Holy Cards offer comfort, consolation, and encouragement to Catholics, who often carry these portable images of their favorite saints with them and use them in daily religious ritual. Given as remembrances at wakes and funerals, communions and confirmations, holy cards are also a widely popular-and highly collectible-form of folk art. This handsome volume, the only book available on the subject, is both a rich illustrated survey of this devotional art and a gallery of saints organized thematically along with brief biographies, attributes, and powers. Prophets and angels, disciples and evangelists, martyrs and hermits, visionaries and mystics are among the religious figures in Catholicism represented here-in exquisite turn-of-the-century depictions that are at times dramatic or disturbing, at times moving or comforting. Barbara Calamari and Sandra Di Pasqua, who also collaborated on Novena and Holy Places, explain the often enigmatic symbolism in these cards in a beautiful book that makes an ideal gift for first communion, confirmation, or graduation.

My Personal Review:
I am not a religious person, but when I saw the book Holy Cards on display at a local book store, I was drawn to it by its beautiful artwork, its colors, and the expressions on the faces of these saints. This is a fascinating depiction of human possibilities, with a wonderful cast of characters. The book is divided into sections with heading such as martyrs, Hermits, Prophets and Angels, and Visionaries and Mystics. Each saint's story is told, triumphs and frailties and all, making them seem very real even to a nonbeliever. Saint Sebastian and many of the more well-known saints are here, but you'll also learn about Saint Emyidius, patron of earthquakes, Saint Paul the Hermit, patron of clothing industry workers, and Saint Rita of Cascia, saint of impossible causes. I found this book fascinating and would recommend it to anyone, religious or not, who loves good art and wants to delve into the world of the human spirit.

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