

ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA PARISH

- Catholic Book Discussion: *Signs of Life* by Scott Hahan
- Introduction and Life Begins – Holy Water, Sign of the Cross and Baptism (pages 1 – 36)
- Session One: February 9, 2017

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. After only 36 pages, what is your impression of Dr. Hahn's book, *Signs of Life*? What do you hope to get out of the book? Out of the discussion? How is *Signs of Life* similar or different from other books we have read and discussed together?

2. In the "Introduction" to *Signs of Life*, Dr. Hahn gives us insights into why he wrote this book. Hahn uses phrases like the ones listed below. What does Hahn mean by these phrases? Which of these phrases touches you personally?
 - "Being Catholic means never having to say we have nothing left to do." (page 7)

 - "It's a mistake to treat *intelligence* and *piety* as if they're mutually exclusive terms." (8)

 - "It's a handbook, a how-to, a good-natured defense, and a gentle nudge for all of us to do better, no matter where we are in our spiritual development." (page 9)

 - "It is a very good thing if all we need to do is touch a bead or feel the wool of a scapular in order to turn our thoughts to God, because we may come to moments when that's all we *can* do." (page 17)

3. On page 12, Scott Hahn asks the question: "What is a sacramental"? How do you answer that question? Go back to your Catechism days: what is the difference between a "Sacrament" and a "Sacramental"? Give examples of both.

4. Describe "the wall" that Dr. Hahn encountered on his journey. How do these words help us when we meet "a wall" on our own spiritual journeys: "Even amid the most extraordinary circumstances, we can escape to God, we can endure, and we can prevail, using the most ordinary means of prayer." (page 17)

5. Dr. Hahn begins his section on "Holy Water" with this simple statement: "We begin in water." (page 21) What is he writing about?

6. From your knowledge of the Bible, trace the "story" of water in the Scriptures. How do these "stories" relate to Holy Water?

7. In the section on the "Sign of the Cross", Dr. Hahn describes the Sign of the Cross as "the most common prayer of Christians". (page 25) Making the Sign of the Cross means "we accept that life as our own." (page 28) According to Pope Benedict XVI: "It is a summing up and re-acceptance of our baptism." (page 29) Do these statements in any way deepen your appreciation of the Sign of the Cross in our lives as Catholic Christians?

8. Scott Hahn insists "Life begins as Baptism" (page 30) Why?

9. "Baptism is not merely a ceremony, not merely a rite of passage. It is our entry into a New Covenant bond, a new family, a new life, a new birth, a new creation." (page 34) What is this "New Covenant" that Dr. Hahn writes about?

10. OK! And, finally, what did we learn and what do we take away from our reading and discussion thus far?