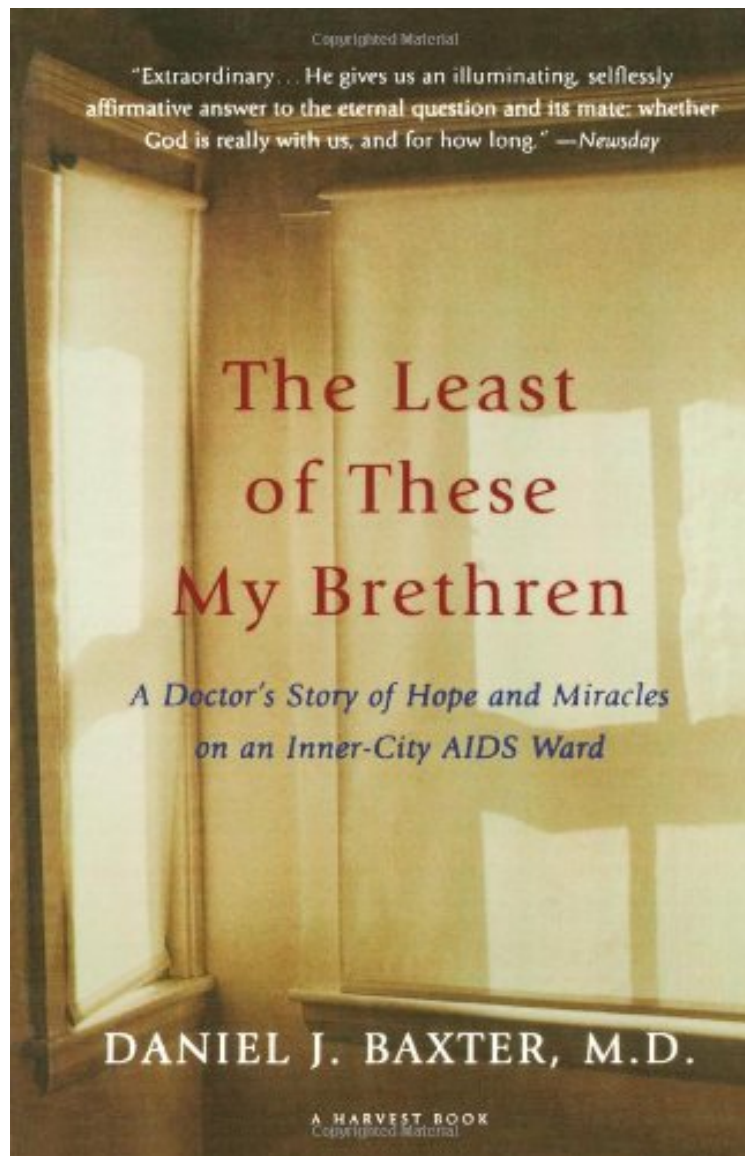


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The Least of These My Brethren: A Doctor's Story of Hope and Miracles in an Inner-City AIDS Ward

Daniel J. Baxter M.D.

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Daniel J. Baxter M.D. : The Least of These My Brethren: A Doctor's Story of Hope and Miracles in an Inner-City AIDS Ward before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The

Least of These My Brethren: A Doctor's Story of Hope and Miracles in an Inner-City AIDS Ward:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Poignant - The last days living with Aids By Mary A. I was struck with the humanity of the book. Dr Baxter gives an accurate insight into the last days of the "lepers of our society". He is a rare find in today's medical circle. He treats his patient with respect and kindness, doing his best to make sure that their final days are as comfortable as possible in the midst of a horrendous journey into death. Here is a doctor with a heart. He has no "God complex". He does not seek to make his patients live at all costs but rather, helps them to die with some dignity. The fine print of the book may be a hinderance to some readers but I felt the book was well worth the struggle. Would recommend it to anyone who is interested in the subject and those who have seen too much of the negative side of our medical providers. I especially liked that the hospital cared enough to provide a memorial remembrance of these people who are often so alone.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I had read this before I bought it, I ... By Customer I had read this before I bought it, I just wanted a copy of it because it was such a touching story that opened my eyes a bit more to a lot of things.

