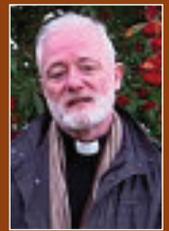


# NEW RESOURCES

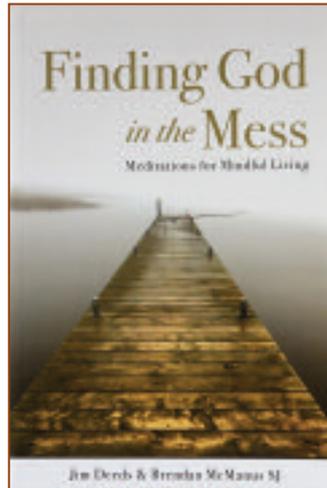
Fr Michael Murtagh  
Dunleer, Co Louth



## FINDING GOD IN THE MESS

**Meditations for Mindful Living**  
**Jim Deeds & Brendan McManus sj**  
**Messenger Publications • pp. 128**

This short and accessible book aims to engage the reader at the visual level as well as mentally and spiritually. Its many colourful images are as visual meditations which are linked to various themes and suggestions for thoughtful reflection. As with Saint Ignatius, the book tries to aid 'the limping pilgrim, putting his spirituality into practice. The meditations are brief and thought-provoking. At least one of them 'pulled me up' on reading it and motivated me to halt and think on the insight that was being offered. The book is bright, immediate and suitable for reading in short extracts or for using as a guide for daily prayer or on retreat.



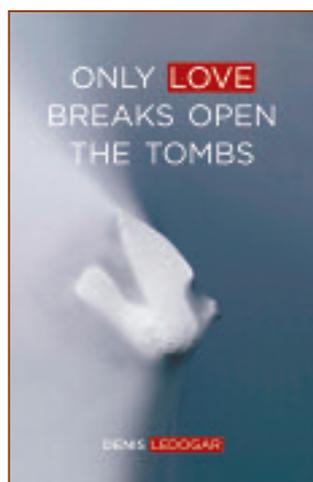
## ONLY LOVE BREAKS OPEN THE TOMBS

**Denis Ledogar**  
**Veritas Publications, 2018**  
**ISBN 9781847308061**  
**pp. 162 • €12.99/stg£11.95**

This book is written by an active Hospital Chaplain, an Assumptionist priest, working in Strasbourg.

The book is based around the structure of the seven last words of Christ which are paralleled with a seven stage approach to dying and death. The insight or link is revealing and the stages, though seeming a little forced at times, do reveal the preoccupations; the fears and the needs of those who are facing death. A re-ordering of relationships; to the family and friends; to the world and to the self, constitute the core of the stages. Fear of death itself is somewhat understated, I thought, but the process of coming to terms with death and loss are comprehensively dealt with.

The style of the book is anecdotal with lots of personal references; stories from the hospital bedside and quotable quotes. 'We can learn how to die.' (Montaigne) It deals with the



evasion of death in our contemporary culture and the task of pastoral care to the ill and dying. The big questions, 'Does death have a meaning?' are not avoided and the gritty reality of 'returning the earth to the earth' is dwelt on. The work relies heavily on testimonies which give it a 'human interest' appeal while the scriptural foundations of the work give it ballast. Overall, it is a thoughtful presentation, especially useful perhaps for all those who work in a pastoral setting and especially for bereavement groups and chaplains of all kinds.



## TO GROW IN LOVE

**A Spirituality of Ageing, Dying and Glory**  
**Brian Grogan sj**  
**Messenger Publications • pp. 115**

The book deals with the spirituality of ageing, dying and glory, telling us, quoting Erikson (p.30), that, 'ageing is a blessed time, just like any other phase of life and carries its own unique graces and opportunities for development. The alternative is to become a whinger and complainer and live a life of a thousand little disgusts'. This is one of the many nuggets of wisdom culled from great literature of from Sacred Scripture that underpin the insights of one who has lived and reflected on life. The style of the book is such that it might be used as a vademecum for a short retreat or for daily use as a springboard for meditation or reflection. The Ignatian method of 'prayerful pondering' is used extensively throughout as are personal anecdotes and insights from the harvest of much study and revision of earlier work in this particular field of human experience.

'The gradual loss of the small self as the great self comes to prevail in us' (p.122) is one of the quotable quotes with which the book is studded and the common imagery of the chrysalis and butterfly story is given a make-over (p.143), presenting it in a new and more nuanced manner. The reassurance by Thomas Merton that the divine spark within us is impervious to mediocrity and sinning gives comfort as people enter the 'final stage of growth'. The dream of Gerontius (p.129) lifts the spirit as the work takes on the form of a retreat, punctuated by short, punchy chapters or sessions that provide food and nourishment for the intellect and spirit alike. While dealing with difficult issues, the book does not fail to present the challenges and the opportunities that any life-stage or life and death event offer and it will be a useful aide to anyone working in a pastoral setting and perhaps for those dealing with the personal onset of the 'third age' or those who deal especially with bereavement groups or with retirees.

