

CONFESSIONS OF A
**MEGA
CHURCH
PASTOR**



*How I Discovered the Hidden Treasures
of the Catholic Church*

ALLEN HUNT

STUDY GUIDE

Table of Contents

Introduction

4

Study Guide Purpose and Format

6

Reading Schedule

7

Session One

DAVID'S TALE & OLD HOUSE

8

Session Two

DINING ROOM

12

Session Three

KITCHEN

16

Session Four

BASEMENT

20

Session Five

BEDROOM

24

Session Six

FAMILY CEMETERY

28

Session Seven

FRONT PORCH

32

Introduction

Books change our lives. The reason is because what we read today walks and talks with us tomorrow, so in many ways we become what we read. We hope this book will change your life and the lives of the people you are gathering to discuss it with.

Millions of people have read books from the Dynamic Catholic Book Program and we constantly receive letters and e-mails about the way they have touched people and drawn them closer to God and his Church. At DynamicCatholic.com we believe that if Catholicism is to thrive in these modern times, then we as Catholics need to become continuous learners.

Spiritual reading has been a crucial part of the Catholic experience for centuries, but with the growing demands and distractions of modern life people are reading less and less. Less than 1% of Catholics in the United States read a Catholic book last year. This is tragic, because so many people have so many questions about Catholicism at this time, and unless we are feeding our minds with great Catholic thought we will not be able to share our faith in a way that is articulate, bold, and inspiring.

One of our goals at DynamicCatholic.com is to encourage Catholics to start reading great Catholic books. Each year we will publish two great Catholic books, one at Easter and the other at Christmas. We call this program the Dynamic Catholic Book Program. The books are made available for just two dollars per copy to dioceses and parishes so that they can be distributed to everyone who attends Christmas or Easter Mass.

Our strategy is very simple. Encourage every Catholic in America to read two great Catholic books each year. We believe this would be a game changer for the Catholic Church in America.

We hope you enjoy *Confessions of a Mega Church Pastor* and pray this study guide is a useful resource as you explore what God is saying to you at this point in your spiritual journey.

May God bless you with a prayerful spirit and a peaceful heart,

The DynamicCatholic.com Team

Study Guide Purpose and Format

The purpose of this study guide is to help readers delve further into the book by exploring personal reaction and application. While it has been produced primarily for use in small faith groups and book clubs, it can also be used by individuals for personal reflection.

The study guide comprises seven sessions. These sessions could take place once a week or once a month, at the discretion of the group.

Each session follows the same format:

Opening Prayer
Discussion Questions
Closing Prayer
Announcements

We recommend that a group meet for sixty to ninety minutes, but that the group agree upon a fixed length of time and adhere to that time.

It is assumed that participants will have completed the reading assignment before attending each session.

Reading Schedule

Session One

DAVID'S TABLE & OLD HOUSE

Read pages 1–10

Session Two

DINING ROOM

Read pages 11–30

Session Three

KITCHEN

Read pages 31–50

Session Four

BASEMENT

Read pages 51–72

Session Five

BEDROOM

Read pages 73–90

Session Six

FAMILY CEMETERY

Read pages 91–118

Session Seven

FRONT PORCH

Read pages 119–140

Session One

DAVID'S TALE & OLD HOUSE

Reading: Introduction & Chapter 1

Opening Prayer:

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds

and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.

Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,

and wisdom to live all the good things

we explore here together.

Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream

for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,

and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self

in every moment of our days.

We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,

the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward

them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.

We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) David heard the Holy Spirit whisper, and that whisper stopped him in his tracks. Have you experienced the Holy Spirit's promptings or whisperings?
- 2) What are two things you most appreciate about the Catholic Church?
- 3) Is there anything you are curious about regarding the Catholic Church?
- 4) When did you discover the Catholic Church? As a child? Or did a friend bring you to the Church or inspire you?
- 5) If you grew up in a non-Catholic home, what was your faith background? What led you to enter, or consider, the Catholic Church?

