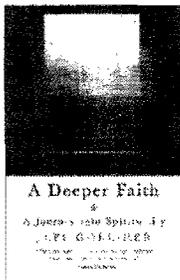


IN REVIEW

A DEEPER FAITH A Journey into Spirituality
By Jeff Gollhofer
Tarcher/Penguin
262 pp., \$22.95



RARELY HAS CONTENT been so exquisitely married to form as in *A Deeper Faith*. Jeff Gollhofer, a cultural anthropologist and Episcopal priest, is a sherpa on this journey of spirituality. His first sentence defines the book's matter: "There is a path – a spiritual path – that crosses the distance between us and God." Gollhofer holds firm, loving and inventive ideas about how to shlep baggage down this path and how to let it go.

To express himself without hectoring or pontificating, he embeds his ideas in letters, not blandly addressed to a general audience, but intimately to a particular sojourner, "My Dear Friend." And never mind if you think you're not that friend: In different times and places, your life is bound to match the correspondent's; meanwhile, you can sympathize and rejoice with that brave tourist, who finds good footing – with God's help – through the 30 letters.

In addition to following the tradition of the Epistle, Gollhofer organizes his book by the traditional church year, an equally inspired notion. Advent, Christmas and Epiphany live in the first section, "Responding to the Call." Lent, Holy Week and Easter fall under the heading "Making the Passage." The longest section of the book, "The Path of Love," covers Pentecost. And within these sections, Gollhofer guides the seeker on this journey through sight-seeing opportunities, such as "Worry," "Perseverance" and "Loving-kindness."

— He boldly shares his dreams and his trips with his reader as well as his ideas, both spiritual and environmental (he loves his trees). Gollhofer's style is pastoral, meaning he's in your face at times, comforting at other times, always understanding your limits and his.

Buy this book. Buy several copies because, as you read, you will think of other seekers to give the book to. That's how meaningful *A Deeper Faith* is.

REVIEWED BY Martha K. Baker, a member of the National Book Critics Circle and lay preacher in the Diocese of Missouri.