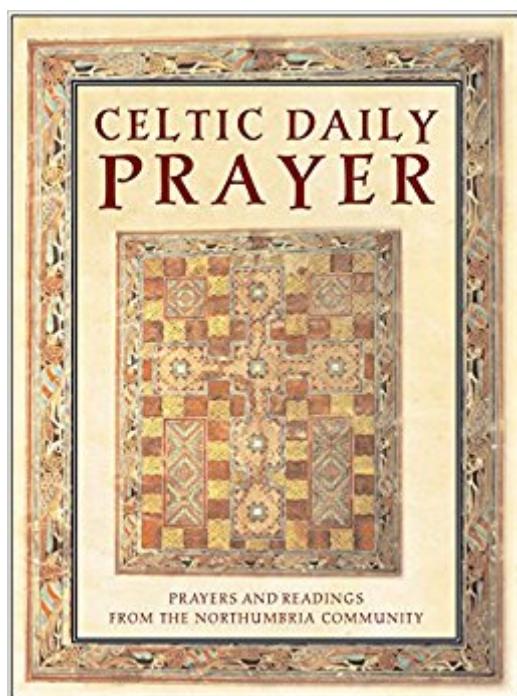


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Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers And Readings From The Northumbria Community



Synopsis

The Ancient Paths of Northumbria in northeastern England have been trod by generations of men and women who loved God and followed Jesus, bringing faith, hope, and love to vast numbers of people. Today, the Northumbria Community remains a living expression of this monastic, contemplative stream of the faith, and the perennial need to make that faith relevant to the world. Celtic Daily Prayer is the fruit of the spiritual life of a remarkable community. Its liturgies, prayers, and meditations are drawn from a deep well of spiritual experience that transcends fashion, culture, and denomination. Blending prayer and praise and building upon the ancient wisdom of traditional Celtic Christianity, this prayer book is extraordinarily fresh. At the heart of the life of the Northumbria Community, as well as this book, lies the Daily Office -- morning, noon, and evening prayers and a monthly cycle of meditations for individual or communal use each day. With words drawn from sources such as St. Patrick's Breastplate, Teresa's Bookmark, Columba's Blessing, and the Psalms, this cycle of daily prayers reflects the essential rhythms of life. With liturgies for communion and other special occasions as well as daily readings, this prayer book contains two complete years of scripture readings and a calendar of saints' days and festivals. The Jewish tradition of family Shabbat, adapted with prayers from the Celtic tradition, also finds its place in this book. A section on rites of passage suggests prayers and rituals for the pivotal times of life: birth, rebirth, marriage, midlife, and bereavement, as well as blessings and graces for all occasions. This traditionally grounded yet surprisingly modern prayer book will enrich the spiritual life of readers for years to come.

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Customer Reviews

More than a prayer book, Celtic Daily Prayer is a gift from the Northumbria Community of northeastern England. This devout religious community, with members scattered around the world, is joined together by the teachings of traditional Celtic Christianity dating back to the sixth century. In assembling this collection of prayers, they offer Christians ancient Celtic devotional writing as well as contemporary sources of wisdom, such as Anne Morrow Lindbergh, T.S. Eliot, and even Peter Yarrow from Peter, Paul, and Mary. The focal point for this prayer book is the daily office, although the book also includes additional meditations and daily readings. It offers two complete years of reading, so it should last a while (the publisher also promises follow-up books). Although many of these prayers come from the ancient monastic tradition, they easily speak to Christians contending with everyday things like jobs, childcare, dinners, and house cleaning. In his introduction Richard J. Foster (Celebration of Discipline) claims that this prayer book is most often found "in kitchens with bread baking and tea brewing or in living rooms crammed full of that cozy lived-in feel." --Gail Hudson

The Northumbria Community consists of Companions dispersed around the United Kingdom and the world, with a motherhouse near the Holy Island of Lindisfarne in northern England. The community is a conscious attempt to find a practical modern expression of a new monasticism, which preserves an uncompromising allegiance to the imperatives of the Sermon on the Mount.

