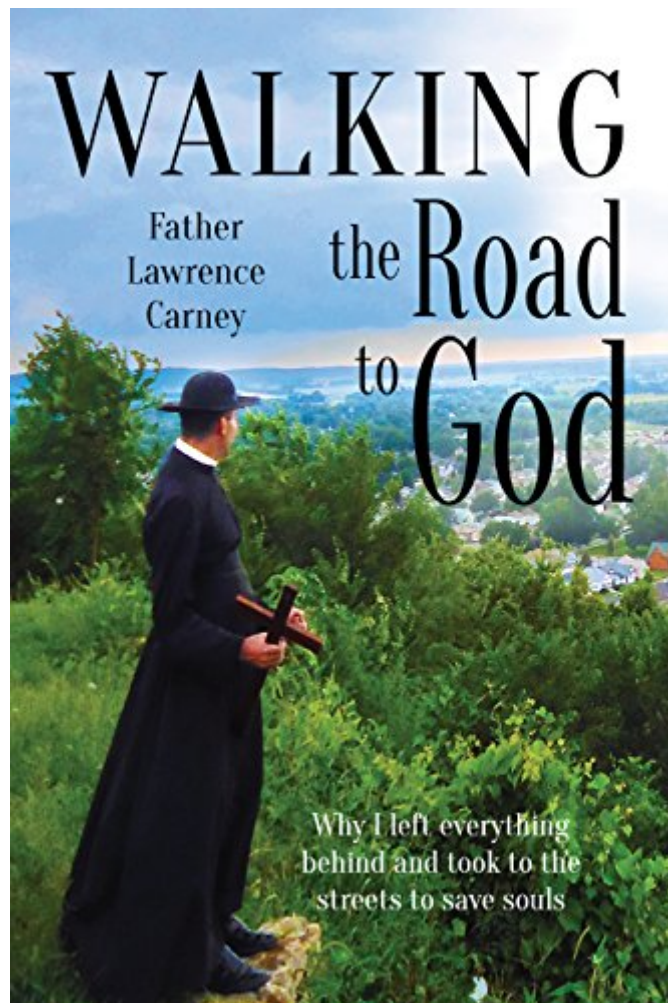




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Walking The Road To God: Why I Left Everything Behind And Took To The Streets To Save Souls



Synopsis

Father Lawrence Carney travels the country, walking the city streets in his cassock, carrying a crucifix, praying the Rosary and seeking lost souls. In his debut work, he writes of the many people he meets, the conversations that unfold and the divine appointments arranged for a priest who lives his life entirely for the salvation of souls. He also reveals his dream of a new order of priests, clerics and brothers, who walk and pray in cities around the United States in an effort to regain what has been lost. With so many lukewarm and fallen-away Catholics in our world today, it is easy to become discouraged. But, rooted in the joy of gospel promises, Father Carney proclaims hope.

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Customer Reviews

This is the kind of book every Catholic will love and find easy to read, since it's both entertaining and educational. Father takes the Gospel right to where we live; he comes to us on the streets where Jesus encountered His flocks. Like Our Lord, Father tells stories (parables) about those he's encountered in the streets, and in doing so, he shares the faith with those he meets and those who read his book. This walking priest gives people his free time which is such a gift in our busy world to

find someone who will chat with us, and he prays with us and for us. I referred to this book and "walking talking catechesis" which is so needed today. It's an inspiring book, and I have benefited greatly just reading this book.

I read this book in one sitting bc it was an easy read. I like the idea of a roaming priest bc the "hands on" approach is always better. But is it practical in this day with so few priests?

Inspiring and thought-provoking. Wonderful mission for these days in our troubled world. Father Lawrence is a friendly, humble, and dedicated man with an inspiring goal. Perfect for anyone, and truly special for anyone who has met him during his walks!

