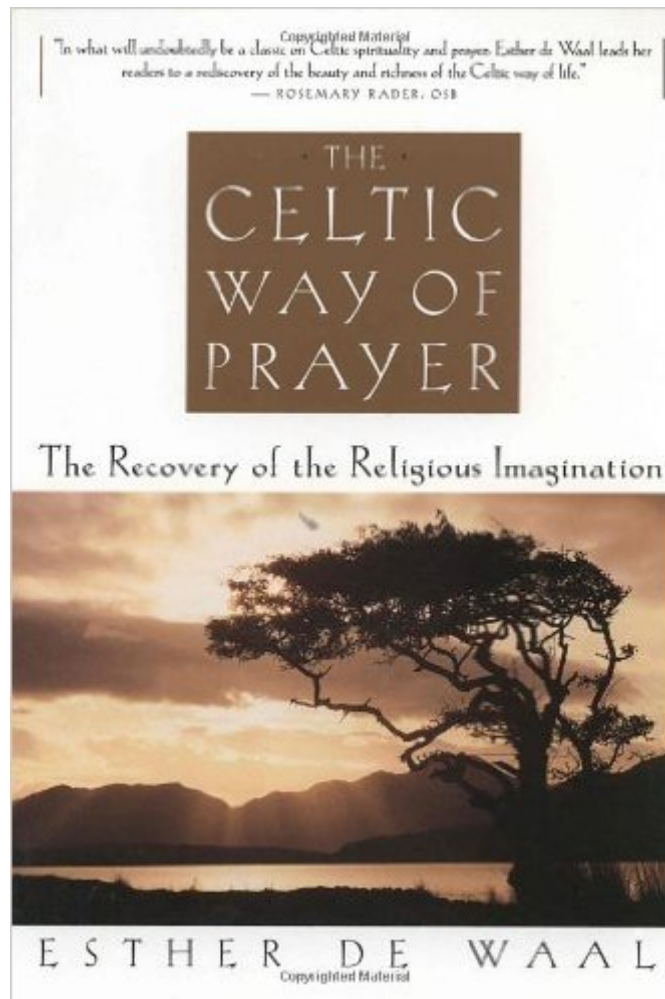


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The Celtic Way Of Prayer: The Recovery Of The Religious Imagination



Synopsis

Esther de Waal, one of Celtic Christianity's preeminent scholars, shows how this tradition of worship draws on both the pre-Christian past and on the fullness of the Gospel. It is also an enlightening glimpse at the history, folklore, and liturgy of the Celtic people. Esther de Waal introduces readers to monastic prayer and praise (the foundation stone of Celtic Christianity), early Irish litanies, medieval Welsh praise poems, and the wealth of blessings derived from an oral tradition that made prayer a part of daily life. Through this invigorating book, readers enter a world in which ritual and rhythm, nature and seasons, images and symbols play an essential role. A welcome contrast to modern worship, Celtic prayer is liberating and, like a living spring, forever fresh.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ester De Waal is an Anglican lay woman, a historian who studied and taught at Cambridge. Her specialties are Celtic Christianity in general, and Benedictine spirituality. The two fields, of course, fit together quite naturally. As this book makes very clear, Celtic Christianity owes very much of its development to two great traditions. The Celtic half of it covers, quite literally, the westernmost peoples of Europe, although Rome and even later London might argue that the Celtic peoples were not Western Europeans at all. (De Waal does not mention it, but just a couple of centuries ago some English writers were portraying the Irish in particular as barely human, and sometimes the Scots not much better.) For those who come to this book not knowing much about the Celts, this book will introduce them to a much wider cast of characters than they might expect. Although the individuals

and the cultural creations that De Waal writes about here are most Irish, Scots, and Welsh, she acknowledges that there were other peoples who contributed to Celtic Christianity, including peoples living in the areas that we know today as Cornwall, Brittany, and the Isle of Man. Reading this book, one will learn a bit about the lives of the Celtic peoples from the earliest days of Christianity in the British Isles through the nineteenth century, when many of the songs, hymns and prayersâ "sometimes hard to tell apart, as she relatesâ "were collected in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. I may be biased, since I have ancestors from both Ireland and Brittany, but the more I learn about these peoples, the more I love them. The other half, of course, is the Christian part. Here, once again, De Waal does a great job of introducing the reader to a very important story in a way that makes you want to learn more.

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