

SEASONS

SNDdeN US EAST-WEST QUARTERLY SUMMER 2018

books and films

T O S H A R E



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A Summer Theme

Earlier *this year* we asked for suggestions for themes of future issues of *Seasons*. We appreciate all the themes that were submitted. Since this is a summer edition and summer is usually associated with vacations and leisure, we chose one submitted by Sr. Barbara-Jean Kubik: share a book or film that you think others might like. We hope you have some time this summer to check out one or more of these books/films.

A Book to Share

I've just finished reading *A Walk Across the Sun* by Corban Addison, 2011. The story begins with the tsunami in India that orphaned two sisters, 15 and 17 years old. Through their efforts to get transport to their secondary school they end up in a vehicle that actually takes them into the hands of human traffickers. From their home in Chennai they end up in a brothel in Mumbai where the younger sister is sold into the hands of drug traffickers and arrives in Paris. The horror continues as this 15 year old is sold back into human trafficking on the East Coast of the USA!

I'm grateful that the story of a young US lawyer and his Indian wife is intertwined into the story of the two sisters. The lawyer's growth in self-understanding as he tries to help find the abducted sisters helped me keep turning the pages. I found the ending a welcome blessing.

Carolyn Buhs, SNDdeN

Fifty Years Later

In 1968 when Bobby Kennedy was murdered, his presidential campaign came to an abrupt end. His spirit, however, lives on in the book, *Bobby Kennedy* by Chris Matthews. Subtitled "A Raging Spirit", this well sourced book recounts Bobby's life in the wealthy Kennedy family, his political life as attorney general and senator, and finally his ill-fated run for president.

After Jack's death, Bobby finally realized that the best way he could honor Jack's memory was to fight for the causes that both held dear. Bobby continued to champion those he thought had been left out of the American dream: African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and poor whites in Appalachia as well as working class poor. Recognizing his mistake about the Viet Nam War, he also supported complete withdrawal.

That June night in 1968 when he had just won the California primary, Bobby told his supporters, "I think we can end the divisions within the United States, whether it's between blacks and whites, between the poor and the more affluent or between age groups or on the war in Viet Nam. We can start to work together. We are a great country, an unselfish country. I intend to make that my basis for running."

If you like history, you will enjoy this clear and readable book with its honest portrait of a man who could be tough and ruthless but who also grew in his sense of fairness and his deeply religious faith. As I finished the book, I could not help but wonder how different our country would be today had Bobby Kennedy been elected president.

Mary Rose Crowley, SNDdeN

The Bone Woman



lea Koff was a graduate student studying forensic anthropology when the UN sent her to Ruanda, then Bosnia, Croatia and finally Kosovo.

Her mission: go to mass graves and exhume the bodies to determine if they were non-combatants – thus proving genocide.

Scientific detachment kept Clea Koff sane. But her belief that the remains were precious individuals grieved by their families is the pulse of her memoir.

Koff's mother, a Tanzanian, and father, an American Jew, both filmed documentaries in Africa, and raised their children going from set to set.

This is Koff's vision of her work: "I am coming to get you. They killed you and tried to erase you; but you will not be anonymous forever. In your pocket are your house keys, and a grocery receipt. As a child you broke your arm. Your bones will speak on the witness stand in front of those who killed you."

This all may sound horrible but it's not. The book is an ode to the human body – this temple of the Holy Spirit. Koff deeply believes that the body has inherent dignity and cries out for justice.

The Bone Woman will be hard to find in public libraries but check Better World Books or Thrift Books on line. Watch this video: <http://bit.ly/2MQ3ORX> You will love viewing, even though you will miss the experience of standing next to Clea Koff as she reaches for a body thinking, "I am the first to greet you after your ordeal."

Denise Curry, SNDdeN

Beneath a Ruthless Sun

***A True Story of Violence, Race, and
Justice Lost and Found***

his sad, tragic and true story is the raw telling of African Americans denied justice during one particular time in the history of our country. This elegantly written re-telling is by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Gilbert King, whose book *Devil in the Grove* earned that prestigious award.

The time is the late 1950's and the location is the orange groves of Florida. It was 1957 and a bizarre freeze ruined the orange crop and almost decimated the state's economy. It is against this backdrop of frantic concern that the story unfolds. A terrible crime is alleged and a young African American is blamed with very questionable evidence. The terrible injustice of racism colors the entire story, beginning and ending with the brutal sheriff of Lake County, Willis McCall.

