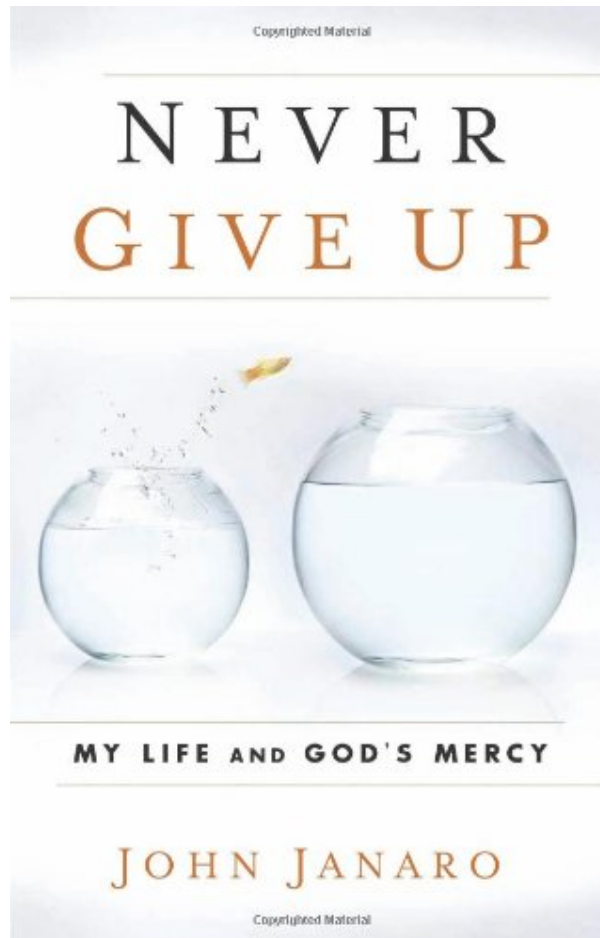


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## **Review**

At last, a book that takes us through the kind of suffering ordinary people actually have to endure--not glorious or romantic, but rather humiliating and tiresome. Janaro writes with courage, insight, and real wit. --Mike Aquilina, author *Angels of God: The Bible, the Church and the Heavenly Hosts*

John Janaro offers practical and deeply prayerful insights. A great consolation to Christians everywhere who walk in the footsteps of the crucified Savior. --Timothy O'Donnell, S.T.D., K.G.C.H.S., president of Christendom College

## **About the Author**

JOHN JANARO is associate professor emeritus of theology at Christendom College, and currently a writer, researcher, and lecturer on topics related to religion and the humanities. He is a member of the Catholic lay movement *Communion and Liberation* and a frequent contributor to *Magnificat* magazine. He and his wife, Eileen, live in Virginia with their five children

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# NEVER GIVE UP: MY LIFE AND GOD'S MERCY BY JOHN JANARO PDF

A personal testimony of gratitude to God who has sustained me throughout my confused, distracted, and often difficult life. —From the Introduction

Some human suffering can't be "fixed." Maybe yours is like that, or maybe you have a family member or friend in that situation. John Janaro's been there—in fact, still is there. His struggles with debilitating illness, chronic depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder could easily bring on a massive case of self-pity, but Janaro has found a better way to live.

If you're thinking of retreating into your private world of pain—or if you know someone who has—Never Give Up will help you see how God's fidelity, the small wonders of daily life, a dose of humor, and the simple kindness of others can bring light into the darkness.

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35 of 35 people found the following review helpful.

If you like "Magnificat" magazine, you will love this book.

By shopper

I originally purchased this book for a friend with Lyme Disease. The plan was to read it gently before

mailing it to her, but before long I found myself with pencil in hand, checking and underlining, and realized that this copy was mine! I am now ordering 5 more copies to give away.

Notes about the author say that he is a frequent contributor to "Magnificat" magazine, and that makes sense. The short, simple chapters are clear, rich, and to the point. They are interspersed with prayers/poems, which can be a little distracting to the flow of the "story," but are beautiful when read alone. I like his connections to the challenges of everyday life, and the value of using our suffering for good. Mr. Janaro's comments about turning on the TV for a suffering person, vs. sitting with them, hit home for me, as well as his practical suggestions for how to be present to those in pain, even when they are grumpy.