[A review by Julian Kwasniewski.] Walking the Road to God is a moving account of the mission and dream of Fr. Lawrence Carney, a traditional priest serving now as chaplain to the traditional Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles, in Gower, Missouri, and how he began to convert many souls by what he calls the "Hook and Line" method. The hook is the 12-inch crucifix Fr. Carney carries in his right hand, and the line is the rosary he carries in his left. He began to do this after reading this passage in Louis de Montfort's True Devotion: "They [the apostles of the end times] shall carry the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left hand." Immediately, people began to take notice of this gentle-looking man in a black cassock with a crucifix. When someone comes up to Fr. Carney, be it out of curiosity, contempt, or eagerness for spiritual direction, he will talk with the person for a little while. Fr. Carney will give the person a rosary and a pamphlet on how to pray it, as well as inviting him to choose a religious medal from a giant bag he always carries. Here is a short example of the sort of stories he tells in this delightfully readable book: While visiting [the soup kitchen] one day, a sister approaches me with a request: "Father, one of the homeless here just lost his sister to a homicide. He is so angry and he is telling us that he is going to kill the man. Could you talk to him?" "Sure!" I had been praying the Breviarum Romanum. After the sister introduces me to the man, I look him in the face, smile, and pray Psalm 26 in English. My book has the Latin on one side and the English on the other side. As I pray, I notice the living Word of God speaking to his heart. When I finish the Psalm, he takes the breviary from me, looks at the text, closes the book and kisses it. I go to the adoration chapel and ask God to calm his heart so that he will not follow his desire to kill the man who killed his sister. Fr. Carney, when traveling in Rome, was once asked by an Italian woman whether, if she bought one

for him, he would wear the saturno, the traditional wide-brimmed hat of the clergy. He said yes. This wide-brimmed black hat is as much an attraction as his cassock, if not more. Fr. Carney says that nearly every day, someone will say how happy he is to see him in the traditional priestly garb, whether that someone is a practicing or a fallen away Catholic, or even completely secular. There is nothing fancy or sophisticated here, but rather luminous faith and humility. Fr. Carney shares his ideas, experiences, and plans. The humility and radical charity are contagious: after reading the book in (almost) one sitting, I felt imbued with a desire to bear witness for Christ. We hear a lot about this "witness," and yet it rarely seems to get off the ground or to attract our attention. Fr. Carney has it right because he is not witnessing to "beige Catholicism." He is being a witness to the powerful Faith that brought us through after the fall of Rome, that launched the Crusades, that produced Gregorian chant and the Gothic cathedrals, that yielded the Mass of Ages and a "cloud of witnesses which no man can number." Fr. Carney is not content to do this radical but real street evangelization by himself. He is in the process of founding an order called the Canons Regular of Saint Martin. This is how he describes his vision for the order: Imagine walking by a beautiful monastery, with windows and doors open, the chanting of Solemn Vespers drifting out, incense billowing up to the ceiling, candle bearers standing by the abbot as he preaches the Gospel. Imagine how the soul, at this sight, would leave the ugly world behind and enter, as through a gate of heaven, a Gothic Church, not in the stale atmosphere of a museum, but a church filled with dozens of canons regular in black robes, giving honor and glory in the Divine Offices day and night. In times past, it has been a particular charism of Canons Regular to offer a place for beautiful liturgies. If we receive this charism as described, people would come in and think, "I just entered the twelfth century, and I love it!" Beauty like this transcends time, and that is why these rich expressions of faith are just as relevant today as they were hundreds of years ago. The Canons Regular I envision would follow the Rule of St. Augustine. The charisms of the Canons Regular would fall between that of fully active parish priest and fully contemplative monks in a country monastery. The Canon Regular prays in the morning with Gregorian chant and says or attends two Masses in the city monastery. In the afternoon he would go out, like St. Martin, on the apostolate, to convert a culture steeped in darkness. The Canon Regular would come back for Vespers, a meal with table reading, recreation, Compline and monastic silence. I find this vision of half-contemplative, half-active monk-priests attractive. This idea is like that of the Sons of the Most Holy Redeemer (or "Transalpine Redemptorists"), only on a daily instead of yearly basis. (The Redemptorists work for half the year at a parish and spend the other

