

## Notes from Fr. Nick

### *Hallelujah Anyway*

Anne Lamott's short volume *Hallelujah Anyway* is sublime spiritual reading. Her thesis is that accepting and giving mercy are the marks of true maturity. All the damage of our lives, either external or self-inflicted, can be transformed into grace through mercy. This description sounds facile as I write it, but with her brilliant word-crafting it is profound.



Much of the book is memoir: her disjointed childhood, struggles with self-esteem, alcoholism and relationship with her son. But she dredges out of the effluence of her life fundamentals for true growth. Parts of the book, particularly the chapter on shopping, are laugh-out-loud funny. She writes in a stream-of-consciousness style that makes her thought hard to categorize, but deeply intriguing. There is always a “free-radical” floating around in her imagery that adds spice but is ambiguous at the same time.

Lamott makes no secret of her faith, but nonbelievers may get as much out of this book as Christians. Here are some samples of her thoughts:

On adolescence: “. . . as if pimples were bad thoughts we'd been having, now erupting on our face.”

In early adulthood: “The bad news was that it felt impossible to be in congruity with one's true self but the good news was that by a certain age, we understood we had a true self and they hadn't managed to wreck it entirely yet.”

As adults: “Self-importance, fueled by performance anxiety, people-pleasing and bad self-esteem, wrapped us into small crisp squares like professionally-laundered shirts.” She continues to explore this image throughout the book.

Later in life: “To forgive is to set a prisoner free, and discover that the prisoner was you.”

### Travel to Israel with Fr. Nick!

Fr. Nick will be a chaplain this Fall on a cruise travelling from Rome to Israel and back (via Greece). Some of his former parishioners will be on board, and he would love for some of us to join him as well.

**Dates:** October 23rd to November 4th. **Ship:** Celebrity Silhouette. **Itinerary:** [tinyurl.com/FrNick-Cruise](https://www.tinyurl.com/FrNick-Cruise).

