

Harry Potter fans will like latest book

I fully expected that when I got my hands on *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, I would not be able to put it down. Quite the opposite turned out to be true.

I HAD to put it down for frequent breaks because it's very weighty. Not only is the book enormous (842 pages), but its subject matter is heavy. I felt the need for gulps of air once in a while to clear away the looming clouds of disaster that stretch through J.K. Rowling's fifth book in the Harry Potter series.

There are family issues, the pains of a first love, fights with his best friends, impending career decisions, unsympathetic (not to say, sadistic) teachers, crooked politics and Harry's unfortunate tendency to make poor decisions.

Of course, lurking behind all of these typically adolescent struggles is the arch-fiend who has pursued Harry since his birth. The baleful influence of He-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named would supply enough plot twists to satisfy most readers. However, Rowling evidently felt that she had used that device enough in the previous books, and needed to provide Harry with fewer "magical" challenges. Certainly, his weak point is relationships.

But isn't that typical of 15-year-olds? I realized that that was the major reason that I needed a break once in a while — Harry is SO 15! He whines, he sulks and he isolates himself from the people who would



help. He rages and screams, explodes into recrimination and occasional tears. And he does these things at the worst possible moments in front of exactly those whom he most needs as allies.

And yet, no sooner had I put the book down, than I was looking forward to the next time I would be able to immerse myself. The world of Hogwarts and the numerous other sites that the author takes us to is a fascinating one. And yet it lies right on top of London.

In *The Order of the Phoenix*, Rowling brings the Muggles' world and the wizards' more closely together than ever before. From Harry's

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (Book 5)
by J.K. Rowling
Scholastic (June 2003)
870 pp., \$29.99
Reviewed by Juli Palma

Aunt Petunia to Hogwarts' Headmaster Dumbledore, the magical and non-magical characters are shown to be increasingly interdependent.

The result is that the "real" world is filled with the possibility of wondrous things, and the "magical" world is made to feel more familiar and understandable. The combination serves to draw the reader back time after time. And it fills Harry's head with a muddle of questions.

The story is driven by Harry's search for the answers to these questions. In previous books, he is possessed by the need to find out who he is and who his parents were. In this volume, he knows exactly who he is ... the most gifted young wizard at Hogwarts. His problem becomes how to survive the onslaught of suspicion and jealousy directed at him because he is so gifted; how not to draw more attention and its attendant danger while getting the girl he's smitten with to notice him. Again — exquisitely adolescent.

The cast of characters are as well drawn as ever. Harry's best friends

Ron and Hermione are growing up along with him, and face their own identity issues. Typical of the age, Hermione is arriving at a mature understanding of things much sooner than the boys are. Rowling could publish a companion volume called *Hermione's Hints on How to Handle the Opposite Sex*. It would be an instant best seller in Rochester as well as at Hogwarts.

Even Dumbledore experiences a sort of epiphany. Unfortunately, he subjects Harry and the reader to an interminable rehash of Harry's whole life and of the events in this volume. Is Rowling afraid that, because the book is so long, her younger readers will have forgotten the events leading to the climax of *The Order of the Phoenix*? Or is she trying to supply information about the other books in case this is the first time her reader has dipped into the Harry Potter experience?

If her motivation is the latter, she would be better served producing the exposition at the beginning. Nevertheless, while I do not recommend *The Order of the Phoenix* as someone's introduction to J. K. Rowling, I heartily recommend it to fans of the series.

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Association names best-selling Catholic books

Catholic News Service

The following books are included on the Catholic Book Publishers Association's Catholic Bestsellers List for August 2003.

HARDCOVER

1. *Sacra Pagina: 1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*. Senior & Harrington (Liturgical Press)
2. *Truly Our Sister*. Elizabeth Johnson (Continuum)
3. *In My Mother's Closet*. Eugenia Zukerman (Ave Maria/Sorin)
4. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
5. *Riding the Dragon*. Robert Wicks (Ave Maria/Sorin)
6. *Lord, Have Mercy*. Scott Hahn (Doubleday)
7. *The Lamb's Supper*. Scott Hahn (Doubleday)
8. *The Holy Longing*. Ronald Rolheiser (Doubleday)
9. *Hail, Holy Queen*. Scott Hahn

(Doubleday)

10. *I'd Rather Teach Peace*. Coleman McCarthy (Orbis)

PAPERBACK

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (Doubleday and Our Sunday Visitor)
2. *In the Name of Jesus*. Henri J.M. Nouwen (Crossroad)
3. *Prayer Book: Catholic Prayers*. (Liturgy Training)
4. *Come, Creator Spirit*. Raniero Cantalamessa (Liturgical Press)
5. *101 Inspirational Stories of the Rosary*. Patricia Proctor (Franciscan Monastery of St. Clare/Kaufer)
6. *Return of the Prodigal Son*. Henri J.M. Nouwen (Crossroad)
7. *Rosary Novenas to Our Lady*. Charles V. Lacey (ACTA)
8. *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal 1969-2002*. Dennis C. Smolarski (Liturgical Press)
9. *Sharing the Faith With Your Child: From Birth to Age Six*. Chan-

dlar & Burney (Liguori)

10. *The Miracle of Hope*. Andre N. Van Chau (Pauline)

CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

1. *My Rosary Coloring Book*. Virginia Helen Richards (Pauline)
2. *Did Adam & Eve Have Belly Buttons?* Matthew Pinto (Ascension)
3. *Tear Soup*. Schwiebert & DeKlyen (ACTA/Grief Watch)
4. *My Guardian Angel Coloring Book*. D. Thomas Halpin (Pauline)
5. *Little Acts of Grace*. Gortler & Piscitelli (Our Sunday Visitor)
6. *Making Things Right*. Jeannine Timko Lechner (Our Sunday Visitor)
7. *Teach Me About the Mass*. Plum & Plum (Our Sunday Visitor)
8. *Just Like Mary*. Gortler & Piscitelli (Our Sunday Visitor)
9. *Called to His Supper*. Jeannine Timko Lechner (Our Sunday Visitor)
10. *My First Missal*. Maria Luisa

Benigni (Pauline)

SPANISH LANGUAGE

1. *Catecismo de la Iglesia Catolica*. (Our Sunday Visitor and Doubleday)
2. *Juntos Para Toda la Vida*. Joseph M. Champlin (Liguori)
3. *Manual Para el Catolico de Hoy*. A Redemptorist Pastoral Publication (Liguori)
4. *Visitas al Santisimo*. San Alfonso Maria de Liguori (Liguori/Pauline)
5. *Catecismo Basico*. Hill & Wallace (Pauline)
6. *Mis 15 Anos — My 15th Birthday*. Diocese of San Bernardino (Pauline)
7. *Mis 15 Anos — My 15th Birthday Instructor's Manual*. Diocese of San Bernardino (Pauline)
8. *Poder de la Oracion*. Hijas de San Pablo (Pauline)
9. *Oracional Bilingue*. Jorge Perales (Liturgical Press)
10. *Angeles Companeros de Todos los Dias*. P. Jonas Abib (Pauline)