half at a remote island monastery.) The Canons Regular of Saint Martin would fill a certain gap in the spectrum of traditional orders, as there are no other orders or communities, to my knowledge, that have this wonderful combination of monastic contemplation and mendicant-style preaching. What we see in Fr. Carney and his vision for the future is a robust example of the New Evangelization by traditional Catholic priests. Quite apart from its vagueness, *“New Evangelization”* often carries a hint of novelty, of rupture from the past. Yet whenever Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI spoke of it, they did not fail to say that people today need the unchanging truths of the Gospel proclaimed in new ways and with new means. Ironically, after over fifty years of a now graying if not baldheaded modernism, what Fr. Carney is doing *“walking the streets in cassock and saturno, with crucifix and rosary, preaching Christ the King and His holy Catholic Church”* is radically new and surprisingly appealing. Whether this appeal is due to the strangeness factor or something much deeper *“namely, a perennial vitality in the message and the traditional ways of delivering it”* is perhaps hard to say, but there can be no doubt that *“the old ways”* for a long time despised and rejected, are proving themselves highly effective today, in a postmodern world desperately in need of meaning to overcome nihilism, tradition to overcome rootless autonomy, friendship to overcome isolation, and beauty to overcome suffocating banality. In the powerful simplicity of his stories, in the strong triple-cord *“traditional liturgy, devotions, and apologetics”* of his life, Fr. Carney demonstrates that the old certainties and the magnificent prayer of the Church do, in fact, respond to modern man’s needs *“that same”* *“modern man”* for whose sake Catholic churchmen in the 1960s and 1970s claimed they had to turn everything upside-down. The failure of that experiment is too obvious now to gainsay. Fr. Carney is only one of many today picking up the lost thread and reconnecting with the Catholicism of our forefathers and of the future. An immense benefit of this book, therefore, is that, over and above giving us an inspiring account of the daily work of a street apostle, it imparts a vision of what traditionally minded Catholics ought to be doing in order to engage the modern world better and, at the same time, what all Catholics ought to reintegrate into their own attempts to evangelize. By the way, Fr. Carney is not just daydreaming about the Gothic church *“he has the use of one in Kansas City, where he would like to found the order!”* But to hear the full story, you will need to read the book.

My family learned about your book and ordered it the same day. I read it in two days (and that is

with five children running around my feet!), and my teenaged daughter read it overnight. It is an easy and refreshing read! We were a bit aware of your mission, and what you envision for this new order, so the premise of the book in explaining what you do and why was familiar. What caught me was the success you have been blessed with. Not in so many numbered converts, but in the response you elicit just by being present. I often look at the world around us and wonder how these hardened hearts will ever be touched. And once touched, how will they possibly have the courage to fight against the world? I know the answer in my head, but your example touched my heart. Your "adventures" give me hope for this world, that people are still drawn to God and His Church, no matter what kind of sin and muck they have themselves surrounded with. For this, I thank you. I will keep you and the establishment the Canons of St. Martin of Tours in my prayers.

Fr. Carney's adventures on the street are a testament to the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, provided we are faithful and persevere. In this book he details a hundred or so encounters with people from all walks of life. Fr. Carney shows us the hand of divine providence behind the encounters, and yet emphasizes that conversions come about by "playing the long game". He's in it for life, and prays that God will send him brother priests to walk with him in a new religious order, The Canons of St. Martin of Tours. Fr. Carney himself is a delightful soul, and the reader immediately takes to him, wondering at his rare combination of innocence, courage, kindness and dedication to the timeless truths of our ancient faith. He also has a holy boldness in taking people deeper into the supernatural realities of our faith. He trusts in grace, and gently tries to unveil a whole other way of seeing and living that many wounded souls have never considered. He tries to offer them a glimpse (or how ever much they can take) of heavenly realities, and then hopes and prays that they will follow the inspiration to go deeper. Every Christian will enjoy and profit by this book, but especially those who are called to street evangelization. Fellow street evangelists might learn a few tips, but more importantly, the book functions like a mirror on your own efforts: what are you doing right? where have you stumbled for lack of faith? which virtues shine from you and where is there rust? Read the book and find out!

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