This book helped me understand not only Lyme Disease, but also depression and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. The author's word pictures of what life is like with those conditions were enlightening, and helpful for me since I have family members with the latter conditions.

Recommended for Lenten reading, or any time.

31 of 31 people found the following review helpful.

The spiritual side of debilitating illness

By Carol Blank

John Janaro's *Never Give Up* is a blessing for those who suffer from debilitating illness and the important people in their lives. The author is a family man and professional writer and teacher who battles the ongoing effects of Lyme disease, chronic depression, and obsessive/compulsive disorder. Although the book is filled with examples of spiritual challenges and comforts derived from deep trust in God's mercy, it does not shy away from human tendencies toward bitterness, self-pity, and a "Why me?" attitude.

"One thing I have learned is that suffering does not automatically make one a better person," Janaro writes. Instead, it can bring about a host of negative attitudes, including the feeling that God is "distant, unresponsive to prayer, and even cold." *Never Give Up* contains a mix of personal stories and practical suggestions for reliance on God's mercy and love to deal with the effects of debilitating illness.

In the part on day-to-day suffering Janaro advises healthy, able people not to undervalue time spent with those who are ill. "Cheering up" does no harm and can sometimes be helpful, even for those who are clinically depressed. Visitors need not try to solve problems or entertain, but they can be consistent about showing up and standing by. "In human things, time and presence are the media of love," Janaro writes. "If when you leave he is sulking, you have not failed." Come again, and bring along something to occupy your attention. Whether you are reading a magazine or cleaning out your wallet, staying is an act of love.

A chapter on lamentation contrasts the grumbling of the Israelites in the desert with laments that permeate the psalms. Hungry and thirsty, the chosen people don't ask for food and water, but grumble about God's leading them out of Egypt. On the other hand, the prophet Jeremiah expresses woe at being publicly humiliated and tortured for his prophecies, yet he trusts in God and continues in obedience. The grumble is a complaint; the lament is a prayer.

Janaro sees prayer not as a dialogue, but as a conversation initiated by God. He also suggests that we turn to Mary, the Holy Spirit, and the Church to teach us to pray. He offers a meditation on entrusting ourselves totally to Mary, which reads, in part "I cry out to you with all my afflictions. / Help me, Holy Virgin. / Heal the afflictions of my body. / Free me from the prison of fear. / Obtain for me the true freedom for which my spirit yearns."

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Never Give Up

By SciGirl

In *Never Give Up*: my life and God's mercy, John Janero recounts his struggles with chronic pain and mental illness in a poignant fashion. The tone of the book, however, is not gloomy or self-pitying. By honestly expressing his pain and suffering alongside his prayerful insight, he presents a realistic picture that goes further than I would have expected in illuminating the complex thought processes associated with depression.

"Perhaps I can speak for many who suffer in silence, who are not understood by their love ones or who do not even understand themselves. They feel imprisoned by pain of brain and body. Their plight is not a plague in a faraway country, nor does it appear in the news. These people are in our neighborhoods, schools, and offices and too often no one hears their pleas for care and compassion. Perhaps my testimony can help them--and help others understand them. I shall entrust that possibility, with faith and prayer, to the grace and wisdom of God." (p 17)

This book has been next to my bed for most of the past year and is well worn. I initially read it cover-to-cover but subsequently have re-read snatches of it, either seeking out bits that I recall or randomly thumbing through pages and reading whatever pops out at me. This unusual memoir speaks to me and has been a particular blessing this year. I bought a new copy with the intention to send it to friend who is struggling with depression and anxiety, but as I write this review I am considering sending it to his housemates who struggle to live with and support him.

St. Dymphna, pray for us.

\* I received this book through the Catholic book reviewer program from The Catholic Company, wherein books given in exchange for honest reviews. Legal mumbo jumbo...I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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