

Father Michael Denk Interviews

Patrick O'Hearn, Author

“The Shepherd at the Crib and the Cross”

Hi everyone. My name is Father Michael Denk. I'm the Administrator here at St. Matthias in Parma Ohio and I'm here also with the Prodigal Father. We do a lot of book reviews that the publishers send to me. I'm so glad to review this brand-new book that I've been able to preview beforehand and actually, my endorsement is in it. The name of the book is “**The Shepherd at the Crib and the Cross,**” by Patrick O'Hearn and illustrated by Michael Corsini.

I'll read you my endorsement because I think it's pretty good. He has a great number of people that have endorsed it like Father Callaway. My endorsement says this: “*I immediately loved the artwork in this book but then I read the story and was even more in awe. I am so moved by the shepherd's desire to see the Messiah and to tell his family about Jesus. There was such a longing in the **Shepherd at the Crib and the Cross** as well as wonder and awe.*”

During this season of Advent, it really is a time of wonder and awe so I'm really glad to have Patrick with us here to just share his experience of writing this book. Tell us a little bit about yourself and about the book that you wrote.

Patrick O'Hearn: Thank you, Father, for having me on your show. I grew up in the Midwest. I would say in Illinois but I always called Ohio my home and your area there. My parents both live in Ohio and it's my home away from home.

Going back to writing this book what inspired me was two things. I feel like at Christmas time there is often, like we know, everything about the Christmas story, and it becomes kind of almost too familiar. People go to Mass because you can take it for granted but there's this mystery that's being revealed to us and that's what I felt like this story is God kind of nudging me. I had this longing to hold the baby Jesus, like a lot of the saints, like Saint Anthony got to hold the baby Jesus. Even St. Faustina when she was in prayer would see the baby Jesus. Part of that is just how can I write something that conveys this longing to hold Christ and then to be with Him at the foot of the cross.

I saw *Ben-Hur* for the first time just recently and I'm kind of ashamed that it took so long but it was kind of neat that fictional character involved the life of Jesus and that kind of led me to write this book.

Then, another reason was that we have a son that's about seven and I saw that the top children's book was a Disney Advent book with these secular characters. That kind of got me upset and I said, “OK Lord maybe you want me to write something that will glorify you even more than Disney does.” Sometimes I don't think Disney does glorify God. That was kind of the inspiration behind the book.

Fr. Michael Denk: You're very familiar with the Saints. You've also written a book about that. Maybe you can tell us a little bit about that too.

Patrick O'Hearn: I wrote a book called, "***Parents of the Saints***," that took me three years to write. I spent a few years in religious life. I discerned there and I discerned out and after I left I kind of had difficulty relating to a lot of the Saints. Just because God had called me in a marriage, I felt like every Saint that I was devoted to kept pointing me to their parents. I'd be at Mass and out of nowhere[I would hear] 'write about my Mom and Dad.'

Father, I think I've spoken with your mother before but you know any priest you can see, it's really it comes down to their mother and father. They're the reason behind their vocation, all the prayers and sacrifices, which led me on that quest to write about over 100 parents and their virtuous lives.

Fr. Michael Denk: It's a beautiful book as well and a very great insight that speaks of the importance of parents in the lives of Saints.

Patrick O'Hearn: Thank you.

Fr. Michael Denk: "***The Shephard at the Crib and the Cross***," begins with this shepherd whose name is . . .

Patrick O'Hearn: There's a couple ways you can pronounce it, but I go with Nissim(Nee-some)

Fr. Michael Denk: I was just making sure there. I'll just read the first passage. "*Nissim propped himself up against rock and stared out at the sheep dotting the hillside. As the cold mornings bit at the young man's cheeks, he pulled his thick wool blanket around his shoulders and buried his face in it for a few moments. Though tattered, the blanket his mother had made for him as an infant kept him warm in the pasture and made him long for home.*"

I just want to start off first of all with that image of the shepherd and also the image of the blanket. Tell us about those two images and why you chose that to begin this story with that.

Patrick O'Hearn: When we get to more in the story when you see the baby Jesus kind of cold, there's this impression like he's shivering he's cold in the manger and that's why I wanted to start with this blanket. This gift that he eventually wants to give to the Messiah, and the just out in terms of the shepherds just out there in the pasture, just kind of as we think about the shepherds; they were just vigilant, they're out tending the sheep and praying and so I think those were the two reasons behind kind of starting with that to kind of set up the story.

