

Discussion Guide for *Coincidentally* by Fr. George Rutler

Coincidentally is not a book for the historically illiterate or those who have a difficult time connecting several dozen tenuous threads in the length of two paragraphs.

Actually, this book is for anyone who gets a tingle on the back of the neck when it is mentioned that Jefferson and Adams both died on the fiftieth anniversary of July 4th, 1776 and James Monroe followed five years later. Or that Robert Todd, son of Abraham Lincoln, was pulled to safety after falling onto some train tracks by Edwin Booth, the brother of John Wilkes Booth, future assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

Since this book doesn't have a coherent story line or even a theological topic, the discussion questions for such a book are likewise scattered. Enjoy.

- 1) This book is about historical coincidences, some disturbingly clear, some so tenuous that they barely hold together. What is Church's position on coincidence, fate and karma?
- 2) In the natural world there are several "coincidental" geometric shapes, the most famous being the "golden spiral". Do occurrences such as these say anything about the randomness or lack of randomness in creation?
- 3) One of the amazing things to notice while reading this book is the breadth of the historical information presented. Would a better grasp of the facts of history have practical value beyond the confines of this book?
- 4) Apart from being able to win Trivial Pursuit and Jeopardy, is there a value to knowing a large body of "trivial" information?