Opinion
NCR Voices



Catechumen Jennifer Giaramita is anointed by Auxiliary Bishop Robert J. Coyle of Rockville Centre, N.Y., pastor at Good Shepherd Church in Holbrook, N.Y., as she receives the sacrament of confirmation during the Easter Vigil at Good Shepherd April 20, 2019. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)



by Heidi Schlumpf

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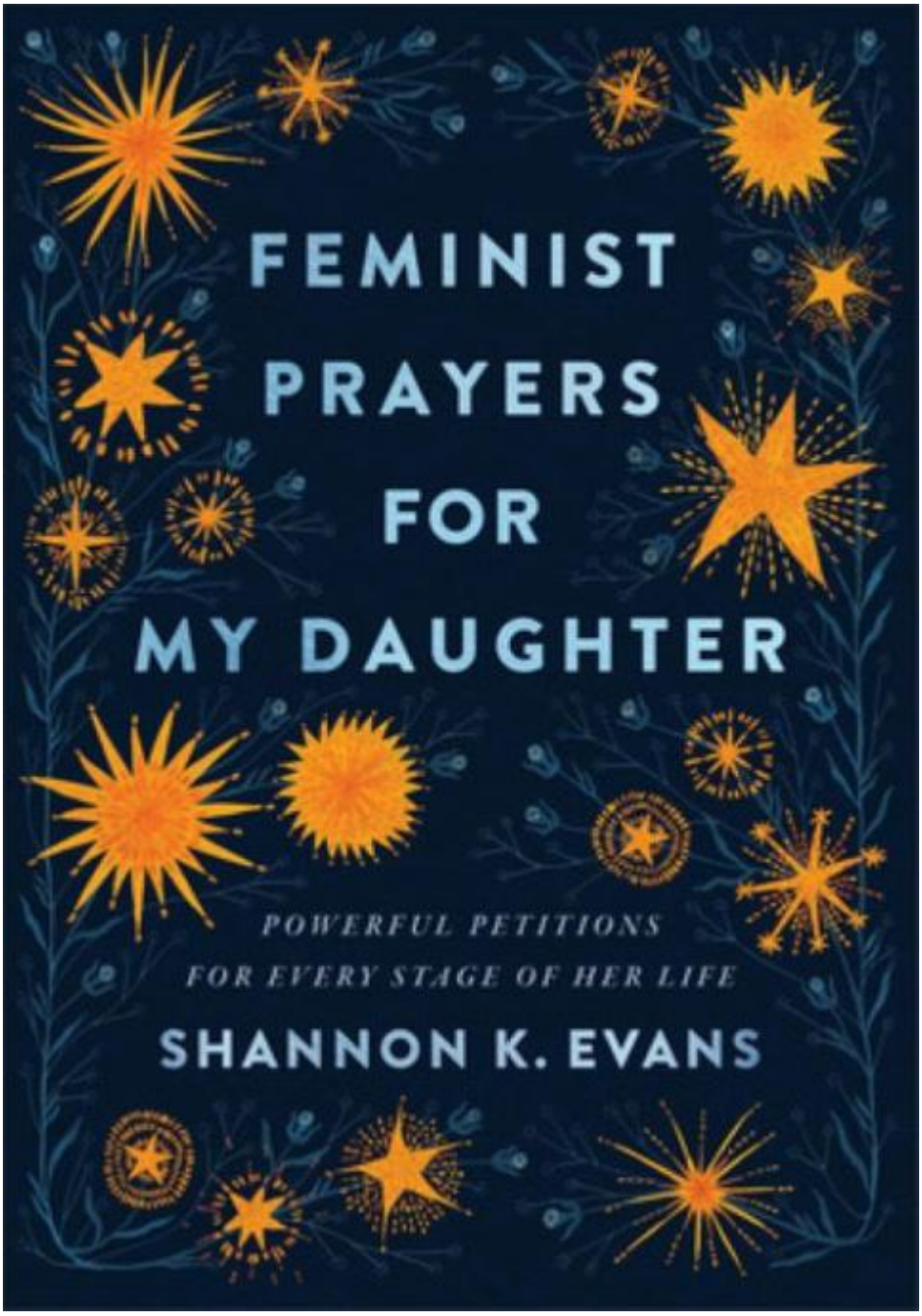
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My daughter was confirmed this spring, and I was bit surprised at how moved I was by the ceremony, especially when the bishop called down the Holy Spirit upon the group of gangly teenagers. It made me proud to be a Catholic — this, after much frustration that the preparation for the sacrament seemed to prioritize the paperwork for the chancery.

When I began thinking about a confirmation gift, I didn't rule out the typical ideas: jewelry, religious-themed tchotchkes and, of course, money. But I had an additional possibility in the back of my mind: a new book called *Feminist Prayers for My Daughter*.

I love this book — and not just because it's written by NCR's spirituality and culture editor, Shannon Evans, who is a very wise woman and social media maven!

Billed as a collection of "powerful petitions for every stage of her life," this 183-page book includes prayers for starting kindergarten, ones for first menstruation, a prayer for celebrating breasts, one for befriending anger and one "for getting her butt into counseling."



NCR spirituality and culture editor Shannon Evans wrote "Feminist Prayers for My Daughter."

A number of the prayers speak in a special way to the experiences of a teen girl living in 2023: a prayer for handling peer pressure, one for body acceptance and one "for when gender boxes are too small." I hope my daughter reads the prayer "for taking up space," but also the one for "leveraging her privilege" and the one "for doing the inner work."

Some of the prayers speak directly about women and organized religion. There's a prayer for women's ordination and "for seeing women lead in church." The one "for a faith community" calls for companions on the journey and prays to "preserve her from faith communities that are unhealthy, imbalanced, or toxic."

One prayer urges "a feminine imaging of God." And Evans practices what she prays for on that topic. Her names for God in the prayers' salutations are expansive: "O Tender Parent," "O Womb of the World," "O Eternal Doula," "O Still Small Voice." My favorite is the salutation to "O Creator of Cellulite" in the prayer "for a world without Photoshop."

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This book will likely not pass muster with some traditionalist Catholics, but it otherwise has broad appeal. Although I gave it to my 14-year-old, it could speak to women of all ages. I know I have enjoyed praying with it, too, and it will be my go-to gift for all the women in my life.

I asked my daughter what she thought of the book.

"Cool," she said.

That's high praise from a 14-year-old.

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