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# Home To Holly Springs (Father Tim)



## Synopsis

Sometimes a trip back home becomes a journey of the soul.

## Book Information

Series: Father Tim (Book 1)

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## Customer Reviews

Karon's bestselling series of Mitford novels has concluded with 25 million copies sold to date, but to the relief of eager fans, she introduces a new series featuring Father Tim. The beloved Episcopal priest returns to his childhood town of Holly Springs, Miss., where he reconnects with old friends and battles some old demons. The novel is thick with Father Tim's past, as Karon uses flashbacks to shed light on his early adulthood, especially his transition to seminary. In Holly Springs, his penchant for getting near strangers to open up to him—and his earnest, moving reflections on faith, prayer and the risks of love—are reassuringly present. His wife, Cynthia, is on stage far less than he, but when she appears, she is charming and insightful, as usual. Yet the book is far from perfect. Development of the quirky locals in Holly Springs is thin, and the end is a tad abrupt. Most frustratingly, the central drama of the novel falls flat: Father Tim discovers a long-buried family secret, but he doesn't grapple deeply enough with the emotional consequences of his discovery, nor does Karon fully explore the ways in which the secret plunges us into the Southern quagmire of race. Still, Mitford fans will enjoy this newest visit with wise, winsome, lovable Father Tim. (Oct. 30)

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Far from Mitford and his beloved wife Cynthia, Father Tim Kavanagh enters unfamiliar emotional territory in the town of his birth. When he receives a letter postmarked Holly Springs, Miss., that contains a cryptic two-word message written in a precise, old-fashioned hand, Father Tim decides to answer its call and return to his birthplace for the first time in 38 years. On the long drive, he faces unanswered questions and half-forgotten memories: What happened to his boyhood chum and blood brother, Tommy? What caused his father's melancholy that bordered on cruelty? What happened to Peggy, the adored black caregiver who disappeared when he was 11? Who is trying to contact him, and why? As Father Tim awaits the letter writer, he is showered by blessings: He finds that his hometown has been beautifully restored, and he makes peace with an old flame. When the summons comes, it brings both joy and betrayal. He is reunited with his beloved Peggy, only to learn a terrible secret: She was carrying his father's child when she disappeared. When Peggy reveals that Henry, her son and Tim's half-brother, has leukemia and can only survive with a transfusion from a compatible sibling, Tim has to struggle to reach the decision he knows is right. In this setting away from home, we see Father Tim in a new light as he wrestles with his past and explores the origins of his religious convictions. The saga veers into magical theater as Karon (Cynthia Coppersmith's *Violet Comes to Stay*, 2006, etc.) ties up every loose end in Tim's past. But readers who miss Mitford's colorful eccentrics will be satisfied by Holly Springs's ample supply of quirky characters. Karon's deft interweaving of past and present infuses the Mitford saga with new energy. *Kirkus Reviews* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I have long been a fan of Father Tim, but this novel is a cut above! Never outside of Scripture have I had such a satisfying read. All the pain and pathos of Tim's childhood is overwhelmed in a wave-wash of God's grace and love, well blended with laugh out loud humor. Don't miss this one!

I downloaded this book and held it in waiting for a time when I needed it. It was a comfort to see the title waiting for the time. This week the time came. Reading this book buoyed up my spirits when I needed to have my faith in humanity reinforced. I love the writing, the humor, the sense of family. In short, Karon has done it again. Blessings!

I think Holly Springs could be as much fun as Mitford. When an author switches to something a little different it upsets readers who don't want anything to change. I think Jan Karon probably felt she had said everything she had to say about Mitford and needs a new town. Holly Springs seems like a

great choice. We should give it a chance. Yes, I found conversations and who was saying what hard to follow. Yes, there are way too many far-fetched coincidences in this book. And yes, it was hard to keep track of all the new characters. I wondered about having two Peggy's but I think she had talked about the Peggys in other books and didn't feel she could change names. The Peggys are very different and I wasn't confused. I'm happy that Jan Karon is branching-out. I can see all kinds of great things ahead for Father Tim, Holly Springs, and the whole batch of interesting new characters. I've never found Father Tim's wife, Cynthia, that interesting and didn't mind that she didn't occupy much space in this book. Despite its shortcomings, I enjoyed the book. I was expecting another entertaining book by Jan Karon and that's what I got. I think you will too if you don't expect Mitford when you read it. You still get lovable Father Tim and Barnabus--plus loads of interesting people. That's enough for me.

Jan Karon has done it again....she hit a home run with Home to Holly Springs....We get to see Father Tim at his most vulnerable while he relives his childhood while waiting on the answer as to why it was so very vital for him to come home to Holly Springs after a long thirty eight years....So many questions are finally answered for Father Tim and for us, his followers....Keep writing Jan...Mitford, Father Tim, and all of the other characters I have come to love have made my life so much richer!

I am an avid fan of Jan Karon. IMHO, this is the best novel she has written yet. I was a little afraid to read it after reading a couple of reviews by people who were unhappy she had left Mitford behind. This book kept me on the edge of my seat, wondering what was going to happen next. Wonderful surprises were in store! I thoroughly enjoyed learning about Father Tim's past. I am looking forward to the next books in the series. I will admit that everything fit together too neatly sometimes, but one reason I enjoy Ms. Karon's book is because they are so "happily ever-after." I didn't feel she had abandoned Mitford at all, but introduced us to a new place and neighbors in Holly Springs. If you like Jan Karon's other books, you will love "Home to Holly Springs." If I have time someday, I want to re-read the Mitford series after finishing the Father Tim series, having gained the insight of him and his past.

Jan Karon took Father Tim back to his hometown and his roots. A lot of unanswered questions from his childhood were answered and he was reacquainted with many people from his youth. He even was pleasantly surprised to learn he had a relative he didn't know he had. While reading this novel, I

thought of many things and people from my own childhood and it brought back many memories, good and not so good, but that's ok. Father Tim made peace with himself and with some of the others of which he came in contact. Even some of his old haunts that he visited as a child were still there. One of my favorite parts was visiting his old homeplace and finding 2 new friends. All in all, it was a very pleasant read.

I read Jan Karon's books for the first time when I was pregnant with one of my daughters, either 15 or 16 years ago. I remember laughing so hard at the description of Father Tim's dithering over his wedding day, I had to go into the bathroom so I wouldn't wake my husband. This was such an enjoyable read for me. I so enjoyed journeying with Father Tim as he put together puzzle pieces from his past. And, of course, Jan Karon has a way with words that ensured lots of laughter along with the tears I experienced along with him.

I was very excited to finish the Mitford series and find the Father Tim series. I read this expecting it to have the same "flavor" and healing nature of Jan Karon's Mitford works, but was disappointed in how downright depressing it often was. After laughing and crying and getting to know Father Tim and the well-turned characters in her other books I was anticipating a more uplifting, fulfilling story about his past. After the first few pages I greatly hoped that only a portion of the book would be spent on his old haunts. I was anxious to get on with the drama that seemed to drag on and on and get back to my heartwarming and familiar Mitford. Jan showed great courage to write this story as she saw fit, but as the reader, I had other ideas of what I wanted to hear about Father Tim. I didn't relate to her new characters as well as I'd hoped. I also didn't connect his past with the person I got to know in the Mitford books, there seemed to be a disconnect somewhere. Or maybe my expectations were too high? Despite my less than great review of this book, I have the next one in the Father Tim series "In the Company of Others" awaiting and am taking a break from the good Father for a spell.

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