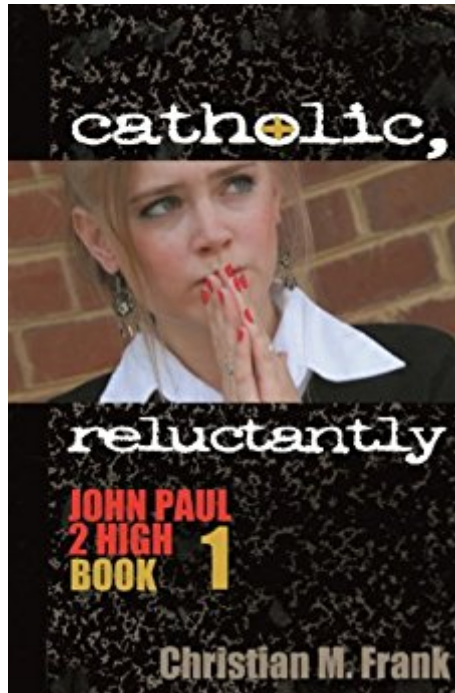




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Catholic, Reluctantly (John Paul 2 High Book 1)



Synopsis

No one wants to be at John Paul 2 High. George would rather be wrestling at a big high school. Liz would rather be anywhere else, period. Brian was homeschooled. J.P. just wants to have fun. James seems to hate everyone. Only Celia seems to like the little Catholic high school. But when a shooting at the public high school causes beautiful Allie Weaver to join John Paul 2 High, the pranks, personality conflicts, and problems with the nearby public high school seem to take on a life of their own...and the sinister shooter is still out there.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Good book. I appreciate that anyone can read this book and you do not have to be Catholic to enjoy it. The mystery and intrigue leaves the reader trying to solve a crime. This is a wonderful introduction and/or reminder that faiths include many different kinds of people. These many different people express and experience faith differently. This book is so well done in speaking to teens. It sincerely is written in "their language". Teens are judgmental and this book begins to show the difficulties and loneliness in judgments. Adults are not portrayed as perfect and teens struggle with it

at times. I recommend this book for teens and believe the content and subject matter might be a little "too old" for tweens.

Great plot. A mixture of real teenage angst, humor and serious issues such as stalking, hazing and threats. This book is the first in the series (I think there are 6 in the series). At the end, it ties up some of the plot lines, but also leaves you with big questions that I hope will be resolved soon in the next books. The book accurately portrays the Catholic faith and practices. Also portrayed are the incorrect views of Catholicism that people outside of the church have.

There's a lot to like about *Catholic Reluctantly*, especially the many small ways faithful Catholic youth are faced with moral challenges in their daily lives. It's refreshing to see real world issues that Catholic youth must struggle with in school and with their friends. However, even though the book is full of these well intended small events, nothing really big happens. I kept waiting for something to propel the story forward, something greater than "he is weird" or "she doesn't like me" or "will I ever fit in?" There are hints of greater dangers and challenges (the creepy gun guy and the value of the land the school resides on), but that's all they remain, hints of future things in later books. The book is a quick and easy read, but, at the end of the day, not a whole lot happens. It wasn't until the last chapter of the book that it felt like, "Okay, here we go," and then the book was over.

This is an exciting novel by a team of young Catholic authors under the pen name Christian M. Frank. This is fantastic, it weaves in Catholic ethics with normal teenage issues. There are three ethical situations presented in a Catholic light, and the storyline of the mysteries starts when someone starts sabotaging their school.