Fr. Michael Denk: I couldn't help but think of a baby blanket, or blankie we sometimes call it, where babies will have them and they'll just never want to let go of them because they bring them such comfort and even into adulthood sometimes people keep their blankets; and so this story of the shepherd, he keeps his blanket throughout and Patrick weaves that image of the blanket

Patrick O'Hearn: I actually had a blanket, I'm kind of ashamed, until 8th grade (laughter)and then my brothers threw it away; I used to sleep with that thing and it made me realize later on in life, it was actually something from my mother that I had and I would just hold it in my hands and eventually I got rid of it and then it was kind of like our Lady's, I want you to hold my rosary, instead of my blanket...

Fr. Michael Denk: Yeah, I figured there was something behind that.

Patrick O'Hearn: You are right. I think the reason that blanket and then as you see on, and you just made me think about this kind of like God is leading us to this detachment, that the things that we love the most in life that are precious to us, it's like we have to give them back to Him.

Fr. Michael Denk: I'll just show you the image there of the opening scene. It is a beautifully illustrated book, a really beautiful book in general. So, he begins with this blanket and he carries it throughout this whole passage, this whole story, and he hears about this proclamation from Micah who said that the ruler of Israel will come from Judea. What I like about this is he's talking to his own parents and he's trying to ask them and make sense of them. "What does that mean father? How will he get here?" So even as a child, he's wondering about these things. We hear in scripture that Jesus says, "Turn and become childlike." So, during the season of Advent and waiting for Christmas, we're supposed to have that same childlike wonder that he had. Again, I think you are tying in that the parents of this shepherd, and we'll see later, the parents of Jesus, who come to meet him as well. You must have had good parents; I know your parents so I'm just saying that. Tell us a little about your parents' impact on your writing.

Patrick O'Hearn: I think my dad has always been a very good writer and it's funny like in high school, I hated to write. My mom would actually help me with my papers and it shows you, it's like God gives you a certain gift that you have, or maybe you didn't know you had it, and God can take it away if you become prideful and so I feel like my parents have always been supportive. My dad would always look at my papers, and he would look at all the grammar and stuff, so I definitely think that they helped; they obviously encouraged me to write, so they've been great supporters and just their faith life has just been the most important inspiration.

Fr. Michael Denk: Yeah, they are a beautiful couple and their faith life is so great. You weave together scripture in the book, so as we move on a little bit, we hear him now, he travels to follow the star and the angel says, *"be not afraid, behold, I bring to you good news and great Joy which will bring to all people, for you is born this day in the city David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."* And Nissan asks, *"How will I recognize Him?"* The angel says you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and laying in a manger. Nissim gazes in wonder as more angels appeared and began saying, *"Glory to God in the highest and earth peace to people of good will."* Together the shepherds went to see the baby. I'll just show you the image here, because I love this image of the Holy Family and the image of the Nativity scene. But when he sees the baby, he realizes that he must be cold and he takes the blanket that he has and says to Mary... Yes, I think he goes back to his parents, and kind of asks them, and they encourage him and they tell him his name is Jesus, but then he goes back and what does he do with the blanket?

Patrick O'Hearn: Well, he wants to give it to the Holy Family but they're gone, so you know he's disappointed and then his mother says to him that the greatest thing that you can give God is your love.

Fr. Michael Denk: I like that longing, so there's times when we feel like we've missed out on an opportunity or we've missed out on doing something that we wanted to do for God and it doesn't always work out and so it's pretty profound that he experiences this longing and then his parents encourage him that the greatest thing you can do is to love God. You know, I think

sometimes in our lives, there's people that feel like they missed their vocation or they missed an opportunity or didn't quite have the courage to do what they wanted to in life and I think that this can comfort them and help them see that God continues to have a plan and a purpose for you and for them. What would you think about that?

Patrick O'Hearn: I do think so too. I think about some of the greatest saints, you know, you look at Saint Augustine right. He was in his thirties when he converted, and you think about all those years when he could have loved God more and some of the saints that you know later in life and I think we can always dwell on the past like you know, even myself, I had an opportunity, Father, you know one of my biggest regrets in high school, we had daily mass every day and I went to a Catholic High School in Illinois and I would go by the chapel and I don't think that I you know maybe I did a sign of the cross; I don't think I stopped a handful of times. I think in my whole life, I missed out on that Grace, there was God just waiting for and I just think about that but then God says to me, Patrick, just love me now, just like don't worry about the future or the past but like right now give me everything you have and I will make up for that time that you missed. So there's a lesson for all of us there, in terms of loving God. He looks at the present.

