

# WordbyWord



Library Newsletter/July 2017

## ***Raoul Wallenberg, the Biography: The Heroic Life and Mysterious Disappearance of the Man Who Saved Thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Holocaust***

By Vernita Kennen, Library Coordinator

While this was not the first time I heard or read about Raul Wallenberg, I was often left with more questions than answers. My Swedish-American background has meant that I was more than a little curious about the story of a Swedish man who had aided Jews during WWII and then disappeared into the Soviet Union. The rumors that continued to pop up over the years about his fate continued to tantalize me. Was he still alive? Had he been killed quickly? Did he die in a prison camp somewhere? After a visit to Poland and Hungary, learning more about others who risked their lives to save Jews from the Nazi purge, I wondered about parallels between Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Shindler.

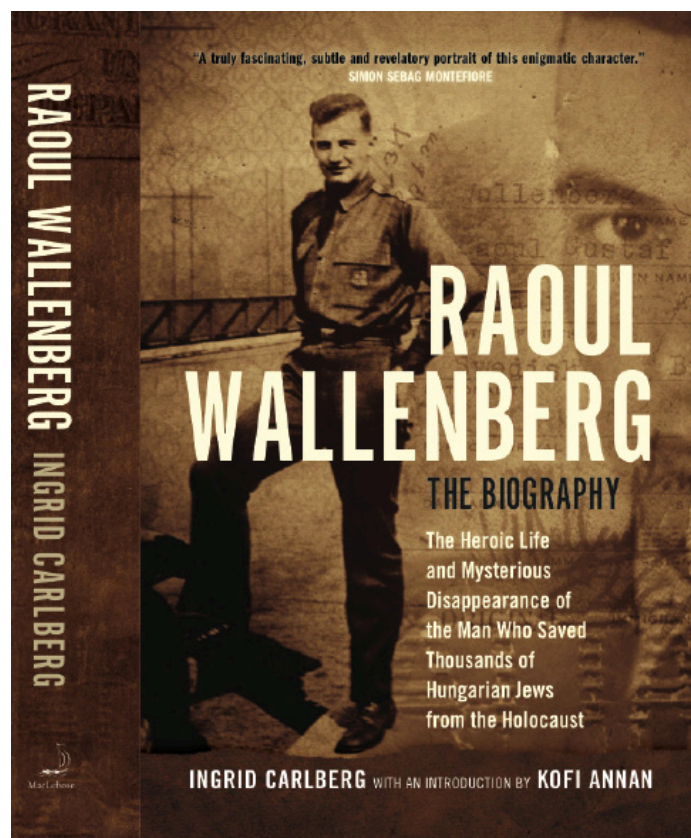
Why was Raoul Wallenberg twice nominated for a Nobel Prize? How did it happen that he was made an honorary citizen of the United States (1981), an honor that has been granted only one other time - to Winston Churchill? Israel, too, has bestowed him honorary citizenship (the first non-Jew to be so designated) and named him as "One of the Righteous Among the Nations". Why did President Barack Obama posthumously award Wallenberg the Congressional Gold Medal in 2012?

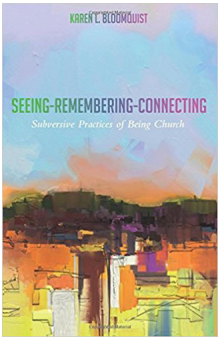
Fortunately, a new biography in the Apostles' Library has provided me with many answers. Ingrid Carlberg has written an extensive book titled *Raoul Wallenberg, the Biography: The Heroic Life and Mysterious Disappearance of the Man Who Saved Thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Holocaust*. The biography is as complete as possible with an extensive bibliography, a list of people interviewed, many photographs, and a helpful index.

This book has helped me learn that a series of unlikely coincidences led to the appointment of Wallenberg, by trade a

poultry importer, as Sweden's Special Envoy to Budapest in 1944. With remarkable bravery, Wallenberg created a system of protective passports, and sheltered thousands of desperate Jews in buildings he claimed were Swedish libraries and research institutes. As the war drew to a close, his invaluable work almost complete, Wallenberg voluntarily went to meet with the Soviet troops who were relieving the city. Arrested as a spy, Wallenberg disappeared into the depths of the Soviet system, never to be seen again. In October 2016, 71 years after his disappearance, Wallenberg was formally declared dead by the Swedish Tax Agency.

