

Mary's Pence Summer Reading List 2015

Black Lives Matter

Fire in the Ashes, Jonathan Kozol (2013)

Carmen Attikossie, our Communications Intern this past spring, recommended this book to us after reading it in one of her classes. This true coming of age story details the journeys of children growing up in one of the poorest neighborhoods and most dysfunctional school districts in the United States. Kozol's intimate understanding of urban schools and the children who attend them is clear as he examines how and why some students succeed while others are defeated. Most importantly, this book allows the children and young adults he's been writing about for more than 25 years to speak.

Warmth of Other Suns, Isabel Wilkerson (2011)

In *Warmth of Other Suns*, Isabel Wilkerson, a Pulitzer Prize winner, tells the essentially untold stories of The Great Migration – the largest internal migration in United States history. Based on interviews with over 1,000 people, Wilkerson chronicles the stories of black migrants who fled the American South to seek better lives in the north and west during the 20th Century. Contextualized both by larger social forces and personal challenges, each story is a unique insight into this largely undocumented historical moment. Toni Morrison, herself a granddaughter of the great migration, calls *Warmth of Other Suns* “profound, necessary, and a delight to read.”

Men We Reaped, Jesmyn Ward (2013)

This memoir by Jesmyn Ward was recommended by new staff member Grace Garvey-Hall. The title comes from Harriet Tubman: “We heard the rain falling and that was the blood falling; and when we came to get in the crops, it was dead men that we reaped.” The book is Ward's attempt to understand the early deaths of five young men whom she was close to, including her brother. Though the causes of death include drugs, accidents, and suicide, Ward also points to racism and poverty as overarching causes. Throughout, we also see the impact of these young men's deaths on the women who knew them and who loved them.

Brown Girl Dreaming, Jacqueline Woodson (2014)

Brown Girl Dreaming, a memoir written in verse, is Woodson's recollection of growing up as an African American girl in the 1960s and 1970s. A part of The Great Migration, living first in South Carolina, and then in New York, Woodson copes with the remaining racism of the Jim Crow laws. As the book progresses, her awareness of the Civil Rights movement grows. It is as much a child's story about growing up and self-discovery as it is an adult's examination of the same issues she first became aware of in childhood.

Latino Voices

La Verdad, Lucia Cerna and Mary Jo Ignoffo (2014)

La Verdad, which means “the truth” in Spanish, was recommended by Rita Fisher, a donor from California. Lucia Cerna was a housekeeper in the Jesuit Community residence in San Salvador in 1989. This account, in Cerna's own words with context provided by Ignoffo, tells of the murder of six Jesuit priests and two of her coworkers who would become martyrs in El Salvador. Cerna did not choose to see the soldiers leaving the murder scene, but her courageous decision to tell the truth has revealed much about U.S. involvement in El Salvador, corrupt political systems, and the atrocities that are committed within them.

The Violence of Development: Resource Depletion, Environmental Crises and Human Rights Abuses in Central America, Martin Mowforth (2014)

Mary's Pence board member who for many years has lived part of each year in El Salvador, Pat Rogucki, recommended this book. Mowforth examines the ways that development has failed in Central America despite billions of dollars of funding. Using information from case studies and interviews with over sixty people in Central America, including nuns, politicians, NGO representatives, and indigenous leaders, Mowforth demonstrates the systemic violence and poverty that comes when western governments, financial institutions, and companies develop the global south.

In the Time of the Butterflies, Julia Alvarez (2010)

Luisa Rivera-Izabal, Mary's Pence board member from Mexico, suggested this work of historical fiction. Alvarez imagines the voices of the four Mirabal sisters known as "Las Mariposas." The sisters were real life activists and symbols of resistance against Trujillo's regime. Three of them were murdered by the state, although their deaths were reported as accidental. Alvarez takes turns writing in each of their voices to tell their story, which touches on themes of courage, love, and sacrifice.

Amor and Exile: True Stories, Nicole Salgado and Nathaniel Hoffman (2013)

This book was recommended by Kim Anderson, a Mary's Pence supporter and the president of American Families United, an organization focused on lobbying about U.S. immigration issues affecting families. The book offers a look at the broken immigration system from the perspective of love and marriage. Nathaniel Hoffman tells true stories of couples from both sides of the border whose personal lives are deeply affected by immigration politics. Salgado offers a personal account of her own story of living in the U.S. with her husband while he was undocumented and then ultimately starting over in Mexico.

Dynamics of Change

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate, Naomi Klein (2014)

In *This Changes Everything* Klein argues that the changing climate is challenging us to restructure the global economy. Writing with urgency, Klein argues that the solutions for fixing long broken economic systems and for addressing climate change are inextricably linked. She further argues that this crisis is an opportunity to heal broken relationships with nature and each other as steps toward rebuilding systems. There is hope, too, as Klein documents groups that have already begun this healing process. Thought not a light read, this book is well worth the time.

Thank you For Your Service, David Finkel (2013)

Finkel's second military focused book tracks the lives of soldiers once they return home from deployment. Here, they face another kind of war, reintegrating into normalcy. They face the challenges of post-traumatic stress, physical and emotional wounds, thoughts of suicide, panic attacks and stacks of paperwork required to get meaningful treatment. The women and others in these men's lives do not go unaffected. The trauma of the soldiers is contagious, and the effects will last as long as violence endures.

The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of Legendary Catholic Social Activist Dorothy Day, Dorothy Day (2009)

Dorothy Day's autobiography starts in the 1920s, leading up to her conversion to Catholicism, and then moves on to her attempt to live out the gospel sincerely. Among other things she tells of her choice to live in poverty among the poor, her relationship with Peter Maurin, and the ultimate creation of the Catholic Worker Movement. Her Catholicism was true to the values of nonviolence, care for the poor, and anti-racism.

Food for the Body and Soul

The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: The Virtue of Solidarity and the Praxis of Human Rights, Meghan J. Clark (2014)

Sr. Peggy O'Neill, S.C., the founder of Centro Arte Para la Paz, an educational and cultural center in Suchitoto, El Salvador and Mary's Pence supporter suggested this book. Clark clearly defines key concepts of Catholicism and how they originally developed. She especially focuses on the core principles of human rights and solidarity. Using the trinity as an example, Clark calls for lives lived in community, claiming that each person's dignity is dependent the dignity of all. She offers a unique framework from which to consider ethics, politics, and philosophy, and a firm foundation for faith.

In Her Kitchen, Gabriele Galimberti (2014)

This global cookbook was recommended by Luann Philipich, a Mary's Pence supporter and a librarian. Galimberti is a photographer, not a cook. But while he was on his first photography assignment, he made an effort to connect with a grandmother in each country he visited and try their signature dish. Included in this book is a photograph of each grandmother, the food she cooked, and the recipe. It is a taste of hospitality around the world, and serves as a way to honor and value women caring for their families.