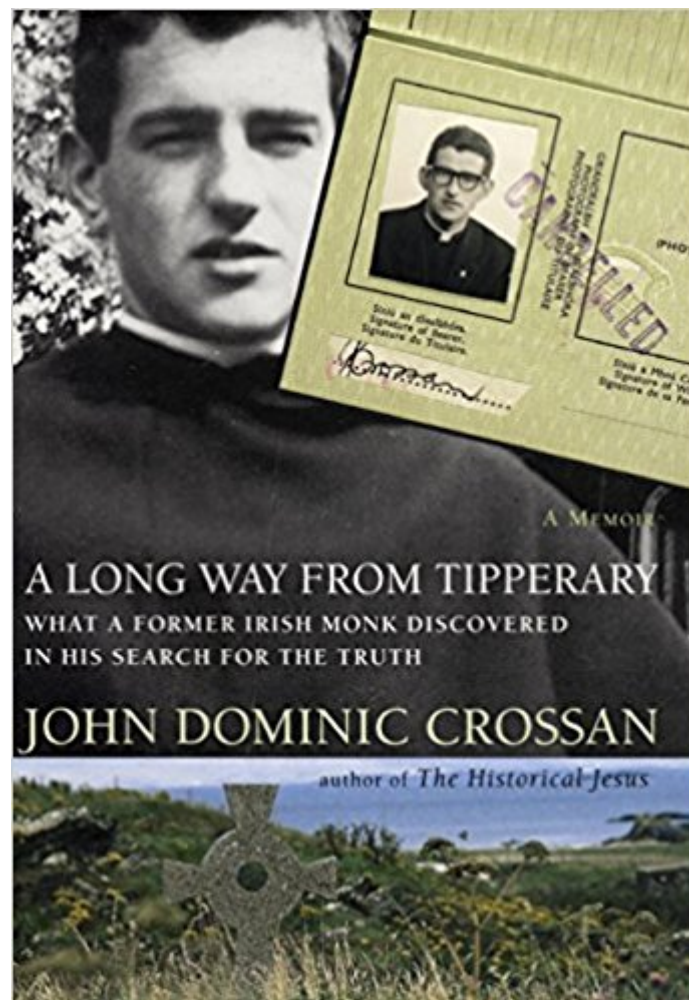


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# A Long Way From Tipperary: What A Former Monk Discovered In His Search For The Truth



## Synopsis

I have spent thirty years reconstructing the historical Jesus. I have done so self-consciously and self-critically and have tried to do the same on reconstructing myself. But what justifies this memoir is how my own personal experience, from Ireland to America, from priest to professor, from monastery to university, and ... from celibacy to marriage, may have influenced that reconstruction. Where has it helped me see what others have not, and where has it made invisible to me what others find obvious?-from *A Long Way from Tipperary* From his upbringing in Ireland to front-page coverage in the New York Times and mention in cover stories in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report, John Dominic Crossan—who has courageously pioneered the contemporary quest for the historical Jesus—has dared to go his own way. In this candid and engaging memoir, the world's foremost Jesus scholar reveals what he has discovered over a lifetime of open-eyed, fearless exploration of God, Jesus, Christianity, and himself. Crossan shares his provocative thinking on such issues as how one can be a Christian without going to church; whether God is vengeful, or just, or both; and why Jesus is more like Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. than like the Pope or Jerry Falwell. Raised in the traditional Irish Catholic Church, Crossan inherited a faith that was "accepted fully and internalized completely but undiscussed, uninvestigated, and uncriticized." A dauntless spirit whose imagination was ignited not by piety but by the lure and challenge of adventure, he became a monk to travel and explore the world, unaware that his most thrilling quests would be scholarly and spiritual. "God had going the best adventure around," Crossan confesses. Because he could never subject his theological convictions and historical findings to the restrictions of the Church, Crossan chose to leave the monastery and priesthood. Speaking of this time in his life, Crossan writes, "Not even a vow of obedience could make me sing a song I did not hear." But he never abandoned the Roman Catholic community or tradition and never lost his faith. He has devoted his life and career to a reexamination of what he calls "necessary open-heart surgery on Christianity itself."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"If people have had enough chicken soup for the soul, how about some Irish stew for the mind?" asks John Dominic Crossan in the introduction to his meaty new memoir, *A Long Way from Tipperary: What a Former Irish Monk Discovered in His Search for the Truth*. Crossan burst into the public eye in 1991 with the publication of his bestselling *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. In this and subsequent books, Crossan's historical research has demonstrated the follies of both secularist denial and fundamentalist distortions of Jesus' significance. *Tipperary* is Crossan's memoir of the ways in which his personal experience "from Ireland to America, from priest to professor, from monastery to university, and ... from celibacy to marriage" have influenced his evolving understanding of who Jesus was. Crossan's struggle has always been to find a way of understanding Jesus that engages "both reason and revelation, both history and faith, both mind and heart." Here is his description of his ideal readers: They are ... dissatisfied, disappointed, or even disgusted with classical Christianity and their denominational tradition. They hold on with anger or leave with nostalgia, but are not happy with either decision. They do not want to invent or join a new age, but to reclaim and redeem an ancient one. They do not want to settle for a generic-brand religion, but to rediscover their own specific and particular roots. But they know now that those roots must be in a renewed Christianity whose validity does not reject every other religion's integrity, a renewed Christianity that has purged itself of rationalism, fundamentalism, and literalism, whether of book, tradition, community, or leader. Those who recognize themselves in this passage will find hope and courage in Crossan's book. --Michael Joseph Gross