A particularly meticulous and tenacious reporter, Mabel Norris Reese, pursues the truth and while her heroic efforts cannot save many of the victims of this terrible injustice, she is as unrelenting as the hot, bitter sun that beats down on the orange grove workers.

This compelling story is marked by the same tensions we know so well and that still fracture our American life. *Beneath a Ruthless Sun* is one of those books that help us face the racism that has beset our country and that continues to divide and harm us all.

Terry Davis, SNDdeN

Triumph of the Human Spirit

If you enjoy stories about children in need, underdogs who rise above the odds, and people who care, this is your book. *A Memory of Violets* by Hazel Gaynor traces the plight of impoverished and often crippled children who are watercress and flower sellers in the late 1800s and early 1900s in Covent Garden's flower markets in England. We cringe at their harsh circumstances and then cheer at the non-profit response of John Groom (Albert Shaw in the book) in setting up safe and caring places for the children to live and work. This is an historical novel that showcases the triumphant human spirit.

Bobby English, SNDdeN

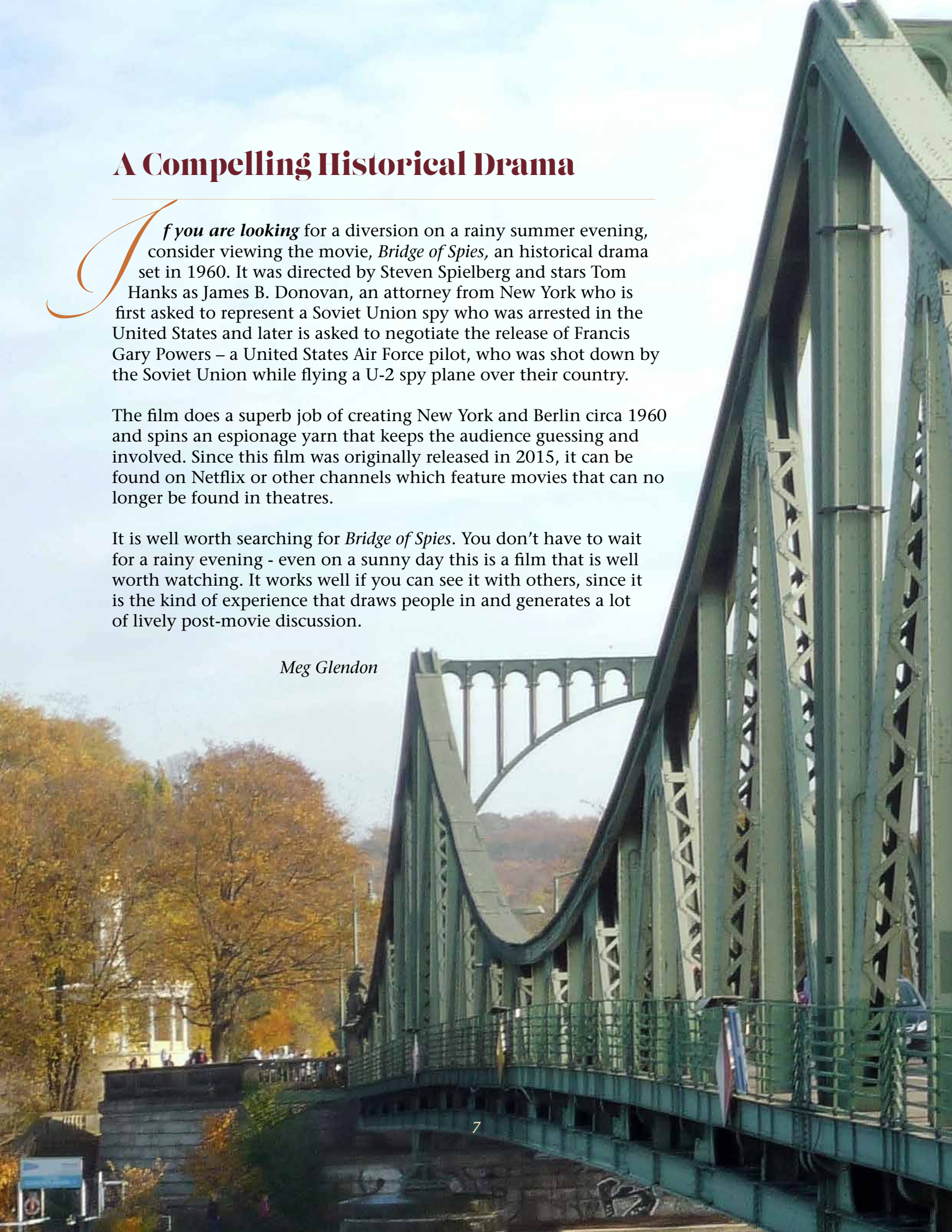
A Compelling Historical Drama

If you are looking for a diversion on a rainy summer evening, consider viewing the movie, *Bridge of Spies*, an historical drama set in 1960. It was directed by Steven Spielberg and stars Tom Hanks as James B. Donovan, an attorney from New York who is first asked to represent a Soviet Union spy who was arrested in the United States and later is asked to negotiate the release of Francis Gary Powers – a United States Air Force pilot, who was shot down by the Soviet Union while flying a U-2 spy plane over their country.

The film does a superb job of creating New York and Berlin circa 1960 and spins an espionage yarn that keeps the audience guessing and involved. Since this film was originally released in 2015, it can be found on Netflix or other channels which feature movies that can no longer be found in theatres.

It is well worth searching for *Bridge of Spies*. You don't have to wait for a rainy evening - even on a sunny day this is a film that is well worth watching. It works well if you can see it with others, since it is the kind of experience that draws people in and generates a lot of lively post-movie discussion.

Meg Glendon



A Spiritual Treat

ne of my favorite authors is Richard Rohr. His small book entitled, *Just This*, is a collection of short contemplative reflections. Each day as I read a portion, the Spirit stirs my heart and I am lost in the wonder of God. The major gift I received while reading the book is the meaning of what Richard Rohr calls, "Just This." He states the importance of simply looking upon, gazing upon a person, living creatures and things, with love. Doing this, there is no need to analyze or critique what God has made, and as negative thoughts are blown away, one can see "Just This."

