



Fearing the Stigmata: Humorously Holy Stories of a Young Catholic's Search for a Culturally Relevant Faith

Matt Weber

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As a fourth grader at Holy Cross Grammar School, Matt Weber asked his religion teacher why St. Francis was often pictured with holes in his hands and feet. She responded that those holes were known as the stigmata and that they reflected the wounds Jesus received during his crucifixion. "And how did he get them?" the curious Weber asked. "He got them because he was a good Catholic," was the reply. And so that night, Weber recounts, he did a little more sinning than usual—just to be certain he wouldn't receive the stigmata!

In *Fearing the Stigmata*, twenty-something Matt Weber—a Harvard graduate, television producer, and certified rosary-bead carrier—employs his sharp wit, earnest candor, and gift for great storytelling to illustrate for young adult Catholics both the real challenges and the immense joys of publicly living out the Catholic faith. The fact that Weber has discovered a way to have a deep, ever-growing faith life that also manages to be culturally relevant will offer hope to many currently disengaged Catholics in the 18-to-35 age range.

From smuggling ice-cream sundaes into cloistered convents to telling jokes to an outdoor statue of Mary at a busy intersection in Boston, *Fearing the Stigmata* amusingly but honestly explores the tension this layman experiences between wanting to be holy yet “fearing being made holey,” and wanting to be good yet not wanting the cost to be too high. Indeed, Weber attends Mass every Sunday morning; but the temptation is there, he admits, to sneak out early so he won't miss kickoff!

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