Fr. Michael Denk: He realized, he goes through his life and he is beginning to grow up now, and he starts to hear, it's pretty cool because I love when parables are brought to life like the Good Shepherd or even the shepherds that were at the Nativity. I never thought to wonder what happened to them. What happened to the rest of their lives? I mean they encountered Christ, and now what happens? This we get to explore. He's now grown older, and he has children now and they're beginning to hear word that Jesus is working miracles; He's healing the sick, changing water into wine, telling his disciples to love their enemies even raising a man from the dead. And so, he begins to have this yearning again and a wish that he could not only see Him himself but have his children meet Him. So, talk about that a little bit.

Patrick O'Hearn: It's interesting, you know Bethlehem is only five miles from Jerusalem. I've never been to the Holy Land. You probably have Father. It's one of my dreams someday to go there, but you think about it, there is a possibility that these shepherds would have encountered, there's a good chance they would have seen Jesus at some point later in life. So that kind of comes full circle. He is bringing his family and he's going to Jerusalem which he thinks is just a normal Passover feast but lo and behold he is in for a big surprise.

Fr. Michael Denk: So, God is orchestrating and providentially bringing this fulfillment to his heart, to bring the desire of his heart to fulfillment.

Patrick O'Hearn: That's where Ben Hur in the movie, again, it's been awhile since I've seen that but I think there's a scene where they show Ben Hur walking and Jesus is going up to Calvary at the same time. That was a little bit of the inspiration behind some of this.

Fr. Michael Denk: Good! So, make that connection to tell people that.

Patrick O'Hearn: You know, in Ben Hur, there is a part where they show Ben Hur, towards the end of the movie, right, and Jesus is going up to Calvary, and maybe, there is some kind of interaction there [with] Ben Hur, I don't know if he sees Jesus, that's what we see with Nissim too, where Jesus is now going to Calvary; he sees Him along the way.

Fr. Michael Denk: One of the things that I teach a lot through the Prodigal Father and at the parish here is prayer and I think what would most connect with this is imaginative prayer. Saint Ignatius talks about praying with your imagination and you're kind of laying out for us how a prayer experience might happen; that God takes memories from our lives. He could take images from a movie like Ben Hur, He could take desires that we have and when we pray with these scripture passages, which this is obviously a prayerful book, He begins to tell His story in our lives, and He begins to reveal Himself in our lives. So, what would you say to our viewers who are familiar with writing and children's books but wanting to learn about prayer and how do you do this in prayer? Did you pray with these passages? Did some of this come from prayerful imagination?

Patrick O'Hearn: I would definitely think the shepherds part, I prayed with a lot, in terms of the prophecy of Micah, you know that vigilance, just praying, "come, Lord Jesus," I want you to come like Nissim, and I would say in terms of a lot of this is more inspired in my prayer life, not necessarily me going to these passages and praying but I definitely think that I have before thought about what would it be like if I was there with Simon of Cyrene. And as we see Nissim tries to carry the cross, and the Roman soldiers don't choose him, they choose Saint Simon, but just like "Lord, let me be the one that carries your cross," so I think definitely think it's the fruit of prayer. I think this book could like as you said people could take these images and pray with them as well.

Fr. Michael Denk: It does go back and forth, our prayer, the fruits come later and then sometimes we bring all of that into our prayer and pray with the experiences that we've had. As we continue on, tell them about how he begins to enter into the passion and the shepherd now sees Jesus.

Patrick O'Hearn: So, he sees him on the way of the cross, then there's that desire to carry the cross and he's prevented. So he goes to his children, let's follow Jesus, let's go to calvary with Him. Again it's a lesson for dads, for priests, we have to go with Jesus, he's been abandoned, his apostles have fled, at this point except for John. I think it goes back to the Nativity story where Nissim, we didn't touch on it, but how the other shepherds left but he remains; he just doesn't want to leave Jesus and that's just this desire of Nissim's, to just to like, 'hey I'm going to stand with you until the very end.'