First of all, though the Celtic Saints are celebrated in this book, there are others that have little or nothing to do with the Celts, like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This book actually developed from a local religious community on the northeast coast of England, near the Scottish border and it was this community that tried to devise a way that people could pray at regular intervals without upsetting their normal everyday lives. There is lots of devotional reading, and the devotions range a lot in theology. I cannot use this book as a substitute for the actual Daily Offices, however. It does provide great material that I can use for my morning and evening prayers and there is a cycle of seven different Compline prayers, one for each day of the week. There is no Apostles Creed (aka the baptismal vow) or the Lord's Prayer (aka the Our Father) so I do not use this to replace the Daily Offices, but I do use the meditations and selected readings from time to time while doing the Office. A problem with this book has occurred just now. The pages are falling out. Strange, because for a prayer book (where a reader has to constantly flip back and forth pages at a time) I would think that the binding would last much longer than this. Because of the constant

flipping, I had to use ribbons to keep my place. I've used these homemade ribbons before and nothing like this has ever happened to my Bibles or Prayer Books before, especially in under a year of use.... In this case, just a few months. Pity....It has excellent material. If it was just that I would have given it 5 stars, but the title was a little misleading (it is mainly Celtic, but not exactly, so I felt a little "ripped off"), that would have given it 4 stars. Now with the binding issue, it is down to a 3 star, though I was tempted to give it 2, but there is great material in here.... I just have to be more careful not to loose anymore pages.UPDATE:After an exchange of this book, I now have a hard copy that has much stronger binding. The pages are still glued together instead of being stitched on, but my guess is they probably used more glue? At any rate, because I am no longer using pages after getting this exchanged, I am now promoting the book to 4 STARS instead of the 3 that I originally assigned it. It still has great material, but it isn't exactly a "Celtic Prayer Book" per-se and it really could use some ribbons.

An astounding collection prayers, sayings, meditations for every occasion, with that Celtic mystique which makes them so special. Such a variety here, of moods and occasions, from very short offerings to lengthier...Wonderful edition, like a library at your fingertips--and such an abundance to choose from. There is a helpful table of contents too so readers can sort the many works according to need. If you say grace or find yourself in prayer, you should have this book in your library, for it is a blessing unto itself.

I first stumbled across this book in the local Barnes & Noble, where I sat and perused it, becoming more and more drawn to the liturgies and readings. When I arrived home, I immediately logged on to .com and put it on my Wish List. One of my friends gave it to me the following Christmas. The section of the book I use most often is the Daily Office, which can also be found online at the Northumbria Community's web site. The services are short and designed to be said in community. I introduced my Education for Ministry (EFM) group to the Complines, and they have become a regular part of our worship together. I also use the "Follow the Example" section of the book when planning liturgies for small groups and retreats. Here you will find a list of Saints and Holy Days with brief biographies and references to the other sections of the book for suggested scripture readings. The Saints range from the ancient and traditional, primarily Celtic, to 20th century figures such as Diterich Bonhoffer, Oscar Romero and Thomas Merton. Nine longer liturgies and reflections based on the lives of specific Saints like Brigid, Brendan and Hild. The book also contains a series of 31 Daily meditations, a Holy Communion service, a Family Shabbat, Rites of

Passage, brief seasonal liturgies, and two series of Daily readings for the year. A definite must for those interested in Celtic Christianity and Spirituality.

I've had this book for about five years and it's still a treasure that keeps yielding its jewels whenever I go to it. Poems, psalms, scriptures, meditations, with all that variety and so much spiritual depth, I never tire of it. One reason is the richness of sources all the material comes from -- yes, the Bible and spiritual leaders. But also great writers, preachers and mystics from the ages, all the way from Homer to Peter Marshall. Much practical thoughts from ones like Bill Hybels and Thomas Merton, Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and those for whom labels cannot be attached. All this has been gathered for us by the Northumbria Community for our devotions and prayers, morning, noon and evening. They are arranged in cycles for private and community use each day. A full two years of devotions convey the rhythms of the inner and outer life. Then there are precious graces for the celebrations of birth, rebirth, marriage, growing older, and bereavement. These devotions span centuries and give me the sense of the circle of physical and spiritual life. Sometimes I might forget about this book for a short while, but when I go back to it, it is a whole new life and a bright treasure chest all over again!

This is absolutely beautiful. As far as I can tell so far in my various investigations, the Northumbria Community is a better, more authentic group than many of the "Celtic" communities. It doesn't seem to be putting out materials simply to make money and inflate their egos. Most of this material is also online. I found that out too late or I would probably not have bought the book. If you like a simple and lovely prayer of the hours, this is a good one, online or in book form. Using it in a group, the book would obviously be better.

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