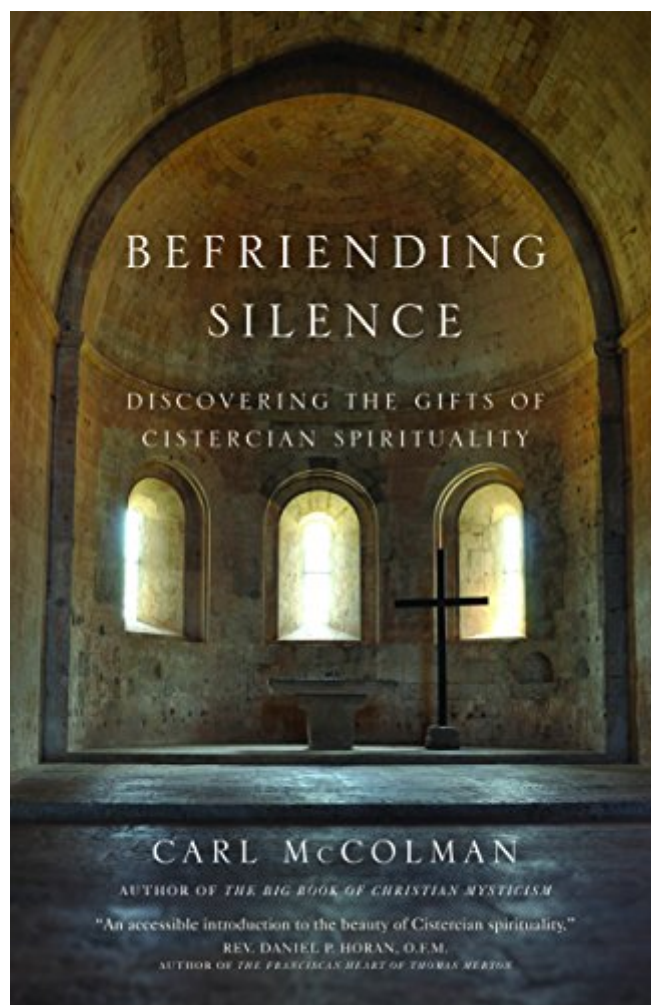


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Befriending Silence: Discovering The Gifts Of Cistercian Spirituality



Synopsis

Winner of the 2016 Georgia Author of the Year: Inspirational-religious books. Respected speaker, author, and Patheos blogger Carl McColman introduces Cistercian spirituality as "the hidden jewel of the Church," presenting a surprisingly contemporary path grounded in monastic tradition. This accessible and comprehensive guide highlights a unique focus on simplicity, living close to the earth, and contemplative prayer, all of which make Cistercian spirituality relevant today. Steeped in chant and silence, grounded in down-to-earth work and service, and immersed in the mystical wisdom of teachers ancient (Bernard of Clairvaux) and modern (Thomas Merton), Cistercian spirituality's beautifully humble path has for centuries made monasteries places of rest, retreat, and renewal. Now, Carl McColman offers the first practical introduction to this ancient, contemplative spirituality for all people. Hailed by reviewers of his many books as playful, and profound, McColman draws on his experience as a lay Cistercian to provide insight into the relevance of the tradition to contemporary issues and spiritual practice. He explains how silence, simplicity, stability, stewardship of the earth, contemplation, ongoing conversion, and devotion to Mary combine to offer a rich and unique path to discipleship and intimacy with God.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Befriending Silence takes us in the back door and then into the life of Cistercian spirituality. As a lay Cistercian, the author writes this book in conversational language without losing the beauty of the practice of silence. He shows us, through a carefully written overview, the reasons why a person would seek to become a monk, in particular, a Cistercian monk. This is a kind treatment, one with affection and grace, that seeks to enlighten the reader to the joy of quietness in presence, the presence of God, where words are not required and openness to God is rich and meaningful. I am not of the liturgical community, but I have found the richness of what McColman speaks. There is much to be gained when one follows a spirituality of contemplation, where we listen and tune our focus and personhood to this ancient practice. I appreciate the fair treatment and information given. A few questions of mine were answered through the reading of this book. I love the title!

Having devoured his previous two books, I was very eager to read Befriending Silence. It was not a disappointment. Like his previous books on mysticism, McColman continues to instruct in the mystical tradition. This time, he relies on the great Cistercian monks of the past and present, most notably St. Bernard and Thomas Merton. One of the best compliments I can give Mr. McColman is that he does a wonderful job balancing both contemplative prayer and the importance of communal/liturgical prayer. This is, of course, one of the great strengths of Cistercian spirituality. (Often, I feel, that some of the contemporary contemplative authors I read seem to downplay the importance of liturgical prayer.) The book concludes with a look at "perseverance" which is something I am always in need of improving upon. Here, McColman reminds us that the paradox of perseverance is that "we remain faithful to God, to prayer, to trying to make our lives better and holier because we hope to grow in grace and also because in some ways we will always be a mess." Amen to that! I will refer back to this text often and will recommend it to my family and friends. I only wish I lived close to a Cistercian monastery!

good reading

A good, clear exposition of the Cistercian charism.

Readings for Lent were spiritually encouraging. Helpful for spiritual growth.

Well written with clarity and spiritual depth!

The perfect comprehensive book for beginners and advanced readers on the topic of contemplative prayer. I found it especially helpful for my Eucharistic Adoration in Sacred Silence.

This is a good read.

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