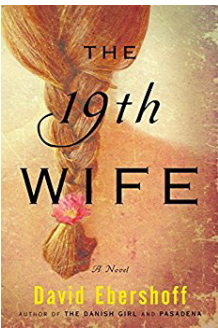
Stories of people like this, true heroes, always make me consider my own life and how I might react in similar circumstances. They also make me consider how I live my own life, here in this place, today. You will be challenged to think in many of these same ways after reading Wallenberg's story.





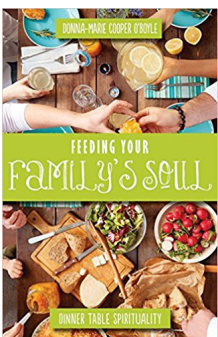
*Seeing-Remembering-Connecting: Subversive Practices of Being Church* by Karen L. Bloomquist is a small book with much to say. The author has long been involved with the Lutheran church in many areas and speaks here to her own history as well as that of her beloved church. She tries to go beyond bemoaning the “decline or disillusionment with the church today” and also beyond bemoaning what is wrong with society today. It is certainly not a how-to book. The book instead hopes to go to the core of what the church is about and how it can be a dynamic movement today.

Bloomquist takes on the big topic of transformation for the sake of the world, certainly not an easy or comfortable topic for many of us who read this as long-standing members of the Lutheran church. She uses the verbs seeing, remembering, and connecting as a way to be the church. She says “we see, remember, and connect with another reality that not only is possible but becoming manifest here and now”. May it be so!



*The 19th Wife: A Novel* by David Ebershoff is his third novel. It tells two parallel stories of polygamy. The first recounts Brigham Young’s expulsion of one of his wives, Ann Eliza, from the Mormon Church; the second is a modern-day murder mystery set in a polygamous compound in Utah. Unfolding through an impressive variety of narrative forms - Wikipedia entries, academic research papers, newspaper opinion pieces -

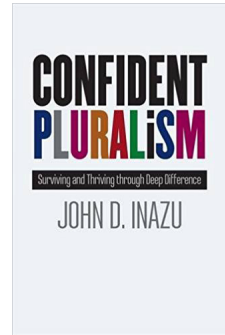
the stories include fascinating historical details. We are told, for instance, of Brigham Young’s ban on dramas that romanticized monogamous love at his community theatre; as one of Young’s followers says, “I ain’t sitting through no play where a man makes such a cussed fuss over one woman.” If you enjoy historical novels, this one is for you.



If you are a busy family, trying to find a way to incorporate faith into your meals together as a family, *Feeding Your Family's Soul: Dinner Table Spirituality* by Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle is a good answer to your dilemma. It is designed for families with elementary school to high school aged children. The book has 52 fun and creative faith lessons (one for each week of the year).

This one-of-a-kind book will encourage parents and caregivers to seize the opportunity in teaching faith to the children (the captive audience waiting to eat!)

while gathered at the dinner table, and while reminding them of the value of coming together as a family to break bread and share hearts. It includes some yummy recipes to try, too. (While it’s written from a Roman Catholic viewpoint, your family can easily adapt these teachings as needed to reflect a Lutheran perspective by using your copy of Martin Luther’s Small Catechism.) This title came highly recommended in Living Lutheran.



Recently the United States has become increasingly polarized and divided. This split is evident across the nation in conflict over LGBTQ rights; in challenges to religious liberty; in clashes over abortion; in tensions between law enforcement and minority communities. With all of this physical and emotional violence enacted by our legal system and such seemingly irresolvable differences in beliefs,

values, and identities across the country, we are forced to ask - how can the people of this nation ever live in peace together? *In Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving Through Deep Difference* John D. Inazu analyzes the current state of the country, places contemporary United States within its broader history, and explores the ways that we Americans can - and must - live together peaceably despite these deeply engrained differences. Inazu not only argues that it is possible to cohabitate peacefully in this country, but also lays out realistic guidelines for our society and legal system to achieve the new American dream through civic practices that value toleration over protest, humility over defensiveness, and persuasion over coercion.



# Library Hours

The Library is open whenever the Incarnation building is open.

## Check-out procedures:

- 1) Fill out the card in book/media pocket with your full name, phone number and the date you take out the materials.
- 2) Leave card(s) in the basket. PLEASE DO NOT FILE CARDS!
- 3) Return books after three weeks and Videos/DVDs/CDs after one week. Place returned items in the large basket on the floor.