



Baseball as a Road to God: Seeing Beyond the Game

By John Sexton, Thomas Oliphant, Peter J. Schwartz

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The president of New York University offers a love letter to America's most beloved sport and a tribute to its underlying spirituality.

For more than a decade, John Sexton has taught a wildly popular New York University course about two seemingly very different things: religion and baseball. Yet Sexton argues that one is actually a pathway to the other.

Baseball as a Road to God is about touching that something that lies beyond logical understanding. Sexton illuminates the surprisingly large number of mutual concepts shared between baseball and religion: faith, doubt, conversion, miracles, and even sacredness among many others.

Structured like a game and filled with riveting accounts of baseball's most historic moments, *Baseball as Road to God* will enthrall baseball fans whatever their religious beliefs may be. In thought-provoking, beautifully rendered prose, Sexton elegantly demonstrates that baseball is more than a game, or even a national pastime: It can be a road to enlightenment.

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Editorial Review

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I see great things in baseball, Walt Whitman rhapsodized in 1846. A century and a half later, Sexton and his collaborators see such great things in the game that they look to it for spiritual enlightenment. Readers learn how such enlightenment comes to fans in sacred places such as Wrigley and Forbes Fields, during rituals such as Opening Day and the seventh-inning stretch, through saints such as Christy Mathewson and Roberto Clemente, and by means of miracles such as The Catch made by Willie Mays and the perfect game thrown in the World Series by Don Larsen. To be sure, Sexton acknowledges that baseball has had its sinners, including Ty Cobb and Pete Rose. He further concedes that some great baseball stars, including Hank Greenberg and Sandy Koufax, have actually stayed away from the diamond to honor religious commitments. But because of the way its timeless rhythms foster serious reflection, Sexton still evangelizes for baseball as an underappreciated wellspring of faith. A surprisingly profound new look at America's national pastime. -- Bryce Christensen

Review

Praise for *Baseball as a Road to God*

"In the church of baseball, John Sexton is one of the preeminent theologians."

—Bill Moyers in an interview with John Sexton on *Bill Moyers Journal*

"This book takes the reader on a remarkable spiritual journey, using the secular sport of baseball to explore subjects ordinarily associated with religion—prayers, altars, sacred space, faith, doubt, conversion, miracles, blessings, curses, saints and sinners. There is magic in these pages."

—Doris Kerns Goodwin, from the foreword

"... a thought-provoking proposition for zealots and skeptics alike."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"An elegant little meditation on life and the afterlife, well worth reading . . ."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"John Sexton has written beautifully about the magic of baseball: its near irresistible appeal, its legends, its breathtaking moments of drama, its heroes and villains. He has also written with great insight about the intense-felt character of religious perception. And he has—dare I say it?—woven the two together miraculously."

—Ronald Dworkin, author of *Law's Empire* and the recipient of philosophy's prestigious Holberg International Memorial Prize

"*Baseball as a Road to God* is both a wonderful collection of delightful baseball stories that allows the reader to relive the moments of joy, despair, anxiety, and inspiration, and a meditation demonstrating that baseball is rife with the profound and complex elements that constitute religion. The stories reflect a love of baseball and call upon us all to *live slow* and *notice*, illustrating the availability of a joyful, spiritual life."

—Governor Mario Cuomo

"*Baseball as a Road to God* illuminates baseball as you've never experienced or thought about it before. John

Sexton has given us nine 'innings' of lively stories and insights that take our national pastime far, far beyond the playing field. He has pitched a perfect game!"

—Arthur R. Miller, professor of law and resident scholar at *Good Morning America* for more than two decades

"John Sexton's book, *Baseball as a Road to God*, provides a thoughtful and intriguing examination of the connection between baseball and religion. In this wonderful book, John navigates in clear language the complex questions linking faith and America's favorite pastime. Using his parlance, this book is a home run."

—Rachel Robinson, founder of the Jackie Robinson Foundation

About the Author

John Sexton is the fifteenth president of New York University. He lives in New York City.

Thomas Oliphant was a columnist for *The Boston Globe* and is a *New York Times* bestselling author. He lives in Washington, DC.

Peter J. Schwartz is a *Bloomberg News* contributor and former legal fellow at NYU. He was the first student enrolled in the "Baseball as a Road to God" seminar. He lives in New York City.

Users Review

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Deborah Ellefson:

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