Fr. Michael Denk: Yeah, that's beautiful, and that is, just through all of this, just a desire to want to be with him, a desire to want to see him, a desire to want to carry that cross, and in Advent too hopefully for all of us, it's an intensified yearning of that desire to see Christ to encounter Him, to be with Him, to receive Him lovingly.

Patrick O'Hearn: Like you were saying too, I would say more in the Nativity story was born more of the fruit of my prayer; there was that longing to hold the baby Jesus; I just had it, I want to hold...and I think when you go to Holy Communion, it's like you've received the baby Jesus, and so I think that's where again, the fruit of this book came from, was that longing of myself to be there.

Fr. Michael Denk: You mention the Saints, that some of the mystics had experiences of longing to see Jesus, and some of them had experiences, the shepherds too, so what's been your learning of that?

Patrick O'Hearn: In the book, you know I work for Tan books, we have a great book called *The Mystical City of God*, by the venerable Mary of Agreda, our Lady revealed her whole life to her, and one of the accounts I did read in there was how all of the shepherds actually got to hold the baby Jesus. They passed Him around and I thought there's a movie, Mary of Nazareth whatever, where the Shepherds are holding the baby Jesus and so I think that's a real thing. I can imagine Padre Pio, in his creche in Italy just taking the little infant Jesus out of there and just holding him. I think, as we talked about before the show began, and was about the different shepherds and Our Lady appearing to the Fatima visionaries, and even Padre Pio was a shepherd; Padre Pio was told that he had a revelation that the shepherds were in fact the first ones that appeared, that got to meet the baby Jesus. So it shows you this kind of shepherds that even though they are very lowly in the world's eyes, they are probably the greatest people in God's eyes and I think it's a lesson for us too. You know we look at people with special needs, I think about my late aunt who had down syndrome and the world kind of like considers them outcasts and nobody, but in God's eyes they're like the greatest people.

Fr. Michael Denk: Yeah, I did have, you reminded me, I had a prayer experience once where I was at a retreat house called Loyola Lakes and they had a barn and they have a beautiful drive through the pine trees and they have a barn at the bottom, with a bunch of cows. So I was praying and pondering with the Nativity story and I remember I went down there, and it's not a very pleasant smell, but it reminded me of farm life; my relatives in Pennsylvania had a farm, they still do growing up but 150 acres and when I would go there and just be in God's nature, it was such a wonderful experience. I remember going back to my prayer after that and praying with the passage of the nativity and in my prayer meditation there was that experience of Mary who had just had Jesus. There was a desire in me to ask to hold the child but I was afraid, I didn't feel I could worthily ask the question. But it was interesting, Joseph noticed me. He noticed me and he looked over to Mary and he said, "I think he wants to hold our baby." And so, Mary gave Jesus to me and I held Jesus in my arms and I just remember looking down and gazing. I've always loved to hold my nieces and nephews, so to hold Him in my arms and just feel that presence of Him was such a powerful experience for me and I think that as you read through this book it will give you different images and notions that could become an invitation for you to pray. I was in the Holy Land a couple of times and one of the spots that I was in, Bethlehem, I've always had a devotion to the Holy Family, the Nativity, and especially the creche scene; I used to love setting up the manger below the Christmas tree every year and placing the characters in there and just had that childlike wonder and awe. When I was in the Shepherds Field, I felt a tremendous holiness, of all the places that I was there, was in Shepherd's Field; That's the field where the shepherds would kind of roam with their sheep, and there's little caves burrowed out in the hills. It was really a profound sense of presence being in that field in the midst of God's nature. I know you will go to the Holy Land at some point and I'm sure I will go again. But when you go, as you mentioned, it's not that far. The way that the pilgrimages have to travel, they usually do Bethlehem and Nazareth, so you're doing the beginning and the end of life, either at the front of the trip or the end of the trip. Then you have to go to Galilee which is far, and that's where Jesus worked all his miracles and did most of his ministry. So, I think you are right that the shepherds had to have heard of him and probably gone to see him.