Famous for his popular studies of the historical Jesus, Crossan here considers a question that many readers have long entertained: how did Crossan's own life shape the way he thinks Jesus lived? An intriguing question, but not one Crossan answers satisfactorily. The memoir fails to draw compelling connections between Crossan's own life and his Jesus, a radical egalitarian and social revolutionary. But if it does not do much to illumine his historical reconstructions of Jesus, it does

offer a fascinating glimpse into the Roman Catholic Church and particularly the Roman Catholic priesthood in the years surrounding Vatican II. The Irish Crossan was sent to boarding school as a child, and entered the Catholic priesthood. For a while, the priesthood was a good fit. The Church sent him all over the world to study, encouraging his intellectual bent. He eventually left the priesthood because he knew that the Church would constrain what he could say as a scholar. (He now identifies with the Catholic tradition, but eschews the Catholic hierarchy, and never goes to church.) Occasionally an irksome self-importance sneaks into this memoir; Crossan never tires of informing us that he was featured on the cover of the Chicago Tribune magazine or interviewed by Terry Gross, and an entire chapter discusses his adventures as a "talking head." While this becomes tedious, readers who are curious about the thinkers and writers who are shaping contemporary religion won't want to miss this book. (July) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

John Dominic Crossan, co-founder of the Jesus Seminar and Professor Emeritus of De Paul University, is a best-selling author on books related to his thirty and more years of research into the historical Jesus. He was an Irish Catholic monk who eventually chose to leave the monastery and priesthood because he could never subject his theological convictions and historical findings to the restrictions of the church, but he did not abandon his faith. He has spent his life performing what he calls "open heart surgery on Christianity itself". Crossan has written many books accessible to lay people including "The Historical Jesus": "Jesus: a Revolutionary Biography" and "God and Empire". As a theologian and author myself, I take immense pleasure in reading autobiographies of my favourite authors because they throw so much light on the context of their thinking and their choice of subjects to pursue. This memoir is no exception. Crossan analyses much of his life experience and journey from a traditional Catholic upbringing to a more authentic faith with his usual doses of humour, honesty and deep insight. In particular, he ponders the effect of his Irish childhood, growing up amongst resistance to and violence against British authority, on his understandings and interpretation of the Jewish Jesus of history living in a world dominated by the power of Rome. I highly recommend the book to Crossan readers and others who will then, no doubt, become Crossan readers. Dr. Val Webb, Australia, author of "Like Catching Water in a Net: human attempts to describe the Divine" and "Stepping out with the Sacred: human attempts to engage the Divine".

I like to know more about him and this gem of book did the trick. He writes in a way that not simple and to the point. I disagree with his views on Jesus, but he make some good points. I think to claim

he project his worldview is given and no author is not guilty of this. We only have this one life and we need to make the most of it and we all have our limits. Father Crossen is no different. I do find it interesting how he claims to be Catholic, but deny the resurrection. If Jesus never died for our sins therefore our faith is a lie then . I find it also interesting how he explain how Ireland was not a enlightenment environment. I find that hard to believe in higher learning that it effective us all.

I anticipated a good autobiography and John Dominic Crossan, I thought, would narrate a fascinating life story. Yet, the reading of his book included much more: He correlated the times and seasons of his life experience with emerging and well thought out concepts in theology. As a Roman Catholic with a vital interest in new ways of seeking and understanding God, I found this book offered relevant insights into the interface of church with divinity and creative understanding. His writing is relevant to those seeking to reconcile old, flat static ways of ordering and defining religious concepts with the best of the searching, responding and growing heart and soul, both individually and collectively.

I've recently begun reading most of the books John Crossan has written. I first tried The Historical Jesus and gave up, but accidentally had also ordered Jesus, A Revolutionary, which in the forward he says is a user friendly distillation of the bigger book for the general public! It was fantastic! I've been deeply moved by his specific books on the parables but have once again found my interest waning going into his book on Paul and the one on Christianity. I recently finished A Long Way and found it very helpful in hearing him tell of his journey and decisions along that way and his present sense of Jesus (and God!) and what this is all about. An audio interview I listened to, he shares the significance to him of his middle name, Dominic, and the nickname Dom. Dominic was the new name given him and is Latin for "belonging to the Lord." He went on saying, when early Christians said D.O.M., they meant "God is the greatest!" This is the name he goes by.

Loved it. "Like" anything that John Dominic Crossan writes he is easy to follow and understand and this book is a history of his life before and after he became a Monk and after he left the priesthood. I think he's one of the greatest Theologians that I have followed.

I thought this was an autobiography. It's more of a long winded justification of his fence sitting beliefs.

If you've read Crossan or have just heard about him, you may have wondered about his story. How did a monk from Ireland become a renowned Jesus scholar. Considering his view of Jesus, does he consider himself a Catholic or not? The answer to the last is yes, but it is complicated. We learn something about his background and the pathway to fame. It's an interesting read that combines memoir with some scholarly reflection.

This is a delightful, amusing yet serious, description of the life and spiritual journey of John Dominic Crossan, one of the leaders of the Historical Jesus movement. With grace and humor, Crossan refuses to take his life and transitions too seriously, and writes fascinating narrative about the boy from Galway who was looking for adventure, and help found a new perspective on Jesus of Nazareth. Excellent writing! Powerful message! I highly recommend this, no matter where the reader stands in terms of theology.

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