

Book club mulls vocations

Jennifer Burke/Contributing writer

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They are part of the parish's Let Your Life Speak Book Club, which meets every other Tuesday during the Lenten season. Prior to attending each meeting, members read two chapters of Parker J. Palmer's book, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. During the meeting, the 18 members break up into two groups and discuss what they've read.

"I have some questions prepared in case there's a lull, but that hasn't happened so far," said Jamie Fazio, Blessed Sacrament's pastoral associate and one of the book club's leaders.

In his book, Parker uses anecdotes and bits of wisdom from his experience to urge readers to probe their own inner lives to determine what it is that they are really called to do and be. He asks readers to find their true vocation, which he says comes from listening to one's own life and trying to understand what it is truly about. If one does not do this, he maintains, one's life will never represent anything real in the world.

"Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue," Parker writes. "It means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I must live — but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life."

Some of the book club's participants found Parker's definition of vocation surprising.

"He flipped it and said no, vocation is finding you, finding what your identity is," said Nita Brown, a member of the book club.

Parker emphasizes listening to what's inside rather than to external forces and egos, which rings true for Brown. Her favorite passage from the book is one that argues that only once people discover a vocation can they truly relate to their community.

"If you truly know yourself, then you are truly at peace. Then fear, hatred, all these things are gone," Brown said.



Rebecca Gosselin/Catholic Courier

Nita Brown (right) and Lisa Allen discuss the book *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* during a March 11 meeting of Blessed Sacrament Church's young-adult Lenten book club.



Brown says she enjoys listening to and discussing different interpretations of the book when the club meets.

"You interpret things differently because of who you are, your background and where you've lived. I wanted to pick everybody's brain," Brown said.

Lisa Allen, another member of the group, was interested in the connections people made between their lives and the book.

"It was interesting how they were all at some transition in their lives, and either it clarified things for them, or made things start to make sense," Allen said. "It (the book) teaches you how to believe in yourself, look at how you've handled certain experiences and what roads you've taken. It's kind of a guidebook to help you down that path."

Allen said the book is good for young adults to read and discuss because many are at a point in their lives where they may be experiencing doubt or confusion about what they are supposed to be doing.

"It can help people as they're starting to have these feelings in their lives, like 'Where am I going? Where am I headed? Am I happy?'" Allen said.

Although the book doesn't talk specifically about Lent, Allen said it is appropriate because Lent is a good time for people to slow down and take stock of their lives.

The parish is also home to another book club, which meets on the Tuesdays that the Let Your Life Speak Book Club doesn't meet. This club is

reading a book by Thomas Merton and is open to anyone, regardless of age. And more young-adult book clubs are planned for the future, according to Fazio.

"The nice thing with the book is that you can read it at your leisure. We're planning on doing two a year; one during Lent and one during the fall. It's a wonderful way to reach out to (young adults)," Fazio said.

The next meeting of the Let Your Life Speak Book Club will be held April 8 at Blessed Sacrament Church, 534 Oxford St., Rochester. The club meets after the 7 p.m. Mass.

**Catholic Courier to honor
'Milestone'
Anniversaries**

The *Catholic Courier* again plans to honor couples who are celebrating "Milestone" anniversaries this year.

Couples who marked or will mark 25, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75 or more years of marriage this year may be listed in the special Milestones/Vocations issue, which will be published May 15.

We will accept anniversaries occurring between Jan. 1, 2003 and Dec. 31, 2003.

Please send the following information:

- Full names of husband and wife; date of wedding; church and city where married.

Also include a telephone number should questions arise.

Deadline for submission is Thursday, May 1.

Send the information to: *Catholic Courier*, PO Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624 or e-mail it to agall@catholiccourier.com.