So, we are entering that point now where they come to the passion, Jesus is hanging on the cross, Mary is there kneeling before the cross, Martha picked up Joshua and whispered in Nissim's ear, I think we should go now. So, there's this sense of not wanting to leave but being invited to leave. As a shepherd, Nissim is used to storms, and so he told his wife, "Please take the children, and return to the Inn; I will join you there later. I want to stay with Jesus." Martha pulled Nissim's old wool blanket from around their youngest child who had handed it to Nissim. "Keep the blanket in case you need it." Nissim's eyes filled with tears as he accepted the blanket from her. It was the very one his mother had made for him; the one that he had wanted to give to baby Jesus in the manger. So, we have this continuation of the blanket being woven through the story and him being given back the blanket that he had given to his child which was intended for Jesus and now it's being given back to him. Talking to you now, I realize this familial relationship you have that is carried throughout your other book, obviously but throughout this book as well, of Nissim's parents originally encouraging him and now needs him encouraging his children and just a beautiful way of them becoming the holy family too that God wants our families to be holy. As you mentioned before, you felt a need to write this book. There was something that you saw in our world that you wanted to bring Christ into and I know that most families now struggle with that need of everything that is so secular especially as we're in the Christmas season. And how rich and beautiful the story of Christ is and can be brought into this world. That's what I have always loved about the new evangelization, it's a re-representation bringing Christ back into the world and our age and our time and I think that that book really does this. People are looking for good children's books and when you have a children's book like this that is not only Christ-centered but so deep and so beautiful and so rich that it draws you into it. Since I first read an initial copy of this book, it is one that has permanently left an impression on me. I can't shake it off; it continues to unpack itself for me and I continue to meditate and continue to dwell upon this whole story of Nissim and the blanket all the way through. How has it been like for you? How long have you worked on this book? What is it like to write a children's book nowadays?

Patrick O'Hearn: I would say, it's a lot less work, children's books, than writing an adult-size book. So, it's kind of a break for me and I can put in more of my creative juices. I had this really great editor, her name is Michelle Buckman; she's written a book for Sophia Press, and Tan. Actually, I gave her my first manuscript, and they say that every editor needs an editor, every author you need an editor, but she just helped me a lot, with being creative; originally, I had it as two stories, I wanted to give people their moneys worth. It was going to be called the Shepherd at Bethlehem, and the Shepherd at Calvary, and I just felt like, let's just bring it full circle and so just throughout, the bottom line is about that wonder and awe and that's what led me to write this book. When you see my son excited for Saint Nick or Santa Claus, and that wonder, and I think as adults we lose it, even like going before our Lord in adoration or mass, we can become too familiar with those mysteries, so here's this chance for Nissim to say like wow, this is amazing. You know as Christmas comes, we are actually going to go to Mass, we are going to go to Bethlehem, with the Eucharist...

Father Michael Denk: ...born on the altar...

Patrick O'Hearn: Yeah, that's right. Anyways, I love writing children's books. It was my first one, so going back to the illustrator, we went back and forth on a lot of designs and I'd never known I should have recommended this, so after he did one sketch, I was like you know, of the

resurrection, could you add angel in there, so that's like the angel came at the very last minute, and so there's just different details. It's a learning experience; I'd recommend it people that have a passion for writing. Sometimes they say the best writers, as you get older, because you have more time...kind of just listen to God and say, "God is there a book you want me to write." You don't write books to become famous or to make money because they doesn't really happen. Unless you are Tolkien or something. But even St. Therese, when people pick up her book today because she wasn't well known, you know the story of a soul, you have to check your motives, "Lord why am I writing this?" I will say Father, your book, I want to thank you for your compliments, you're book on **Pray 40 days**, is a beautiful book, it's one of my wife's favorites, I love it too, that's an incredible book that God put on your heart. So, thank you for writing that.

Father Michael Denk: Well, thank you! Tell us, because we are in that season, Saint Nick, Santa Claus, Christmas, how do you make sense of that for your children? Any advice you'd give for parents that are wanting to keep Christ in Christmas?

Patrick O'Hearn: Well, we have the Veggie Stories, the Saint Nick Story, Saint Nick is an actual Saint, Santa Claus is real, I mean he's the same Nick. What I try to preach to my son in a sense is that it's also about the spirit of what did Saint Nick did; he was giving away, it's not so much like, and even with the story of Nissim, it's not so much presents we're going to give but what can I give to the Lord at Christmas. By preparing my heart for Him through prayer fasting and when we go to Christmas, "Lord, I want to give you something, I want to give you my love even more." Kind of like Nissim gave the blanket. At Christmas I always say to my son, "What are you going to give to Jesus for Christmas?"

