Kathryn Glover, M.P.A., Vice President for Human Resources and Institutional Effectiveness and Secretary of the Corporation at Virginia Theological Seminary, recommends the following books as part of the Bishop Payne Library’s monthly series highlighting a faculty member’s “picks”:


Brown’s telling of the famed Washington University crew team that won gold at the 1936 Olympic games is in many ways a quintessentially secular story of determination and self-dependence. Yet we cannot help but recognize God’s hand in Joe Rantz’s indomitable spirit in the face of loss and near starvation and in his never-failing love for a father who abandons him, not once but twice. Success for Joe and his team of young men from vastly different families and backgrounds comes not from their individual or collective skill and expertise, but from their willingness to rely not on themselves alone, but on each other as a means of becoming one body as they row for gold.

**bell hooks, Teaching Critical Thinking (Routledge 2010)**

Each essay in this gem of a book offers both teacher and student a new way of understanding and experiencing the complexities of the classroom experience. Hooks looks at critical thinking not as a skill that is bestowed upon a select few, but a gift that we offer to each other through telling our stories and allowing—even encouraging—humor, tears, conflict and love into the classroom. For hooks critical thinking is “a profoundly democratic way of knowing” that is open to all when we engage questions of who, what, where, when, why and how...not just once but over and over again reserving judgment and embracing radical openness.


This compilation of excerpts from interviews for the PBS series, “Religion and Ethics NewsWeekly” brings together voices, both familiar and less familiar, offering reflections and insights on faith, prayer, doubt and all that brings meaning to life. During this Lenten season I commend most particularly the section on meditation and prayer.

**Neal O. Michell, Beyond Business as Usual (Church Publishing Incorporated 2007)**

All too often in church leadership the rector is responsible for all things spiritual and the vestry takes care of all things physical. According to Michell this approach limits the mission and ministry of the parish. Instead he suggests that a learning parish model where rector and vestry recognize and accept what they know and what they don’t know leads to a more mission-centered parish able to embrace change and risk along with the possibility of both success and failure. Although not necessarily a one size fits all recipe for success, this book offers very practical and practicable ways for clergy and vestries to work together in developing parishes into learning, mission-centered communities where God’s work can be accomplished.