

priest with a real pastoral instinct.

For instance, Father Tim goes out bicycle-riding with the grieving boy and tells him it's O.K. to be mad at God, who "can take it....God was tough....He knew that I still loved Him....He'd be waiting for me when I felt better about things."

It is also the story of boys growing up in a blue-collar environment, boys with names like Pinhead and Joe the



**Burying
Father Tim**
Tom Robertson

Poignant, funny novel

Bum, some of which come across as dated and are ethnic slurs. Although some incidents seem straight out of Damon Runyon (*Guys and Dolls*), a real sense of neighborhood comes through.

Among the things the narrator recounts is his First Confession where he didn't wait for the priest but immediately recited his sins to the sliding oak panel of the confessional.

Mike had been given a card about what to say, "and in Catholic school, following the rules precisely is everything." So he began, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been fill in the blank since my last confession." Then he heard a chuckle from the other side and recognized the laugh as Father Tim's. The confession soon turned into more of a conversation than a recitation of memorized sins and prayers.

Born in Joliet, Illinois, author Tom Robertson attended eight years of Catholic school. He retains a great deal of respect for the Church and its traditions. For instance, he describes the crucifix at the back of St. Basil's as "carved 100 years ago by an artist more interested in immortality than money."

But he does have some fun with the saints: those "whose halos were revoked"—like St. Christopher—and those described too compactly—like St. Blaise, who shouldn't be seen as the patron saint "of choking" but "of not choking."

Father Tim tried to whip together a boys' basketball team when Mike was in fifth grade. At the first practice one of the kids had a "spell" and Father Tim rocked him (probably not permitted by today's guidelines for child protection).

Father Tim's real achievement was not teaching basketball but enlarging the boys' compassion. He had them play an all-black public school and a school of mentally handicapped children. That first year the parish team never won a game.

This gentle stroll through childhood memories keeps a few surprises until the end. *Burying Father Tim* leaves the reader combing through his/her own memories.

Parenting Without Fear

Letting Go of Worry and Focusing on What Really Matters

By Paul J. Donahue, Ph.D.
St. Martin's Griffin
305 pages • \$14.95

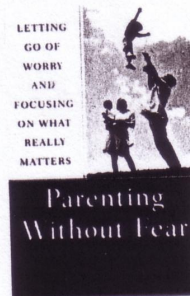
Reviewed by ELIZABETH PILGRIM, a freelance writer and book reviewer with a background in adult education.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST Paul J. Donahue develops two themes in this book to help parents discover the intricate relationship between them: Overcoming anxiety is the necessary first step for parents who wish to develop a clear game plan for raising young children, and parents need to understand who they want their kids to become and what kind of personality traits are needed to thrive in today's world.

Donahue lists six fears that parents have. Moving beyond these fears enables parents to teach their children to be successful, persevering, mindful and compassionate, for example. If parents do not release

their fears, they cannot teach essential lessons to their children.

Donahue describes what steps parents can take to reverse this trend. By overcoming anxiety and uncertainty,



Affirming for parents

parents can regain their confidence and learn to focus on what really matters.

Donahue's six lessons enable parents to provide young children with a foundation for learning and the core values and strengths they will need to tackle challenges in the years ahead. Kids who have this foundation are more likely to develop a positive self-image, to gain the confidence to follow their own desires and interests, and to find the will to resist the pull of the crowd when it veers away from their beliefs and goals.

Parents who emphasize these lessons recognize that raising resilient, self-aware and compassionate children is within their reach. In the early years, more than any other time, they have a chance to impart their wisdom and give their sons and daughters the skills that they can rely on for the rest of their lives.

The advice in this book brings some sanity to the way we live today. Its emphasis on parents and adults living more mindfully makes the book worth its weight in gold.

Donahue writes in an easy-to-read style and with a gentle, wise tone. But be forewarned that Donahue writes for an audience that is mostly educated, upper-middle-class and American. This book is necessary, helpful and compassionate. 