

Archbishop Lori's book provides Catechism in bite-sized pieces

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Archbishop William E. Lori has published his first book, "The Joy of Believing: A Practical Guide to the Catholic Faith."

The title of the book is an intentional play on the title of Pope Francis' first encyclical, "The Joy of the Gospel."

"It's the flipside," the archbishop said. "The Gospel is really the person of Christ and his teaching. It is really the joy that Christ came to proclaim. This book is about the joy we experience when we embrace the Lord and embrace the teachings that flow from knowing and loving the Lord."

The book grew out of a series of columns the archbishop wrote for *Columbia*, the magazine for the Knights of Columbus, of which Archbishop Lori is supreme chaplain. The columns on faith distilled the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to elements that could be easily read and prepared for discussion at a Knights' council meeting.

"You can read one of the chapters and you've covered a considerable amount of ground in the compendium, but hopefully in a way that's conversational and in a way that is meant to prompt reflections," Archbishop Lori said.

Each chapter includes questions that can be used for personal reflection or group discussion.

"We don't just accept the faith as a series of abstract truths that we say are true," the archbishop said, "but kind of unconnected from our lives. The joy comes when we apply the faith to our lives, when it makes a critical difference in how we live."

The book attempts to explain some of the great mysteries of our faith in a way people can understand. He said it's typical for those who just come out of the

seminary to use theological jargon in their homilies “and you see all the eyes glaze over and all the heads nod.” He notes there is a time and place for the church’s faith to be expressed at a high level, but a pastor’s job is to build a bridge between people’s ordinary experience and the beautiful truths of the Gospel and the church’s teaching.

“That’s what I try to do in this book,” he said. “When I would finish an article I’d let it sit in my desk drawer for a couple of days and then I’d go back over and say, well, this paragraph maybe not even God knows what it means. And then I’d go back and rewrite it.”

He hopes the book will help those seeking to deepen their faith open their hearts to the Lord.

“If someone has questions, I hope this will be at least the beginning of searching for answers,” he said, “and I also hope that if someone is alienated or disconnected or disappointed in the church or simply has found his or her faith has been a little bit overwhelmed by the cares of daily life, I hope this will be a moment to say, ‘let’s take another look’ in a way that is accessible.”

The book, published by Frederick-based The Word Among Us Press, is available on the archdiocesan website at archbalt.org. Archbishop Lori will sign copies outside the gift shop at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore after the 4:30 p.m. Mass April 26

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