In stillness I behold the beauty of God
In the woman who sits near by-
And the bird in the nest and the gravel walk
Are "Just This" – in love's gaze they lie.

Bernice King, SNDdeN



Paul, Apostle of Christ

Paul, Apostle of Christ, is not a light-hearted playful movie to be sure, but one which vividly portrays the circumstances that informed Paul's writings.

I saw this movie soon after Stephen Rasche visited East Catholic High with a video portraying the plight of persecuted Christians in Erbil, Iraq. Movie scenes of the Christian Community of Rome, shepherded by Priscilla and Aquila, vividly brought me to a new level of awareness of the plight of those persecuted as well as the strength and suffering that fidelity to the Gospel message brings, whether in times long past or in current day realities.

The often-discussed dilemma faced by Priscilla and Aquila of staying in dangerous Rome and caring for the sought-after Christians or heeding the desires of those wishing to attempt fleeing the city, parallels the situation of our Sisters in the Southern Hemisphere who daily put their lives at risk for the sake of their people who cannot escape their circumstances.

For someone like me who cannot easily practice the Ignatian "contemplation of place," the movie helped me grasp the intensity of the imprisoned Paul and his consistent command to love, voiced to his courageous scribe Luke at each telling of yet another killing. Love, not revenge, is the only way to meet all the turbulence around them. Needless to say, the movie has a timeless and powerful message.

Barbara-Jean Kubik, SNDdeN

Life in Alaska

ver the years I've seen stunning brochures and breathtaking pictures of Alaskan cruises taken by family members and Notre Dame friends.

In her novel *The Great Alone*, Kristin Hannah moves beyond the spectacular beauty of Alaska into the dark reality of the survival of a dysfunctional family who leave mainland U.S.A. for what Ernt, the father tells them will be their promised land.

Ernt is no Moses. Psychologically damaged by PTSD as a POW in Vietnam and increasingly violent due to bouts of acute alcoholism, he leads his family to Kaneq, Alaska in 1974. What he calls a cabin is really a shack without plumbing or electricity on 40 acres of barren and isolated land.

Unprepared for life in Kaneq, the family survives their first winter only because the community reaches out to them.

Cora, the mother, is an enabler. She honors the pre-Vietnam Ernt at the frightening cost of jeopardizing her own and her thirteen year old daughter Leni's safety. And Leni, the only adult in the family, is caught between placating her father and protecting her mother while she works through her confusion about a developing relationship with Matthew, a classmate.

