

THRIFT STORE

Meeting Jesus 25¢ at a Time



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

In an interview the author, Jane Knuth, said, “These stories changed my life and I think God wanted me to use them to change other lives as well. I wish for my readers that you be delighted when you read the stories and I wish, maybe, you will be a little disturbed too.” What parts of the book gave you some discomfort? Where did you find joy and laughter?

Why do you think Jane showed up at that first meeting of the St. Vincent de Paul Society?

Why did she show up to work at the thrift store?

Can you relate to her initial impressions by comparing them to your own volunteer experiences?

What thrift store customer was most memorable to you? Explain.

Jane soon comes to see God at work with and within the thrift store customers, volunteers and donors. What incident showing God’s presence is especially vivid for you?

One of the themes of the book is that the poor can be our teachers. In Chapter 3 Jane encounters such a teacher, who gives her a powerful lesson about forgiveness. If you are struggling with forgiving someone, is the street theologian’s lesson helpful?

Among the customers and donors, Jane meets people with questions and opinions about Catholicism, questions she sometimes feels inadequate to answer. What similar experiences have you had and how did you handle those questions?

How is Tim, in Chapter 11, a teacher for Jane? Do you know anyone like Tim? What have you learned from the person you know?

Jane sometimes has issues with the donors, such as their expectations of thanks or the quality of the goods they donate. If you've worked at a rummage sale, thrift store, or similar place, what lessons have you learned about donors?

Why is Dorothy so important to the story? Have you had a Dorothy in your life?

In France Jane encounters panhandlers and reacts negatively to them but then has a change of heart. Do you have a strategy to use when you're approached by a panhandler?

Why did Jane write this book? Do you see the importance of telling your own stories of God's work in your life? If you feel comfortable, share such a story with your group.

Discuss the inner change in Jane that you see happening in the book.

What surprised you in *Thrift Store Saints*?

Did you change your mind about anything by the time you finished the book?

What do you think of the title? How do you think Jane defines the concept of "saint?"
Does that definition work for you?