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Rooted in a scrupulously accurate reading of scripture, *Joshua* is a profoundly moving, deeply inspiring book that no reader will ever forget.

Sometimes it happens. After two thousand years, the human race may be given a second chance.

When Joshua moves to a small cabin on the edge of town, the local people are mystified by his presence. A quiet and simple man, Joshua appears to seek nothing for himself. He supports himself by working as a carpenter. He charges very little for his services, yet his craftsmanship is exquisite. The statue of Moses that he carves for the local synagogue prompts amazement as well as consternation.

What are the townsfolk to make of this enigmatic stranger? Some people report having seen him carry a huge cherry log on his shoulders effortlessly. Still others talk about the child in a poor part of town who was dreadfully ill but, after Joshua's visit, recovered completely.

Despite his benevolence and selfless work in the community, some remain suspicious. Finally, in an effort to address the community's doubts, Joshua is confronted by the local church leaders.

Joshua Details

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Author : Joseph F. Girzone

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Michael says

This is an entirely pleasant and peaceful story about Jesus returning to the world, but quietly. Joshua, a simple carpenter, shows up in an upstate New York town and begins to change those around him through his quiet acts of generosity and kindness. He reaches out to all of the various congregations in the town--the Jews, the African-American Pentecostals, the Catholics, the Episcopalians, the Methodists--and teaches them that religion is not important, kindness is. There are some fairly insightful theological thoughts spoken by Joshua, which I found especially interesting since the author is a Catholic priest. Much of Joshua's criticism is aimed at the Roman Catholic Church, which--considering the source--made them very poignant.

I have come to the conclusion that I am a non-denominational Christian who goes to Catholic Church. A lot of what Joshua had to say echoes the conclusions that I've reached in my own spiritual journey and education. It was heartening to me to know that other people have arrived at the same place that I have. We--the Church--have made something so simple incredibly complicated. The Pharisees would be proud.

I enjoyed this book very much. I am going to give it to my mom.

IWA^B^GA says

I was raised catholic and I now believe that there has never been a time when Jesus (the word made flesh) was not on this earth in human form coming to the people that prayed fervently for him to come . He came to me and initiated me (baptized me) into surat shabd yoga (the yoga of joining my soul with the holy spirit so i can also become the word made flesh)

As Girzone says "The Bible is not Christianity . Christianity is the Apostles (those LIVING HUMANS wh0 are guided by the holy spirit) " --and --"Christianity is not based on the Bible . It is Based on the Apostles of Jesus " ---and "Jesus never wrote the Bible nor did he intend Christianity to be based on the bible --he left Peter and he said "YOU WILL BE THE ROCK ON WHICH I SHALL BUILD MY CHURCH "

So according to Girzone the church is NOT based on the bible but on humans who are one with and intune with God in the form of the holy spirit and all humans are one in that spirit and their so only one church . We are all children of God and to be saved we must love god and each other . Jesus does indeed manifest himself to human IRL to guide his church --those who sincerely seek to love him and all man kind

This is a great book and I will read the second soon .

IWG - 6/8/18

Meg says

What would you do if Jesus was living up the street from you? A simple man, doing God's will, who is as radical today as he was with the Apostle's? Welcome to the journey of a lifetime, where you are likely to question your understanding of God and Jesus Christ. I first encountered this book in high school, and just

re-read it to be in solidarity with my freshmen who have this for summer reading. Some of the lessons I gained were the same, but many were different. I highly recommend that you take this spiritual journey, to learn more about God and more about yourself.

Mike Glaser says

Very touching. Well worth your time.

Paul says

I have some mixed feelings about this book. Portraying Jesus in a modern setting is risky business. Sometimes I think there's a little too much of Fr. Girzone in Joshua, but I'm sure that there is also plenty of Jesus in Fr. Girzone. He has a good and thought-provoking message, one that is simply and clearly stated (if often too repetitive) so that many people will be able to understand it and think seriously about it. As an elaborate parable, the story conveys some important messages.

The modern-day Jesus (Joshua) is a great artist and skilled craftsman. His portrayals of Moses and St. Peter in wood carvings have a powerful effect on those who behold them. But the author's skill in telling a story does not do justice to the subject. Almost all of the characters seem like caricatures and much of the dialog seems artificial. The book resorts to describing the personality of its characters more than realistically portraying them. The story has some wonderful features. Joshua is far more readily accepted by Jews on his second visit than by Christians. The book presents this as a very plausible scenario. Yet Joshua's dramatic effect on the lives of specific individuals is more described than dramatized. The book fails to draw the reader in very deeply here. The story mainly (and too obviously) serves as a vehicle for Joshua's brief discourses on the current state of religion and Christianity in particular.

In the book Fr. Girzone expresses his view, through Joshua, that art should have a definite message. Yet art itself is a message; an expression of God's image and creativity through human effort. If the message in a work of art is strong, the quality of the art must be much stronger still in order to avoid its being dominated by the message. Art that is completely dominated by its message is mere propaganda. Joshua is worth reading for the message it conveys, but the story is too dominated by the author's message to be considered an effective medium.

Cappy says

Ugh...This book was a chore to read. Lifeless characters, wooden dialogue, a plot equal parts implausible and telegraphed. There is a refreshingly progressive message, but not at all artfully delivered.

Nicolas Shump says

This is a compelling read, but is not the best written book. Girzone tells a pretty good story, but parts of this read like stuff coming out of an intro fiction writing class. The conversations are stilted and artificial.

Nevertheless, the conceit of Jesus coming back to Earth under the radar is refreshing. There is a sort of Will Rogers wit to Girzone's observations about religious practice, all the more interesting coming from a retired Catholic priest.

