



# Walking with Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Poet's Journey

*Robert Waldron*

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During his lifetime, priest-poet Gerard Manley Hopkins appeared to be a failure. His daring conversion to Catholicism and entry into the Society of Jesus in Victorian England alienated him from friends and family and dashed his chances for the brilliant academic career that would have been his. Because he championed the theology of Duns Scotus over that of Thomas Aquinas, he failed his final theology exams and never achieved the top rank of professed Jesuit father. As for his poetry, even his best friends didn't understand it, and he met with consistent lack of success in getting it published.

Today Hopkins is regarded as one of the greatest poets in the English language as readers have come to understand and love his provocative, challenging verse with its startling vocabulary and unusual rhythms. He is also a standard-setter for those looking to espouse a Christ-centered ecology.

In *Walking with Gerard Manley Hopkins* Robert Waldron takes us on a psychological and spiritual journey with this remarkable poet and priest. Hopkins' self-imposed repression of his enjoyment of beauty and of his creativity, his frustration at his seeming inability to accomplish anything worthwhile, his unwavering devotion to Jesus, his depression and its influence on the *Terrible Sonnets* Waldron offers a probing exploration of them all. To longtime Hopkins aficionados as well as newcomers to Hopkins' life and work, Waldron is unfailingly a sensitive and sympathetic guide.

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