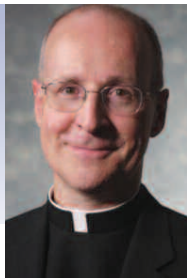


# New Scripture Study

from  
**Father James Martin**



**T**housands of churches will celebrate Bread for the World Sunday on October 15 or another Sunday this fall — as people of faith work together to end hunger.

Rev. James Martin, SJ, editor-at-large of *America* magazine and author of the best selling *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, has written a study on Matthew 22:1-14, the parable of the wedding banquet and the Gospel for October 15.

A Bread for the World Sunday guide is available to order — with notes about a children’s sermon, prayers, and other suggested activities. Worship bulletin inserts in English and Spanish are also available.

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fluid in gender and structure are experimenting with new ways of covenanting to hold their relations. These new ways of establishing what it means to be family will bring different questions to the caregiving needs of the older and frail members of our communities. We can expect the meaning and practice of caregiving at the end of life to become even more challenging in the 21st century. The authors note the pressing need to bring formal policies and practices up to date to address new understandings of family.

Zietlow and Cahn claim that the largest and most pressing problem facing today’s caregivers is the lack of advanced planning; people neglect to plan for their later years.

I remember a single mother in my parish who had been widowed at a young age. She began early to prepare for her own death. She bought a burial plot next to her beloved, purchased life insurance to cover her funeral and burial expenses, drew up a will, made advance directives to cover health decisions, and appointed her eldest daughter as the executor of her estate. Her children knew what she wanted and coordinated in-home services to augment the care they could offer. At the end, she died at home with her family and caregivers present. Advance planning allowed this family to coordinate their care for their mother.

But this example is an exception. Many families stumble along and simply do the best they can.

*Homeward Bound* is not the first book to chronicle the journey of caring for the elderly. What is unique in this volume is its wealth of information about legal, medical, and religious frameworks that apply to each phase. The book includes a comprehensive bibliography as well as specific guidelines for engaging people in conversations about end-of-life planning and bereavement.

Zietlow and Cahn’s captivating stories help bring the results of their research into bold relief. Yet the book’s emphasis on families left me with a haunting question: What about fractured families and the dissolute elderly who are left abandoned by such fracturing? This is a daunting challenge that our frayed and inadequate social network barely acknowledges.

## BookMarks

### The Seventh Function of Language: A Novel

By Laurent Binet, translated by Sam Taylor Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 368 pp., \$27.00

This rollicking novel isn’t easy to read, but it is intellectually delightful. It’s part spoof, part philosophy lecture. The plot, which centers on the death of Roland Barthes, hinges on arguments from semiotics and linguistics. The performative function of language creates power struggles among the book’s cast of characters, which includes Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and a graduate student named Judith (who “suspects the patriarchal powers that be of resorting to some sneaky form of the performative in order to naturalize the cultural construction that is the model of the heteronormative monogamous couple”). The author plays with the traditional forms of fiction as he asks deep questions about the power of words to create reality.

### Limping but Blessed: Wrestling with God after the Death of a Child

By Jason Jones  
Fortress, 216 pp., \$14.99 paperback

When his three-year-old son Jacob died unexpectedly, Jason Jones’s evangelical Christian faith was shattered. “I was desperate for some reassurance, and it seemed like God was out to lunch. God’s silence didn’t make any sense to me.” Jones narrates the difficulties of coping with his child’s death in this reflective, painfully honest book. The latter half of the book focuses on Jones’s theological questions. “If this is how God works in the world, then God isn’t the loving Father I thought I had; God is the monster in my nightmares.” The book includes Jones’s correspondence with Jürgen Moltmann and Thomas Jay Oord, each of whom helped Jones come to a place where he can say, “I still struggle with God, but now I struggle with hope.”