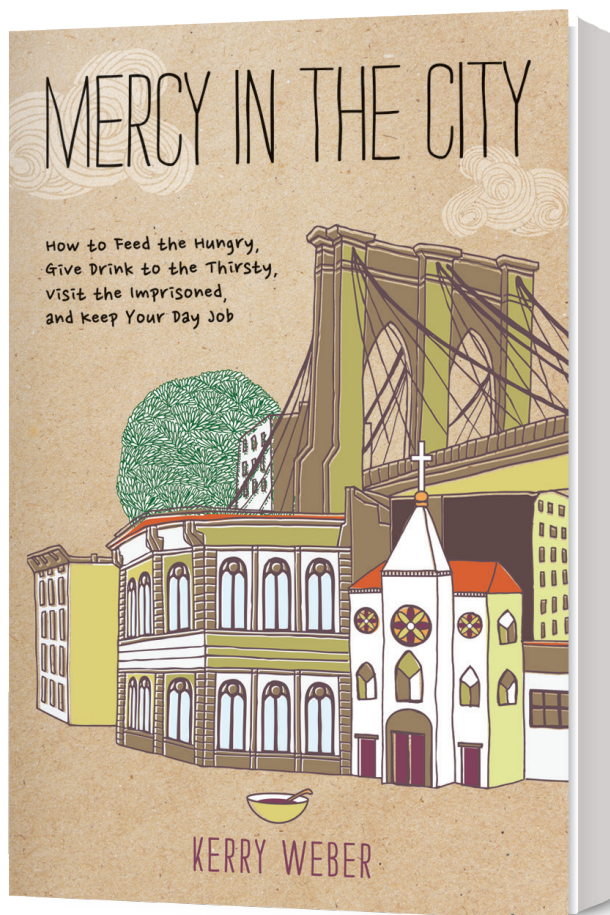




# ONE BOOK ONE PARISH

## A Six-Week Discussion Guide



# WEEK ONE: Chapters 1–4

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## **Chapter 1:** *In Which I Host the Third Annual Sunnyside Pancake Day Spectacular*

1. What traditions do you follow for Mardi Gras, also known as Fat Tuesday?
2. Have you ever worried about how people would react to something from which you chose to abstain during Lent? How did it go?

## **Chapter 2:** *In Which I Wonder Whether I Should Have Given a Homeless Man My Tuna Sandwich*

3. Kerry Weber ends this chapter contemplating what spiritual growth she has experienced by giving up something for Lent. How would you answer this question?

## **Chapter 3:** *In Which I Am Hungry, Crabby, and Grateful on Ash Wednesday*

4. Have you ever felt self-conscious after having ashes applied?  
How have other people reacted upon seeing you?

## **Chapter 4:** *In Which I Consider the Meaning of Sacrifice*

5. Ask yourself the same question that Kerry asked: How are you making Lent work for you?

# WEEK TWO: Chapters 5–8

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## **Chapter 5:** *In Which I Am Compared to a Telekinetic, Killer Prom Queen*

1. The beginning of Kerry's Lenten journey leaves her feeling unsure of herself. Have you ever embarked on a deliberate effort to improve yourself and open your heart to God? How did you feel at the outset?

## **Chapter 6:** *In Which I Pull a Sandwich Cart with Jesús*

2. How would you have reacted to the man in the camel-hair trench coat who broke the rules about getting seconds?

## **Chapter 7:** *In Which I Witness a Modern-Day Transfiguration*

3. Kerry witnesses the church "crowd" becoming a "community." What is the difference between a crowd and a community? How does your parish resemble one or the other?

## **Chapter 8:** *In Which I Am Advised Where "Not to Meet Men"*

4. Consider the quote from Catherine McAuley: "It is better to relieve a hundred impostors than to suffer one truly deserving person to be sent away empty." Do you agree with this sentiment? Do you think it should be applied broadly to aspects of public life? Why or why not?
5. Do you ever feel conflicted when trying to unite the things we want to do, the things we should do, and God's will for us? How do you overcome this conflict?

## WEEK THREE: Chapters 9–12

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### **Chapter 9:** *In Which I Contemplate My Early Fashion Sense and My Current Clutter*

1. How have you cultivated your own “look”? What do you want people to think when they see you?

### **Chapter 10:** *In Which I Realize I Don’t Need as Many Clothes as I Thought*

2. Kerry’s experience in the Clothing Room at Maryhouse made her reassess her priorities around her own clothing. Can you describe a time when your priorities were changed by an encounter you experienced?
3. Some of Kerry’s clothes hold special meaning for her. They remind her of people, places, and experiences from her past. What possessions do you have that are full of sentiments like this?

