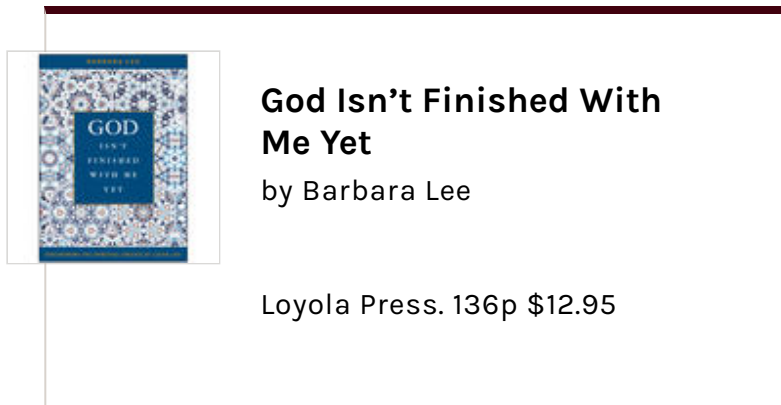


Review: Spiritual direction for the second half of life

James T. Keane

September 21, 2018

A wise spiritual director once gave me a valuable insight about the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and indeed about Ignatian spirituality in general: “Ignatius intended this as a gift to the whole church. This is not some gnostic text for the few. It’s for everyone, in every state of life.” In *God Isn’t Finished With Me Yet*, Barbara Lee extends Ignatius’ gift to a generation often overlooked as spiritual seekers: the aging and the aged, whom she describes as anyone in one’s 50s and onward.



A retired attorney, former U.S. magistrate judge and a long-serving member of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, Lee is herself now in her ninth decade of life. She brings to this short but insightful book the expertise she

has gained as a spiritual director, working with directees of all ages and backgrounds. She realized over time that older adults were a “spiritually underserved population” even though they face many of the life transitions that call for discernment and spiritual nourishment: retirement, caregiving for parents and spouses, empty nesting and dealing with the loss of friends and family.

Each of the five chapters of *God Isn't Finished With Me Yet* includes prayer exercises, suggested scripture readings (for imaginative prayer but also for *lectio divina*) and plenty of questions to spur contemplation and address some of the basics of Ignatian

spirituality. She also provides a valuable postscript of “Ignatian Resources.”

While a spiritual director might advise a young person to “live in the present” rather than worry or wonder about the future, Lee offers the same advice with a twist for older folks: Don’t live in the past, either.

Lee points out that literature—both ancient and modern—tends to see the midlife crisis as the important turning point for most people, what the Jesuit theologian Gerald O’Collins calls the “second journey” of life. But is this true to our experience? “On the spiritual journey,” Lee notes, “there are many detours and wrong turns,” and rarely does anyone’s journey fit an easy mold.

While a spiritual director might advise a young person to “live in the present” rather than worry or wonder about the future, Lee offers the same advice with a twist for older folks: Don’t live in the past, either. “No matter how long or short our lifespan,” she writes, “we live our spiritual life in the present.”

This article also appeared in print, under the headline “For the aging and the aged,” in the October 1, 2018 issue.