Father Michael Denk: So, go back to the blanket. *Mary is at the foot of the cross. She encounters Nissim. She turns lovingly towards him, and she says, "I remember you. You are one of the shepherds that came to visit Jesus when He was born. You held Him so tenderly when everyone else had left."*

"Yes, I was," Nissim replied with courage in his heart. He asked, "Would you accept my blanket for your son?"

Mary lovingly nodded her head. And this was the part that just surprised me and was so profound, that this blanket would become the shroud. So Nissim closed his eyes for a moment and thanked God and stepped forward and placed his warm wool blanket over Jesus' body. Mary pulled the blanket around Jesus' shoulders. "Thank you." She wiped away her tears running down her cheeks. "This is not the end but only the beginning. My son will make all things new. He will rise again." Nissim's sorrowful heart turned to Joy at Mary's words. This is just the coolest epiphany I found in the book. Where did that idea come from?

Patrick O'Hearn: That's funny, I didn't even see it, the way you brought it up about the Shroud, because I didn't even, I wasn't intending to do that. In the last picture you can see that the blanket does come off Jesus so there is another blanket in there...You could look at it that way; He was definitely buried with it, so it wasn't my intention to make it the Shroud because the Shroud was longer and a different material, but you could make the case that it was the Shroud as well.

Father Michael Denk: Well, that's the cool thing about authoring and creativity and reading, that the individual will receive something different than the author even intends. So, as you read this it's going to stir up things in you and you are going to have insights and connections beyond what Patrick might have imagined.

Patrick O'Hearn: Definitely. I had one person who reviewed the book, and they were telling me that I could have, like I was thinking that one of Nissim's grandsons could have been like Bishop of Antioch and made it go on, but at some point, you want to be true to the text, to the script. The guy's a fictional story, but there are scriptural passages that are all true, so it's not impossible that this couldn't have happened. I was asking my wife could I have written it this way. She said, "No it's fine."

Father Michael Denk: Yeah, at some point you have to put it out there. I want to show people your angel. (*Holds book up for people to see*) So I just learned this was not originally in the illustration.

Patrick O'Hearn: The illustrator, Michael Corsini added that, I said, "Can you paint me one of those angels that looks like next to the Blessed Sacrament?" And you can see the blanket at the bottom, and then I think the Shroud is in there but again, you have the Shroud in there but you have the blanket which would have been on Him as well.

Father Michael Denk: So, I'll just read the end here. *"A few days after Nissim and his family returned to Bethlehem, news spread about Jesus throughout the countryside. It was said three days after Jesus' crucifixion, a few of the women who followed Him went to take spices to the tomb to anoint His body. When they arrived, the large stone had been rolled away and inside the tomb was empty. The women said that two angels appeared to them proclaiming that Jesus had risen. Through all the passing of years, Nissim never forgot how much Jesus, the Messiah, and his mother suffered for him. Nissim knew He was the Beloved Lamb and the flock of the Good Shepherd. Even when Nissim's children were grown and had children of their own, he continued to tell the story of Jesus' unconditional love and how he saw Mary hold Jesus at birth and his death and like his own father, Nissim would also remind them, we don't know when God's anointed will come again. But we must be ready."*

So, it's been talked about traditionally that in Advent, we celebrate three advents: the coming of Christ into the world two thousand years ago, the incarnation; the coming of Christ in the present moment, how we will receive Him today; and the coming of Christ in the second coming. So, you have this longing of Nissim as a father reminding his children that he's going to come again, you know, that we should have the same anticipation, this joyful desire for Him to come again, in the second coming. So, tell us a little those three advents in your mind.

Patrick O'Hearn: At the conclusion, I definitely wanted to bring that to full circle, with Jesus coming again, because Nissim and the whole prophecy of Micah, and now he's telling his own children what his father told him. It's more the prophecy of the New Testament, that Jesus is going to come again, and in my life, these things are front and center. In a sense I don't see them as three comings, I see them as one coming, but I think that is what the shepherds teach us, as we talk about vigilance, and throughout scripture we see Jesus, we never know when the thief is going to come like a thief in the night and so that's the preparation even for advent and a lot of us are guilty, I think I am, you know, you know we think that we are going to live

five or ten years; God could take us this day, and so every day it matters. I think too we talk about at Christmas, Jesus is going to come in the Eucharist to us, so that's kind of our encounter with the Christ Child.