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Grace In Unexpected Places! By Daniel J. Maloney Dr. Daniel Baxter's chronicle of his daily routine as a physician in an AIDS ward at Saint Clare's Hospital in New York City, one of the poorest broken down and inadequate facilities truly serving the "dregs of humanity" is one of the richest, most spiritual and compelling books I have read in recent years. I finished this book and have kept it in my mind in many weeks going over the truly profound truths and challenges Baxter presents in his own story. The Least of My Brethren is a multifaceted, complex chronicle that teaches far more than the most readers expect as they begin any new non-fiction book. I was captivated by The Least of My Brethren from the very start; awed by Baxter's ability to present an entire range of issues, at times separately and yet, all at once in other instances -- from the seemingly simple and unimportant issue of how to get a room cleaned up or a light bulb changed in a hospital with only the leanest of support services, and in the next breath, to be speaking quite articulately on issues such as AIDS, poverty, the tragedy and loneliness of human beings who have no one left in life who have not abandoned them, to the entire spectrum of human sexuality, to questions of philosophy of life and the meaning of death and back again to the more mundane insignificance of individuals, almost all terminally ill, breaking rules on smoking in hospitals and in public places. Baxter presents a story that is as much philosophy as it is medical science; as much sociology as it is gender studies, as much psychology as it is political science. As one individual reader, above everything else, Daniel Baxter's story was a moving, yet at times, an inadvertently hysterically funny portrait of how little the latest buildings and equipment really mean to medicine in comparison to the need for a much rarer and seemingly more easily attainable achievement, the enlistment of truly caring human beings. When Baxter speaks of caring people, he is not referring to those who show their care by donations to charity or participation in clothing drives for the poor -- but "down and dirty" caring in the midst of stink, the odor of death and the scarcity of hope! This, one can conclude in reading Baxter's chronicle, is a truly rare and precious giver of life -- not easily found. In some ways I was shocked that truly caring human beings are a preciously rare commodity, yet the more I thought about the issue, I was able to acknowledge how few people there are who are willing to transcend themselves and give to others unconditionally -- while at the same time having the courage to face the demon of hopeless straight in the eye and prevail with hope. What Baxter brought squarely home to me were many personal questions and issues I have need to address in my own life. Whether it was Baxter indirectly asking me how much I appreciate the life I have, for whatever time it is given to me, to his ability to bring me to the realization that I have only marginally and clinically considered my own mortality. Baxter keeps going with questions and challenges on the importance of doing meaningful work in our lives to challenging me to examine my own willingness to place myself in the midst of dirt and filth and to be unaffected by it because the other person, far more needy than I, needs my help in the midst of that personally discomfoting squalor. Finally, Daniel Baxter offers -- not by preaching -- but by his own personal example, the very real and comprehensible answer as to why our human behavior is so often paradoxical: that in order to conquer our fear, in order to gain anything worthwhile, in order to truly transcend ourselves for the good of others, we must become fearless, courageous, spirit-filled and hopeful persons ourselves. And, how do we get to such a place? The answer so obvious that we all actually know it, kept very close to our human consciousness, but often within far enough a safety zone that we do not have to necessarily respond: that is, in order to become stronger and better persons, we must face down, touch and truly look, often for the very first time, at what we find ourselves most afraid. In so doing, we become stronger, more courageous and grace-filled persons. Indeed there seems to be truth to the adage that what doesn't kill us, makes us stronger; for it is proven out in the daily lives of many committed persons like Daniel Baxter, Sister Pascal or the drag queens in ...Brethren, who come to minister their sick friend up by decorating his room and applying his make-up and dressing him in all his finery, in order to help him feel more hopeful and comfortable. I finished Baxters book more fully understanding myself, my own strengths, fears and weaknesses and biases. In addition, I came away with new role models to help me to at least try to make some changes for myself and to better understand the meaning of truly caring for all with whom my path crosses in the course of this mysterious journey we call life. A singular and outstanding read which should deserves much attention!

In an extraordinary (Newsday) book of Tolstoyan power (Washington Post Book World), a doctor shares stories of suffering and redemption from the three-and-a-half years he spent caring for down-and-out AIDS patients in New Yorks Hells Kitchen.