

Via Feminina

Its role of the spiritual life



Mystic?



"a mystical person would be someone who's committed to the search for a deeper contact with God."

Bernard McGinn

Reading Scripture

- In the last three centuries, the intellectual approach has dominated the study of scripture
- Theology and doctrine have been the mainstay of the faith journey
- Result of the post-Enlightenment focus on sensory experience interpreted by the mind.

Reading Scripture

- The inner world was neglected for so long, the symbolic, transformative and mystical aspects of scripture were minimized. . .
- Meaning was reduced to a literal sense only
- In early writings, mystical reading is clearly evident
- Texts providing meaning for life
- Multiple readings of a text

Kourie, *Reading scripture through a mystical lens*, Acta Theologica ,2011

Reading Scripture

- Holding two perspectives:
 - reading of the biblical text that is faithful to its historical and literary context
 - But realizing that this is a sacred text which leads to deeply transformative human experience
- Taste and see that the Lord is good: Ps 34:8



Bernard of Clairvaux

Sermon on the Song of Songs

“Just as we taste food with the mouth, so we taste the psalm with the heart.

The soul that is faithful and prudent will not fail to grind with the teeth of understanding, because if he were to swallow it as a lump, not having chewed it, his palate will not gain the desirable taste which is sweeter even than honey from the honeycomb . . .”



Bernard of Clairvaux

Sermon on the Song of Songs

"Wise singing required an engagement of the whole person, an opening of the mind and the heart to hearing the divine voice in and through the text."

2 Cor 3:6

⁶ He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.



VIA FEMININA

*The Monk Within:
Embracing a sacred way
of life*

- *via negativa* (the negative way)
- *via positiva* (the positive way),
- *Via feminina* offers a new vantage point from which to perceive reality, a perspective that is implied and intrinsic

Via Feminina

The Monk Within:
Embracing a sacred way
of life

*Perhaps the single most distinguishing feature is its **intimate wholeness***

Encompasses and combines feminine and masculine, including everything within its merciful, benevolent, and joyous fold.

*Begins from a different premise of **trust and indissoluble intimacy**.*

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*The Monk Within:
Embracing a sacred way
of life*

- The feminine is an archetype in both women and men
- via feminina is a **spiritual practice and way of life. It is a holistic approach to spiritual life.**

Via Feminina

The Monk Within:
*Embracing a sacred way
of life*

Via feminina weaves together

- the secular and the sacred – God in all things
- loves the earthly realm with all of its life-affirming attributes.
- has the capacity and responsibility to strive to be divine-like.
- To be wedded to humanity-creation-cosmos and to God in one, integrated vow.

Via *Feminina*

***The Monk Within:
Embracing a sacred way
of life***

A **way of being** - We sink into our depth of being.

benevolent
compassionate
loving
nondualistic,
nonhierarchical,
holistic
humanity and divinity,
earth and spirit, without division.



He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

What's the point?

healing to our suffering world

Mark 1:40

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, 'If you choose, you can make me clean.' 41 Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I do choose. Be made clean!' 42 Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

Mark 5:24-34 "Who touched my clothes?"

What's the point?

live in love and grow our divine self

John 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Corinthians 13:13

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.



Closing Benediction

May the light of the divine shine upon us

**May the love of the divine heal our
struggling world**

**May the birth of the divine
take place
again and again
in each of our hearts.**

Amen

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References and quotations taken from -

- *Radical Wisdom*
- *The Monk Within: Embracing a Sacred Way of Life*
- *Emerging Heart: Global spirituality and the sacred*
- *A New Silence: Spiritual practices and formation for the monk within*