The Great Alone isn't great literature, but it is a riveting story of personal survival and unexpected belonging. At the end of the novel, which marks the 50th anniversary of Alaskan statehood, Leni writes, "*For we few, the sturdy, the strong, the dreamers, Alaska is home you either belong here, wild and untamed yourself, or you don't. I belong.*"

Maureen O'Brien, SNDdeN



Learning from the Past

ne book I would highly recommend is: However Long the Night: Making Meaning In A Time of Crisis. Published recently by LCWR it was written by the Sisters in LCWR leadership during the six year crisis with the Vatican (2009-2015.) Margaret Wheatley says: “This is the best leadership book I have yet to read on how to lead through a crisis-laden time.”

It is not a “tell all” book, but rather a serious reflection on the experience with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which ordered a doctrinal assessment and later a mandate for reorganization of LCWR. In sharing together at a later date, the leaders realized that what they learned as a result of this experience is pertinent to life today in our polarized society.

The doctrinal assessment called into question all that religious women in the United States had been about since Vatican II: the values we held, the life we lived, the spirituality we cherished, the variety of ministries in which we were involved, the topics we discussed together at the annual Assembly, and the women whom we honored as Outstanding Leaders.

The book chronicles the personal discernment and suffering of the LCWR leaders; their engagement with the Bishops assigned by the Vatican to oversee this investigation; their ability to give hope to thousands of religious women in the USA and around the world. Eventually through contemplative prayer, much dialogue, and a common love for the church, they were able to arrive at a positive conclusion.

For all of us who lived through this time, the authors help us see how discernment, prayer, and honest discussions all worked together to bring us through this difficult chapter of our lives. These learnings can be useful as we address other issues today.

Nancy O’Shea, SNDdeN

The Writings of James Martin, S.J.

*W*e remember those who have gone before us with love and gratitude. I am grateful to Sr. Mary Ellen O'Keefe, my band, who introduced me to James Martin, S.J. by gifting me with the book *Jesus, A Pilgrimage*. It took me a year to prayerfully read that book. Every page is a meditation on the life of Jesus, his life, miracles, surroundings and followers. Since that time, I have acquired a whole collection of James Martin's books that Sr. Mary Ellen shared with me.

Some of his other books and my comments are:

My Life with the Saints... God wants us to be ourselves.

The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything... Every part of our lives and creation can lead us to God.

In Good Company... I thank God for my community and all the SNDdeNs who make life better for others.

Becoming Who You Are... We are all connected. St. Theresa of Calcutta says, "Together let us do something beautiful for God."

Between Heaven and Mirth... We invite God to open our hearts so we can enjoy life.

Building A Bridge... I bought this book at the St. Thomas More Center at Yale University.

I was invited to hear James Martin give a talk about this book at Yale. He suggested how we and the LGBT community can enter a relationship of respect, compassion and sensitivity. In the book signing line, I was there to praise him. I was grateful and enriched to have read all his books. "Be attentive, be astonished, tell the story", was his advice. God is Good.

Catherine Perroni, SNDdeN

Ordinary People

"The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry is not just a book about lost love. It is about all the wonderful everyday things Harold discovers through the mere process of putting one foot in front of another." - Janet Maslin, The New York Times

This novel by Rachel Joyce is a story about ordinary people. Harold and Maureen Fry are a middle-aged British couple living in mediocre domesticity in Kingsbridge, England. Twenty years previously they lost their only child, David, to suicide. Since then each of them has found it difficult to find a means of sharing their grief with each other. One day a note comes to Harold from a former co-worker, Queenie Hennessy, informing him of her pending death from cancer. Harold responds with a quick note of condolence but on the way to post the letter he decides on impulse to walk to the Hospice in Northern England for a proper goodbye to his loved friend. Carrying a debit card only and wearing just the clothes on his back, Harold sets out on his 500 mile trek.

Pilgrims who walk the Camino in Spain comment that it's those persons they encounter on the way who give them the strength and courage to continue the journey. Thus it was with Harold.

Along the way Harold witnesses humanity in its diversity: a barkeep, a businessman, a female doctor who cares for his wounded feet, a young boy who reminds him of David, and countless others who minister to him with advice, food, water, or a place to sleep. Above all, Harold and Maureen discover a need for each other that culminates in their final reunion. This is truly a heart warming tale of faith, courage and hope.

Jeanne Sullivan, SNDdeN