

Dear Friends of Mary's Pence,

Mary's Pence donors are compassionate. This compassion comes from our spirituality, unique to each of us, and our willingness to learn about others and their experience of life. Mary's Pence second annual book list touches on both these topics. The list is just a portion of the great suggestions that came from donors and board members.

Women are the key ingredient to the changes brewing in the world. The first group of books focuses on women's spirituality and leadership, closely linked spheres of our lives.

**New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views, edited by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu**

The contributors to this book are the thought leaders of the future who are shaping, and being shaped by, the emerging directions of feminist Christianity. They speak from across the denominational spectrum, and from the many diverse groups that make up the Christian community. Taken together, their voices offer a starting point for building new models of religious life and worship.

**Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism & Liberation, Ivone Gebara**

Gebara is unquestionably the most original theologian working from an ecofeminist liberation perspective in Latin America today. Her theology does not begin with absolutes from on high, but with daily life among poor women of Latin America from whose context the interconnected dominations of race, class, gender and the earth are not a theory but a concrete reality. It is from this context that Gebara reflects on the themes of theology, epistemology, the nature of the human person, God, Jesus and redemptive hope. *Review by Rosemary Radford Ruether.*

**Defiant Daughters: Christian Women of Conscience, Marcy Heidish**

This challenging and entertaining book spotlights the lives of spiritual trailblazers. They represent different races, denominations, and nations, but all are feisty--often fiery--and always faithful to their callings. Heidish seeks out the decisive juncture where they took a stand for conscience, regardless of the consequences.

**Goddess Shift: Women Leading for a Change, edited by Stephanie Marohn**

This is an anthology of nonfiction articles, meditations, essays and reflections by many of the most recognizable and influential women of our time. It describes the shape of the new human family that is emerging from the leadership of these remarkable women, and the very different future they envision for the world we share.

**Moonrise: The Power of Women Leading from the Heart, edited by Nina Simons**

Simons posits that the leadership needed to bring about change must reflect both a theoretically feminine mindset—one that is inherently respectful, cooperative, and inclusive—while exhibiting the focused, determined, and assertive characteristics traditionally labeled as masculine behavior. She showcases the works of ardent individuals who exemplify this. Stimulating and hopeful, this collection provides limitless motivation for those wishing to affect change personally or globally.

**Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary, Miri Rubin**

Rubin, a professor of history at University of London, brings to this work a panoramic view of Mary's impact on the evolution and growth of Christianity, especially Catholic Christianity. Mary emerges as a model of motherhood, an object of devotion and a focal point of conflict among Christian believers. But she also serves as a useful tool to help all believers reflect on the uses of the feminine in private yearnings and public supplications.

Mary's Pence work touches women across the Americas, and these next books help us experience the worlds and lives of Latina women.

**My Invented Country: A Memoir, *Isabel Allende***

This is Allende's nostalgic journey through Chile. Exploring the events of her life and those of the country in which she lived until the assassination of her father's cousin, President Salvador Allende, in Pinochet's military coup. Portraits of her family and friends jostle with vivid descriptions of local customs and beliefs and her love for (and sometimes exasperation with) Chile informs every line.

**Mother Tongue, *Demetria Martinez***

This novel is about a young woman who becomes involved with a Salvadorian refugee smuggled into the U.S. by members of the Sanctuary movement, and advocates for the tens of thousands of Salvadorans who have been harassed, tortured, and "disappeared" by a U.S.-supported military government. There is the truth of experience behind Martinez' fiction. In 1987 she was a journalist for the National Catholic Reporter when she was charged, and later acquitted, with conspiring against the U.S. government and aiding the entry of Salvadorans into the country.

**So Far from God: A Novel, *Ana Castillo***

This novel tells the story of Sofia and her four daughters, a Hispanic family living in the small, quiet town of Tome, New Mexico whose inhabitants deal directly with current social issues. Although filled with tragic events, the narrative offers hope in its portrayal of successful journeys toward wholeness. Each chapter stands on its own as a complete story, but readers won't be satisfied until they've finished the entire skillfully constructed book.

**Manana Forever?: Mexico and the Mexicans, *Jorge G. Castañeda***

Castañeda, a Mexican political scientist and former foreign minister, has written a revolutionary book about Mexico that sheds much light on the puzzling paradoxes of his native country. He touches on their attitudes toward civic life, criminality, gender equality and the regard of the foreign, and examines the future possibilities for Mexico.

I hope that you take the time to explore the books on this list. Please send me suggestions for next year, and I'll put them on my personal reading list.

With joy for exploring this world,

Katherine Wojtan  
Executive Director

P.S. Mary's Pence has moved. We're now located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Our roots are Midwest; we were birthed by some courageous women in Chicago almost 25 years ago. Please note our new address: 275 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Paul, MN 55101. Phone: 651-788-9869.

*Some content for book descriptions came from Amazon.com's book descriptions and reviews.*