Closing Prayer:

THE DYNAMIC CATHOLIC PRAYER

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself
by seeking your will and becoming a living example
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change
in order for me to carry out the mission
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Make our community hungry for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church
to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen.

Announcements:

- The reading assignment for our next gathering is Chapter 2.
- Let your family and friends know they can request a free copy of *Confessions of a Mega Church Pastor* by visiting:
DynamicCatholic.com.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

Session Two

DINING ROOM

Reading: Chapter 2

Opening Prayer:

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds

and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.

Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,

and wisdom to live all the good things

we explore here together.

Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream

for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,

and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self

in every moment of our days.

We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,

the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward

them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.

We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Have you ever met someone who is holy? Allen described the nuns as having faces that “shone with a grace and a light that unnerved me. The love of God revealed itself physically in their eyes, cheeks, and smiles.” How would you describe the holy person you met?
- 2) What is the centerpiece of your worship?
- 3) How does your belief in the Eucharist compare with the Scripture, John 6:35-58, listed on pages 17-18, with which Sister Rose challenged Allen?
- 4) Read aloud the words of Christ written by Paul (1 Cor. 11:23-27, page 19); by Luke (Luke 22:19-20, page 21); by Matthew (Matthew 26:26-28, page 22), and by Mark (Mark 14:22-24, page 22). What strikes you about the language used by these followers of Christ?

Closing Prayer:

THE DYNAMIC CATHOLIC PRAYER

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself
by seeking your will and becoming a living example
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change
in order for me to carry out the mission
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Make our community hungry for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church
to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen.

Announcements:

- The reading assignment for our next gathering is Chapter 3.
- If you are enjoying this book, you may want to request a free copy of Matthew Kelly's DVD *The Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality* by visiting DynamicCatholic.com.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

Session Three

KITCHEN

Reading: Chapter 3

Opening Prayer:

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds

and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.

Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,

and wisdom to live all the good things

we explore here together.

Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream

for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,

and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self

in every moment of our days.

We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,

the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward

them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.

We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Is there a time in your life when you endured suffering? How would you describe that time?
- 2) Did the suffering make you *bitter* or *better*?
- 3) What one word would you use to describe Father Caj?
- 4) Have you ever considered holiness as your destiny? How will you get started?
- 5) What strikes you most about the habits of holiness in Sister Diane and Pope John Paul II?

Closing Prayer:

THE DYNAMIC CATHOLIC PRAYER

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself
by seeking your will and becoming a living example
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change
in order for me to carry out the mission
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Make our community hungry for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church
to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen.

Announcements:

- The reading assignment for our next gathering is Chapter 4.
- Visit DynamicCatholic.com to request a free copy of a great Catholic CD, *Becoming the Best Version of Yourself* by Matthew Kelly.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

Session Four

BASEMENT

Reading: Chapter 4

Opening Prayer:

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds

and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.

Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,

and wisdom to live all the good things

we explore here together.

Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream

for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,

and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self

in every moment of our days.

We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,

the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward

them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.

We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Do you have any cherished family photos? Are the pictures black/white with white edges or more recent color photos?
- 2) Compare what motivated John Fisher's rebellion with King Henry's rebellion? What are the differences?
- 3) What does Allen mean by "...you and I are part of the colony of heaven?" How does that apply to your life?
- 4) Have you ever thought about the saints in heaven as your cheerleaders? How does that "great cloud of witnesses" feel to you now?
- 5) Do you ever ask your brothers and sisters in Christ who are already in heaven to pray with you?

Closing Prayer:

THE DYNAMIC CATHOLIC PRAYER

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself
by seeking your will and becoming a living example
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change
in order for me to carry out the mission
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Make our community hungry for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church
to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen.

Announcements:

- The reading assignment for our next gathering is Chapter 5.
- Dynamic Catholic offers a *Mass Journal*, which is a simple tool designed to enrich your experience of Sunday Mass, teach you to listen to the voice of God, and enrich your daily spirituality. Request your free copy of a *Mass Journal* at DynamicCatholic.com.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

Session Five

BEDROOM

Reading: Chapter 5

Opening Prayer:

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds

and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.

Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,

and wisdom to live all the good things

we explore here together.

Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream

for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,

and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self

in every moment of our days.

We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,

the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward

them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.

We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Have you or someone you are close to ever received a vision or dream from God? What was that experience like? What message did you receive?
- 2) Describe Padre Pio's reaction to the stigmata. Were you surprised by his reaction ("embarrassment" and "unbearable humiliation")?
- 3) Allen went from thinking of suffering as confusion, punishment, and isolation from God to believing suffering brings compassion for others, purification of heart, and a closeness to God. Can you see the transformation? How does this transformed idea of suffering compare with your experiences?

Closing Prayer:

THE DYNAMIC CATHOLIC PRAYER

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself
by seeking your will and becoming a living example
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change
in order for me to carry out the mission
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Make our community hungry for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church
to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen.

Announcements:

- The reading assignment for our next gathering is Chapter 6.
- If you have not yet requested a free copy of Matthew Kelly's *The Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality* CD or DVD, now is a good time to do so as you continue your spiritual journey. If you have already received this, you can also find other offerings and resources at DynamicCatholic.com.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

Session Six

FAMILY CEMETERY

Reading: Chapter 6

Opening Prayer:

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds

and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.

Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,

and wisdom to live all the good things

we explore here together.

Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream

for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,

and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self

in every moment of our days.

We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,

the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward

them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.

We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How does your behavior in church affect those around you? What are you teaching others by your actions?
- 2) Where do authority and truth reside? How does that differ from the idea that both reside in the mind of each individual believer?
- 3) Whether you are married or unmarried, how does viewing marriage as a sacrament enrich your life?
- 4) Mother Teresa fully embraced the yearning to give herself over to God, for this is what we are made for. What about you? Are you fully given over to God? What are you holding back?

Closing Prayer:

THE DYNAMIC CATHOLIC PRAYER

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself
by seeking your will and becoming a living example
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change
in order for me to carry out the mission
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Make our community hungry for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church
to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen.

Announcements:

- The reading assignment for our next gathering is Chapter 7.
- Visit DynamicCatholic.com to request a free copy of *The One Thing* by Matthew Kelly. Matthew reflects on the challenges of passing faith onto children in this deeply personal bestseller.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

Session Seven

FRONT PORCH

Reading: Chapter 7

Opening Prayer:

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds

and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.

Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,

and wisdom to live all the good things

we explore here together.

Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream

for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,

and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self

in every moment of our days.

We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,

the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward

them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.

We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How would you explain Allen's statement from John 17:20-23: "The unity of God is the model for the unity of the Church"?
- 2) What is the significance of Baptism?
- 3) The power of invitation made a significant difference in the lives of Allen and his daughter. Is there someone God wants you to invite to worship with you?
- 4) What would it mean to you to desire the unity, the oneness of the Church?

Closing Prayer:

THE DYNAMIC CATHOLIC PRAYER

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself
by seeking your will and becoming a living example
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change
in order for me to carry out the mission
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Make our community hungry for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church
to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen.

Announcements:

- If you enjoyed *Confessions of a Mega Church Pastor*, we also recommend *Rediscover Catholicism* or *The One Thing* by Matthew Kelly, *A Father Who Keeps His Promises* by Scott Hahn, or *My Life with the Saints* by Father James Martin. These titles are available through the Dynamic Catholic Book Program at DynamicCatholic.com.
- Ninety percent of Catholics have never visited their local Catholic bookstore. We would like to encourage you to visit your Catholic bookstore sometime in the next couple of weeks and explore the incredible Catholic books that are available.
- Thank you for taking part in our study of *Confessions of a Mega Church Pastor*. We hope that it has ignited your faith in a new way and that you will share some of what you have learned here with others in your circle of influence.



For more information,
please contact:

The Dynamic Catholic Institute
2330 Kemper Lane
Cincinnati Ohio 45206
United States of America

Email: info@DynamicCatholic.com

Phone: 1-513-221-7700

www.DynamicCatholic.com