

Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation

By Jonathan Kozol

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Amazing Grace is Jonathan Kozol's classic book on life and death in the South Bronx—the poorest urban neighborhood of the United States. He brings us into overcrowded schools, dysfunctional hospitals, and rat-infested homes where families have been ravaged by depression and anxiety, drug-related violence, and the spread of AIDS. But he also introduces us to devoted and unselfish teachers, dedicated ministers, and—at the heart and center of the book—courageous and delightful children. The children we come to meet through the friendships they have formed with Jonathan defy the stereotypes of urban youth too frequently presented by the media. Tender, generous, and often religiously devout, they speak with eloquence and honesty about the poverty and racial isolation that have wounded but not hardened them. Amidst all of the despair, it is the very young whose luminous capacity for love and transcendent sense of faith in human decency give reason for hope.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Kozol (Savage Inequalities) began visiting New York's South Bronx in 1993, focusing on Mott Haven, a poor neighborhood that is two thirds Hispanic, one third black. This disquieting report graphically portrays a world where babies are born to drug-using mothers with AIDS, where children are frequently murdered, jobs are scarce and a large proportion of the men are either in prison or on crack cocaine or heroin. Kozol interviewed ministers, teachers, drug pushers, children who have not yet given up hope. His powerfully understated report takes us inside rat-infested homes that are freezing in winter, overcrowded schools, dysfunctional clinics, soup kitchens. Rejecting what he calls the punitive, blame-the-poor ideology that has swept the nation, Kozol points to systemic discrimination, hopelessness, limited economic opportunities and New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's cutbacks in social services as causes of this crisis. While his narrative offers no specific solutions, it forcefully drives home his conviction: a civilized nation cannot allow this situation to continue. Author tour.
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From Library Journal
Alicea and Kozol paint a vivid portrait of life in one of America's most impoverished neighborhoods, New York City's South Bronx. While telling similar stories, each narrative has its own unique flavor and characteristics that reveal the crushing nature of poverty in America and recount the lives of those who rise above it. Kozol (Savage Inequalities, LJ 9/15/91) describes a neighborhood ravaged by drugs, violence, hunger, AIDS, and antipathy but also one where children defy all the stereotypes. In the South Bronx, where the median income is $7600 a year and everything breaks down, Kozol reveals that the one thing that has remained resilient is the children. One of the resident children is 15-year-old Alicea, who saw his mother and sister succumb to AIDS, a father incarcerated in prison, and friends entrapped by drugs or violence. Like that of many children, his story is a life of options or despair. The path they pursue is dependent on government leadership. Both books should be required reading for policymakers and those concerned with the plight of the American poor.?Michael A. Lutes, Univ. of Notre Dame Lib., Ind.
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From Booklist
When Kozol began to write about the lives of poor people in *Death at an Early Age* (1967), it was possible to believe Americans wanted to do right by the nation's children, even poor children and children of color; this faith now seems naive. In *Amazing Grace,* families like those whose Manhattan welfare hotels Kozol described in *Rachel and Her Children* (1988) have been relocated by the city to the South Bronx, which is--with neighboring Harlem and Washington Heights--" one of the largest racially segregated concentrations of poor people in our nation," and Kozol himself seems near despair ("I have never lived through a time as cold as this in the United States"). Kozol spent a year wandering through Mott Haven and its neighboring communities; visiting churches, schools, hospitals, parks, and homes; talking with parents and kids, social workers, religious leaders, and principals and teachers; struggling to understand how these children and parents cope with destitution and violence and how their fellow citizens can tolerate--even demand--policies that guarantee misery and death for those living a few subway stops north of glitzy midtown Manhattan. Perhaps nothing can halt the juggernaut of resurgent social Darwinism, but, if anything can, it may be Kozol's prophetic vision and the openness and humanity of the remarkable people whose amazing grace he so eloquently describes. *Mary Carroll*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dustin Singh:

Nowadays reading books be than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading addiction give you lot of advantages. The advantages you got of course the knowledge the actual information inside the book this improve your knowledge and information. The information you get based on what kind of publication you read, if you want attract knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want truly feel happy read one together with theme for entertaining including comic or novel. The actual Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation is kind of reserve which is giving the reader capricious experience.

Jessica Keith:

Often the book Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation will bring one to the new experience of reading the book. The author style to elucidate the idea is very unique. In case you try to find new book to study, this book very ideal to you. The book Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation is much recommended to you you just read. You can also get the e-book in the official web site, so you can more easily to read the book.

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