

Thrift Store Saints: Meeting Jesus 25 Cents at a Time

Jane Knuth

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First place winner for "Popular Presentation of the Catholic Faith" from the Catholic Press Association!

Thrift Store Saints is a collection of true stories based on Jane Knuth's experiences serving the poor at a St. Vincent de Paul thrift store in the inner city of Kalamazoo, Michigan. At the outset of the book, Knuth is a reluctant new volunteer at the store, sharing that her middle-class, suburban, church-going background has not prepared her well for this kind of work. By the end of the book, Knuth has undergone a transformation of sorts, and neither she nor we can ever view the poor in the same way again.

Knuth's transformation is rooted in the prevailing message of Thrift Store Saints: When we serve the poor, they end up helping us as much as we help them. Throughout the book we are introduced to new "saints," as Knuth thoughtfully, at times humorously, describes how her encounters with the poorest people led her to the greatest riches of God's grace.

Thrift Store Saints makes clear that it doesn't require heroic Mother Teresa-types to make a difference with the poor, and it even more powerfully shows us that working with them is not gloomy, depressing work. Knuth's moving stories demonstrate the profound joy any of us can experience when we see serving the poor not as social work, but as a spiritual path that leads us to the heart of Jesus.



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