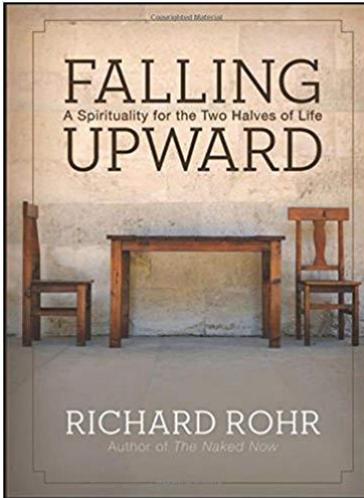


# Ascension's Big Summer Read!



We were so encouraged by the success of last year's Big Summer Read that we're doing it again this year!

*Falling Upward* comes to us via Fr. Dave Brinkmoeller, who lists it as one of his favorites.

In *Falling Upward*, Fr. Richard Rohr seeks to help readers understand the tasks of the two halves of life and to show them that those who have fallen, failed, or "gone down" are the only ones who understand "up." Most of us tend to think of the second half of life as largely about getting old, dealing with health issues, and letting go of life, but the whole thesis of this book is exactly the opposite. What looks like falling down can largely be experienced as "falling upward." In fact, it is not a loss but somehow actually a gain, as we have all seen with elders who have come to their fullness.

- Explains why the second half of life can and should be full of spiritual richness
- Offers a new view of how spiritual growth happens

This important book explores the counterintuitive message that we grow spiritually by our mistakes as well as what we've done right.

## Here's how the 2019 Big Summer will work:

### 1. Order a copy of *Falling Upward*. There are 2 options for this

A) Ascension will purchase a very limited number of the books for those without internet access. You may order one of those at a cost of \$12

Contact Cathy Magness ([cmagness@ascensionkettering.org](mailto:cmagness@ascensionkettering.org)) or Joe Ollier ([jollier@ascensionkettering.org](mailto:jollier@ascensionkettering.org)) to request one of those.

B) Purchase it yourself online. If you use Amazon, make sure to use [Amazon Smile](#) so Ascension benefits from your purchase. *Falling Upward* is available for both Kindle and Nook if that's the format you prefer.

## **2. Join us for the Big Summer Read Kickoff Wednesday, June 19.**

At this gathering we'll:

- A) Give a little background for *Falling Upward*
- B) Distribute copies of the Reflection/Discussion questions

## **3. Join a reading group with friends, family or other parishioners.**

You can read on your own, with your family at home, or with friends or neighbors. We don't care how you do that – just that you read it 😊

If you'd like to be in a group led by an Ascension Staff member, we'll have two options:

### **Mornings at 9:45AM or Evenings at 7PM:**

- Tuesday, June 25 (chapters 1-3)
- Wednesday, July 10 (chapters 4-6)
- Wednesday, July 24 (chapters 7-9)
- Wednesday, August 7 (chapters 10-13)

## **4. Read *Falling Upward* at your own pace or whatever pace your group sets, and use the provided questions for Discussion and/or Reflection**

## **5. Join us for a Closing Session Tuesday, August 13 at 7:00**

From Richard Rohr:

"The question of why is suffering necessary is probably the greatest and most problematic question in Christian theology. Why is there suffering? How is God good if there's so much suffering on this Earth? There's no answer that appeals to the rational mind. The answer lies elsewhere.....

.....when you're in control, in charge, looking good, building your tower of success -- which is what you expect a young person to be doing into their 30s -- you get so addicted to it that you think it's the only game in town. When that game falls apart, it's because it's largely a self-constructed game, a game at which you can look good, you can succeed, you're building your own kingdom, which is not ... what Jesus calls the Kingdom of God, so your little kingdom usually has to fail you. It has to fall apart. It has to, or you'll remain narcissistic, egocentric well into your later years, asking questions like what makes me feel good? What makes me look good? What makes me make money? Many people do. It might feel like success, but no spiritual teacher would agree. First half of life preoccupations won't get you into the great picture, the big picture, which Jesus would call the Reign of God. So, necessary suffering is whatever it takes to make your small self fall apart, so you can experience your big self--maybe what Buddhists would say is your Buddha self. We would say your Christ self, your God self. It doesn't really matter. You can tell people who have passed over from the first to the second half of life, usually you can tell it within the first ten minutes, whether someone is still building their tower of success. And that isn't even wrong; it's just they have something else to experience, and you pray for them and you hope that they will be able to see suffering as a doorway and not an obstacle when it happens."