The title says "Catholic, Reluctantly," but the book's content says, "Catholic, Absolutely." It's about time that a novel, let alone a SERIES, appeared in the teen market revolving around the institution that is the Holy Roman Catholic Church. The refreshing thing about this novel is that it's not afraid to show its love of the Church. Yet there's no preachiness: The author lets the characters tell the story and interact on their own merit, rather than trying to build the characters around a given theme (a Catholic school has opened) and telling the reader what the characters think. Instead, the kids are reading-and-reacting on the run to the school's opening, similar to a wrestler slithering for an escape (2 points) after being beaten on an initial takedown by his opponent. The author is letting the characters develop on their own and is recording things as if he or she were behind them, filming it

all with an 8mm video camera. None of the kids were quoting Scripture left and right, which would have given it a preachy feel present in other Christian teen novels. There was a nice balance of dialogue and exposition. Too much exposition weighs it down and too much dialogue makes it another fluffy teen drama. But, like George Peterson's wrestling ability, there's a nice balance and combination of moves in this book. There's some loose plot ends which will be continued later on. Even though I am 24, I still read teen novels sometimes to see how authors develop characters. There are seven stock characters here: The jock (George), the popular blonde (Allie), the jokester (J.P), the pure good girl (Celia), the moody emo kid (Kosalinski), the serious intellectual (Brian Burke) and another jock (Liz). Yet each is sufficiently developed that none of them are actually stereotypical. The strongest character in here is either George or Allie, the school's resident Next Top Model. I'd like to see if J.P. will get a serious side. A subtle character change in Liz sets us up for good foreshadowing. I liked the development of Burke into a tough, small, scrappy kid. I would've liked to see him develop as a wrestler. Maybe make him awesome like Rocky, but then have his ego get big and have him be humbled. I'd like to see if Liz becomes a superstar athlete. Kosalinski and Getz are prototypical antagonists, but Kosalinski is interesting enough that there's some potential for change. He needs to find happiness. Getz is just evil, but Mahoney and some of his friends seem like good kids. I'd like to see the good, pure Celia develop a dark side someday. :) George and Allie are good, yet flawed heroes. I hope none of the characters die off and I'd love to follow them through their senior year, unlike Ann M. Martin's *Babysitters Club* series, which had all of its characters in the 7th and 8th grade during that series' 14-year run. In real life, charter schools usually have at least 20 to 60 students as a start up program. There's not much else to criticize, however. (As far as I know, the Allie Weaver situation has not happened on a large-scale basis like actual shootings like Columbine, but the actual plot premise there is VERY creative and clever. Terrorists can create as much harm psychologically to their intended populace in some situations without having to fire a shot) What's interesting in terms of plotting and development with these novels is that I could see them creating their own universe, similar to the Jan Karon series (Mitford) or the Katherine Valentine (A Miracle for St. Cecilia) series, where there's tons and tons of characters in a fictional town and each one is interlocked tightly with each other in one way or another. There could be an untapped market for Catholic teen models, especially if they're hooked up with the tons and tons of Life Teen programs at parishes across the U.S. As I'm reading this book for the second time I'm starting to develop my own plot lines for the 7 characters. I hope the next set of JP2H are as good as this one. Unlike the book's title, however, I won't read it reluctantly. I'll read it absolutely.

I received this book for my birthday, and I loved it! The characters are realistic (the ex-public school girl, Allie, the super-sweet Celia, and the practical joker, JP--my favorite, as well as many others) and the plot draws you in. A gun scare, wrestling, a dance, evangelization, and a poltergeist all play a part in the book...and man are the practical jokes great! However, definitely buy this and the sequel at once. As soon as you finish this book, you will want to pick up the next one (I still haven't read the next book, but I can safely assume that it will be great as well!) This book is good for ages 13+, and both boys and girls will relate to it as the two main protagonists are George and Allie.

The series is very enjoyable and easy to read, yet it does cover some serious topics. My neices and newphews all liked the books when I gave a set to them. Book two is kind of slow and I am getting tired of the stalker plotline but otherwise it is a good series for teens.

Well done. I couldn't put it down. Just enough cliff-hanger to entice me into reading the rest of the series. Used as summer reading for grade 11. Light enough for a summer read, with content that a Catholic/Christian (or any) high schooler could relate to.

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