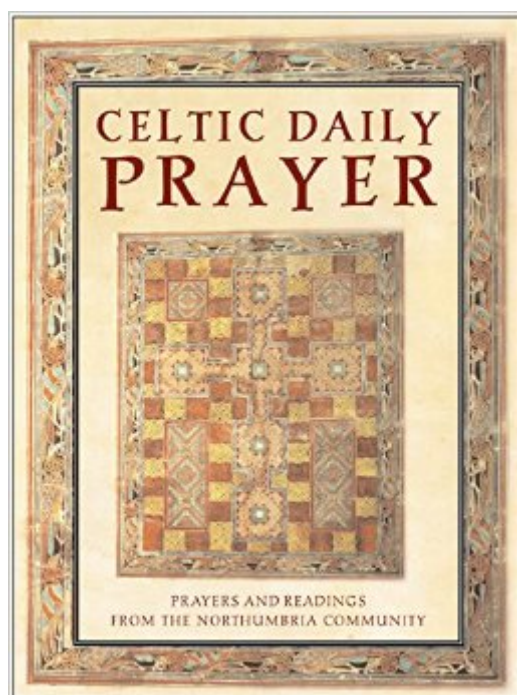


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Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers And Readings From The Northumbria Community



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 daffy 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

Anyone who has traveled to the Island of Lindisfarne will know the gift of such "thin places", where the wonder and glory of heaven radiates into our ordinary lives. Celtic Daily Prayer offers such a threshold type practice for entering "thin places", where we can regularly go to be close to God. Praying "Celtic Daily Prayer" several times a week, I have found this prayer guide a lovely way to deepen my intimacy with God and connect with my Celtic heritage. The book includes daily prayer services, daily readings and prayers for set times of the year, as well as prayers/devotions based in the life of Celtic saints. Even people who hail from a different ethnic heritage will find that Celtic Daily Prayer offers community wisdom and a down to earth guide to daily prayer in the family. The Northumbria Community also offers these daily prayer services and prayers on a CD by the same title, though I found the CD less appealing or helpful than the book. For two other books on Family Prayer, look at THE BUSY FAMILY'S GUIDE TO SPIRITUALITY (Crossroad, 2009) and THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY TOOLBOX: 52 BENEDICTINE ACTIVITIES FOR THE HOME (Crossroad, 2001). The Busy Family's Guide to Spirituality: Practical Lessons for Modern Living From the Monastic Tradition

For a blending of the ancient and the modern, this book of prayers and daily devotionals fits the bill better than anything else available today. Besides the liturgies of morning, midday, and evening prayer, with accompanying scripture readings, there are prayers for special situations and events, not to mention two entire years of daily devotional readings. The interest in Celtic Christianity that has taken root in recent years may seem almost faddish, yet there is a depth of spirituality here that is refreshing and rewarding. This is one of the best tools available to strengthen one's inner life with God.

Immediately following the Table of Contents in Celtic Daily Prayers are these words: "Most powerful Holy Spirit, come down upon us and subdue us. From heaven, where the ordinary is made glorious and glory seems but ordinary bathe us with the brilliance of Your light like dew." This wonderful contribution of liturgical rhythm and flow from the Northumbria Community is a 2002 publication that includes some material from Celtic Daily Prayer (1994 and 1996) Marshall Pickering edition. The publication offers thorough overview in its beginnings. It renders a fine introduction to the Celtic heritage. It includes instructions on how to use the daily office, complines and meditations. If you wish to use the readings and liturgies in your own compilations of church or home liturgies, you may easily do so. The book is well laid out according to the liturgical season. I particularly liked how the

Celtic saints were introduced in the Table of Contents, with the "Follow the Example" heading. The saints days and festivals were listed following. In this tradition, saints are NOT viewed as magicians who bring "good luck" or cast spells. Rather, they are to be seen as examples and heralds of the faith encouraging the lives of the faithful. If you have not had exposure to the Christian Celtic heritage, I would advise reading J. Philip Newell's publications of your choice and listen to the liturgical music of John Bell. Newell's books give you a broad historical understanding religious communities like Northumbria. For those who have some exposure to the Celtic contributions within the historical Christian heritage, enjoy this inspirational river of liturgical Grace.

I have been using Celtic Daily Prayer for almost two years and it continues to amaze me. The combination of familiar repetition and inspirational readings in each day's prayer cycle provides those who "keep the hours" with fresh perspectives in prayer. The daily office was not my tradition until about two years ago, and while I own several traditional prayer books, I am continually drawn to Celtic Daily Prayer as my main guide to the rhythm of daily prayer. For those from a non-Catholic tradition, Celtic Daily Prayer offers a nice transition from the Protestant "devotional time" to the ancient practice of the daily office.

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.

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