### **Chapter 11:** *In Which I Ignore a Homeless Man and Converse with a Homeless Man*

4. Answer for yourself the question posed by the priest in this chapter: What are you failing to do?
5. After her interaction with Leroy, Kerry realized that she had failed to see him as a real person. Have you ever had an experience that changed your perspective on the people around you?

### **Chapter 12:** *In Which I Contemplate the Rules for Riding the Subway*

6. In this chapter Kerry describes a simple, single act of mercy when a stranger handed her a sturdier bag and bottle of water for her sick friend. Do you think small actions like this matter? If so, why don’t more people do things like this?

# WEEK FOUR: Chapters 13–16

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## **Chapter 13:** *In Which I Consider the Meaning of Hospitality and Homelessness*

1. Kerry's open-door policy for houseguests has resulted in both positive and negative experiences for her, with the positive greatly outweighing the negative. Can you describe a time when you opened yourself to the unknown? What happened?

## **Chapter 14:** *In Which I Am Mistaken for Spicy Indian Food*

2. What did you think about Kerry's experience with the men in the homeless shelter? Discuss your reactions.

## **Chapter 15:** *In Which I Attend the Stations of the Cross*

3. When was the last time you attended the Stations of the Cross? How did it make you feel?

## **Chapter 16:** *In Which I Spend St. Patrick's Day Surrounded by Water*

4. In what ways do you take the life-giving waters of God's grace for granted? What "dams" in your life are preventing you from letting in the water of God?

# WEEK FIVE: Chapters 17–21

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## **Chapter 17:** *In Which I Avoid Thrusting Cups At Runners*

1. How do you react to Kerry's statement that "sometimes all you can do is pour out as much water as you can, welcome people to the table, and cheer them on as they continue to run their own race"? How forcefully should we thrust the saving grace of Jesus Christ on others?

## **Chapter 18:** *In Which I Attempt to Create a Lent-Appropriate Dinner*

2. Kerry struggles to schedule a date while staying true to her Lenten fasting. In what ways has staying true to the teachings of Christ caused conflict in your life?

## **Chapter 20:** *In Which I Talk About Death Row and St. Dismas with a Prison Chaplain*

3. How do you react to Fr. Williams comments about the "goodness" he sees in the inmates on death row? How does this fit with our general view of convicted murderers?
4. Fr. Williams expresses to Kerry about how the perspective of being in San Quentin changes the way one experiences Scripture. Can you think of some other points of view that might alter one's interpretation of the Bible and the teachings of Jesus?
5. Fr. Williams talks about how in the Catholic Church we use all our senses in prayer. What are some of your favorite ways that your five senses are engaged in prayer?

## **Chapter 21:** *In Which I Spend St. Patrick's Day Surrounded by Water*

6. Near the end of the chapter, Kerry notes that she had almost forgotten that she was speaking with convicts, saying, "I had arrived ready to visit prisoners, but if I'm honest, I did not arrive ready to visit people." How does this statement make you feel? What do you think about our tendency as a society to define people by their worst actions, rather than by their best?

# WEEK SIX: Chapters 22–25

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## **Chapter 22:** *In Which I Learn Not to Make Assumptions about Who Is Sick*

1. What do you think about Kerry's visit to the home for retired Sisters of Mercy? Is caring for those who are sick of heart the same as visiting the sick?

## **Chapter 23:** *In Which I Carry a Cross and Go on the World's Most Pious Date*

2. Kerry feels very self-conscious about so publicly displaying her faith when she carries the cross for one of the stations. How do you feel when called to show that you are a Christian?

## **Chapter 24:** *In Which I Go to a Cemetery to Remember That I'm Alive*

3. Do you remember your first encounter with death? Would you be willing to share it with the group?

## **Chapter 25:** *In Which I Get Locked Out of the Church While Trying to Help People Enter It*

4. At one point, Kerry compares the Catholic Church to a "huge, crazy, dysfunctional family." Do you think this is a fair comparison? Why or why not?
5. During the Easter Vigil, Kerry remembers Vigils from her past. Do you have any special memories of Easter Vigils that you would like to share?