Father Michael Denk: And I think you said before, not to miss those opportunities, like you talked about the chapel being right there. How many times do you drive home from work and the church is right there. You could stop and be with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We really do have to make the time for God and not just [think] God will come to us spontaneously, will encounter us spontaneously. There also has to be this seeking and longing and desire to want to be with Him, especially because we know where He is. We know that He is there in the Eucharist at Mass on Sunday; we know that we can encounter Him in confession; we know that we can encounter Him in Eucharistic Adoration. So, all of these are opportunities for us to be like that shepherd and to follow our desire and our heart to have that encounter.

What's the best way for our viewers to get a copy of this book?

Patrick O'Hearn: It's available at Saint Paul's Center. That's Scott Hahn's publishing company, www.saintpaulcenter.com. Emmaus Road Publishing is the publisher. It's also available on Amazon but I think there is some delays on there.

Father Michael Denk: Any other closing thoughts, and what you'd like the viewers to know about the book?

Patrick O'Hearn: It's a timeless book, it's not really geared toward one season, but every season you are in, it'll speak to you. At the end of the book, I added four different prayers for each season. One of my favorite ones is the Advent prayer, you know we are coming up on the 'O Antiphons' and I've learned through the Benedictine Monks that the spelling of it means tomorrow I will come. There's kind of like this mysterious meaning behind O Antiphons. The last point is just having that humility and the vigilance of Nissim; God wants to bless all of us and we have to be prepared. We have to be ready. That's what the shepherds can speak to everyone, each person, that God doesn't come to the people with the degrees and all the money but comes to the lowly. We have to come to that level in the spiritual realm.

Father Michael Denk: I would like to end with that prayer that you have there in the back. So, he does mention that he has a prayer for each of the liturgical seasons. I wish I could interview you at length because that would be a whole other perspective on this book.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. Benedictine Monks used the Latin titles of our Lord listed below, also referred to as the O Antiphons, so these will be used in the last seven days of Advent, here for a specific purpose beginning with the last title of our Lord and applying the first letter of each one: *Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia*. The monks form the Latin phrase, '*ero cras,*' meaning 'tomorrow I will come.'

O Wisdom, O Sapientia, Come and show us the way to salvation;

O Sacred Lord of ancient Israel, O Adonai, Come and deliver us;

O Flower of Jesse's stem, O Radix Jesse, Come to our aid;

O Key of David, O Clavis David, Come to those who dwell in darkness;

O Radiant Dawn, O Oriens, Come and shine on those in the shadow of death;

O King of all the Nations, O Rex Gentium, Come and save us;

O Emmanuel, O Emmanuel, Come and set us free, Lord our God.

Let us pray: Grant to us, O Lord, a humble and watchful heart like the Shepherds of Bethlehem that we too may be ready when you come this Christmas. Saint Joseph and our Blessed Mother, intercede for us that we might receive your Son with most pure and tender hearts. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. The Lord be with you. And with your spirit. May Almighty God bless all of you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you forever, Amen.

Father Michael Denk: I just want to ask you one final thing. Are you working on anything else?

Patrick O'Hearn: I do have a book coming out with Tan at the end of May called, ***The Courtship of the Saints, How the Saints met their Spouses***. It's 25 different stories, they are not all canonized, but I have John Paul II's parents, Pope Benedict's parents, Gianna Mola. So, it's kind of a neat story to help our young people and even married couples, to inspire and rekindle their love for their spouse.

Father Michael Denk: Any Saint books that you would recommend to people besides yours?

Patrick O'Hearn: We just had a book, on Tan, on Saint Genevieve. We started this *Tan Resurrection Series*; we are bringing back to life, all these books that have never been in English before, and one of the best books is the ***Passion of Christ, Through the Eyes of Mary***, written by Saint Anselm. Our lady revealed to Saint Anselm, everything about the foot of the cross. It's like watching the movie, The Passion, but you are reading it. We have another book called, ***The Glories of Heaven***, by Saint Anselm. Those are some of the books we are really pleased that Tan has brought out. You can look up *Tan Resurrection Series* and you can see the list of the books we are doing.

Father Michael Denk: That's great! Thank you everybody for joining us. We look forward to keeping in touch with you! God Bless Patrick!

Patrick O'Hearn: Thanks so much Father Denk!