His riff on marriage is passionate, but incomplete. Certainly Catholicism has overregulated this and annulment has been a nightmare, but the character, Joshua, seems to forget his own words about marriage in the Gospels.

How Joshua interacts with Jewish characters is refreshing, but also left underdeveloped. I thought his dialogue with Catholic church officials could have been a bit more biting and incisive, especially the constant references to Joshua not having the authority to comment on Church matters.

Girzone calls this "a modern parable", but I don't see the lesson fleshed out completely, although I suppose one could say the same thing about the scriptural parables.

Ivy says

I have just finished this book for the third time and still love this story as I did from the very first perusal. Father Girzone retells the story of Christ through Joshua, a young man who moves into a small town in New York State. Joshua lives a simple life, making friends easily and winning the hearts of the neighborhood children.

Everyone loves Joshua but people are mystified by him, wanting to learn more but reluctant to pry. Joshua, fortunately, makes himself easily accessible and becomes very popular in town, calling the attention of the neighborhood churches. Joshua tells all who listen that they are free to love God and to worship in any way they wish and not to be bound by the strict laws of their churches. His message is taken to heart by many, but repudiated by those who cannot imagine life without religious structure.

Joshua's lessons are either learned or rejected and like the Pharisees of old, he is reported to the "higher authority" for questioning. A chosen few are allowed to be witness to Joshua's real identity and for them, they will never be the same.

"Joshua" is a beautiful story, written simply, but highly enjoyable. One can finish it in a day and then move on to the rest of Father Girzone's books involving Joshua.

Rachel says

FANTASTIC. Seriously, such a profound book. Former priest, Girzone, wrote a parable - a what if Jesus were to return during modern day - and the Catholic church was like the Pharisees/Sadducees of old. Mind-blowingly good. How the tables turn (the Jewish people that Joseph meet are compelled by him and warmly embrace him, as well as many seeking acceptance and more in life) and what Christianity is supposed to be about - not religious dogma, but rather a freedom in God. There were SO many good parts and scenes, but one of my favorites is this one (paraphrasing):

At a synagogue service, an older Jewish man is enraged that this young "Christian", Joshua, is so openly and warmly received and confronts him along the lines of "Your people killed my people".

Joshua, in return, takes a moment to gather himself and knows that this man is hurting and grieves. He's not looking for a theological exchange. And instead of defending himself or "his religion", he EMBRACES the older man. He simply says, "I am SO sorry for what Christians (he may have even said my people, I don't remember) have done in the name of God and have hurt you and your family. Can you forgive me?" The warmth of the exchange is genuine and the man is transformed, as is the reader.

Jerry says

Inspiring and heartwarming...but a bit dull, and edgier than one would expect for a novel like this.

Casey says

This book suffers from the same syndrome that I believe ails most Christian fiction: a fantastic concept with weak execution. I would say the biggest problem I had was with the dialogue. Every page turns into a sermon, and subtlety is nowhere to be found. Moreover, the characters' words are all so stiff and formal that interactions cannot seem natural for the reader. There are a lot of positive aspects of the book, though. As stated, I think the concept is outstanding. How would we interact with Jesus if He returned today? I also love the principles Joshua tried to convey, about freedom and God's love for His people. I just wish that the author had a more subtle touch. Actually, I think I would rather have had a more limited narrator who didn't go into Joshua's thoughts. Not only did it seem a bit presumptuous (how can we know the mind of Jesus?), but it also took away the mystery from the reader. I love the idea that we should be able to recognize Jesus by what he does, and going into his Biblical memories was too pushy for me. Nonetheless, even though it isn't a favorite, I did enjoy reading the book.

Cora says

I haven't taken time to read Girzone's other Joshua books, but this was an amazing story because the author challenged me to think literally about what the Christ would be like if he walked among us now in the flesh. WWJW bracelets can't come close to the thinking level available through this novel.

K.J. Kron says

Man, I read these books around 1990. Now they seem so dated. At the time I thought they were great - so much so that I read three or four of them. Kind of clever, kind of interesting. How would Jesus be today? At the heart of it, I like the basic message of Joshua - Jesus would be seen as an outcast. But now as I look back at it, Joshua doesn't go nearly far enough - nor could it. The way I view Jesus now as compared to how I did in 1990 is worlds apart. But I'm getting away from the review of the book, which I enjoyed tremendously in 1990. The problem with the book today is how tame it is. I fear that Christians would be bored with it. But then again, I could be wrong.

Ben Zajdel says

What if Jesus came back today? Would we recognize him? Joshua tries to answer that question. A simple carpenter moves to the outskirts of a small town named Auburn, mystifying the locals with his beautiful wood carvings and astute insights into religion. Joshua lives a happy life, making toys for children and fixing furniture for the elderly. People are drawn to him. He is friendly, never too busy to stop and have a conversation. The things he discusses speaks to their hearts. It doesn't take long before the whole town considers him a friend.

But soon Joshua's views on religion and the church bring trouble with the established clergy in town. They don't like the things he says about the way their churches are operated. He is soon summoned to Rome to interview with a panel of cardinals and bishops, and eventually meets the pope himself.

This book is a stunning commentary on the church and its failure to live the Gospel. Girzone captures the spirit of Jesus perfectly, borrowing heavily on Biblical examples. It is well-written, with simple prose that moves along delicately. The climax is never exposed, but foreshadowed well throughout the entire book. I had a hard time putting this book down.

Micielle says

I love this book ! I've read it a couple of times because it just made feel good.this one well always be on my book shelf to be read again.
