



# **Hoping Against Hope: Confessions of a Postmodern Pilgrim**

By John D. Caputo



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John D. Caputo has a long career as one of the preeminent postmodern philosophers in America. The author of such books as *Radical Hermeneutics*, The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida, and The Weakness of God, Caputo now reflects on his spiritual journey from a Catholic altar boy in 1950s Philadelphia to a philosopher after the death of God. Part spiritual autobiography, part homily on what he calls the "nihilism of grace," Hoping Against Hope calls believers and nonbelievers alike to participate in the "praxis of the kingdom of God," which Caputo says we must pursue "without why."

Caputo's conversation partners in this volume include Lyotard, Derrida, and Hegel, but also earlier versions of himself: Jackie, a young altar boy, and Brother Paul, a novice in a religious order. Caputo traces his own journey from faith through skepticism to hope, after the "death of God." In the end, Caputo doesn't want to do away with religion; he wants to redeem religion and to reinvent religion for a postmodern time.



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## Hoping Against Hope: Confessions of a Postmodern Pilgrim By John D. Caputo Bibliography

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"In *Hoping Against Hope* God doesn't exist, God insists, and God insists with so much love and grace that the omnipotent Daddy you don't really believe in anyway gives up the ghost. But John Caputo's gripping narrative is told with such adventurous honesty and irresistible humor that you don't need to agree with him— you just don't want to stop reading him."-- Catherine Keller, Author of *Cloud of the Impossible* 

"What a gift—John Caputo's spiritual autobiography! There are few things more difficult than for a theologian to write one, given the possibilities for narcissism, deceit, and false modesty. Augustine set the standard in his *Confessions* and Caputo's *Hoping Against Hope* is a first-class successor." --Sallie McFague, Vancouver School of Theology

"By helping us reimagine the very way we conceive of religion (without religion), John D. Caputo writes for those of us who live our lives somewhere between belief and doubt yet feel overcome by an unconditional call of love and wonder that will not let us go." --Phil Snider, Senior Minister of Brentwood Christian Church, author of *Toward a Hopeful Future*, and founder of Subverting the Norm

"Hoping Against Hope is a postmodern mystic's theopoetic musings on the tangible grace of infinity in the fragile and fraught yet still ever-mysterious ways of the material. This is Caputo's works/words of love. Hoping Against Hope tugs us insistently into the specter of the star-strewn night and into the ways that hope persists along with stings of loss and mourning. Hoping Against Hope is the dreamscape/soulscape of one always waiting for? which is still to come while not relinquishing this in/finite worlds of unabashed longing where darkness and lightness intertwine to illuminate everything. One cannot tell Caputo there's no mystery as it is everywhere, setting his heart to burn with grace. To read this book is to enter into the heart of one whose soul flows between heaven and earth." --Wonhee Anne Joh, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

"John Caputo is a triple threat philosopher, and it's all on display in this book: brilliant, witty, and human. In *Hoping Against Hope* you will discover the beating heart of a philosopher, full of passion and set on hope." - Tripp Fuller, Founder of *Homebrewed Christianity* and author of *The Homebrewed Christianity Guide to Jesus* 

"Hoping for liberation and fulfillment is a fundamental mode of human existence. *Hoping Against Hope,/I>* is an autobiographical theopoetics of hope through which Caputo poetically and persuasively invites us to the world of impossible hopes for the nihilism of grace with his ever-life-firming, prayerful, and spooky smile. Caputo reminds us that the hope, powerful anticipation of the better world, is an ongoing process of making philosophy and theology worldly. He further helps us realize that hoping against hopes is the philosophical and theopolitical resistance against any form of control, domination, or fixation of being as the yet-to-be. A must-read for those who passionately dare to hope for the life-to-come without why." -- Namsoon Kang, Brite Divinity School

"John Caputo has a near magical facility with words, finding just the right one to craft and deliver yet another alarming nihilistic punch to my theistic solar plexus. I find myself clutching my increasingly tattered cloak of 'orthodox' belief ever closer around me! He displays a wonderful tapestry of self-contained if ambiguous unconditionality and draws strength and reinvigoration instead of anguish and despair from a complacent acknowledgement that it is all likely to peter out in a cosmic catastrophe."

"I find his remarks about God's insistence very helpful in articulating the pre-philosophical sense of wonder, mystery, mystical, and numinous experiences from which I derive my theistic affirmation. . . . On nearly every page I wanted to write yes or no, impress an exclamation or question mark. The book certainly arouses one from one's dogmatic slumbers and makes one think—albeit rather uneasily. It is a remarkable testament and achievement. I think it is the best thing of his I have read—Augustine, Pascal, Newman, move over."

--Patrick Masterson, retired President, European University Institute, retired President, University College, Dublin

#### About the Author

John D. Caputo is the David R. Cook Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Religion at Villanova University and the Thomas J. Watson Professor Emeritus of Religion at Syracuse University, a hybrid philosopher/theologian working in the area of radical theology, and the author of *The Weakness of God* (2006), an AAR Book Award winner, and *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?* (2007).

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