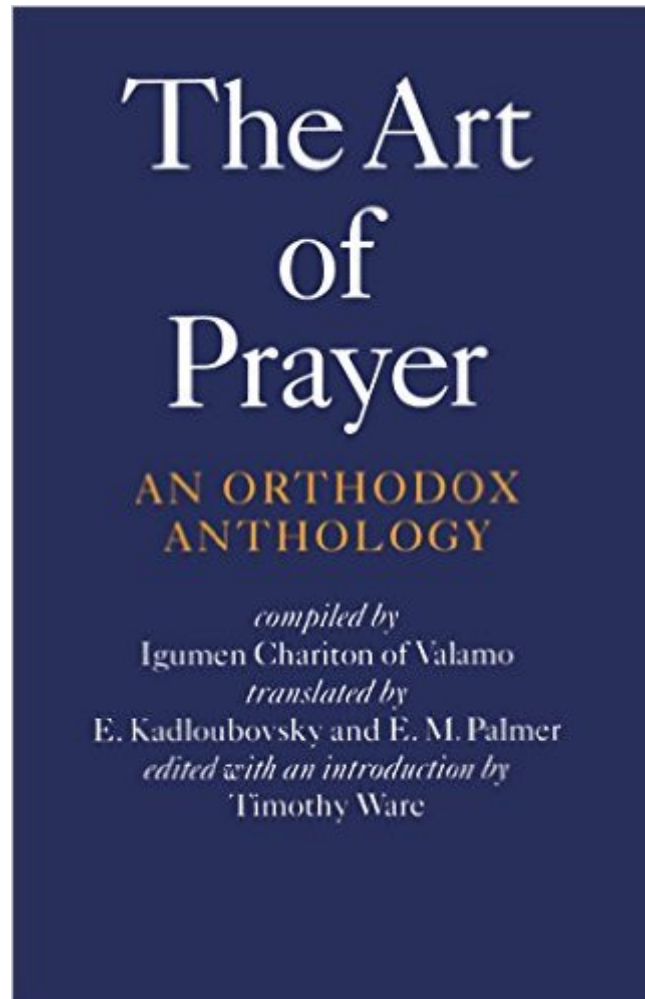


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The Art Of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology



Synopsis

A spiritual anthology drawn from the Greek and Russian traditions, concerned in particular with the most frequently used and best loved of all Orthodox prayers--the Jesus Prayer. Texts are taken chiefly from the letters of Bishop Theophan the Recluse, along with many other writers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I can't add much to the previous reviews; this book is a drink of cool spring water in the desert. One comment. If you've attempted to read the Philokalia but have been put off by the demands it makes of its readers, please pick up this book. It will prepare you for the spiritual treasures found in the Philokalia.

My copy of The Art of Prayer is dog-eared, highlighted, been read in the rain and the bathtub alike, has travelled with an Anglican friend during his trips to see family, and is an absolutely astounding and pragmatic methods of attaining the prayer of the heart. The Jesus Prayer (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner) is an excellent prayer for working towards theosis, that is, union with God, and this book helps one get a 'feel' for the ethos of Orthodoxy, for the process of becoming truly human, as we are intended, and it is a useful book for Eastern Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians alike.

Saint Paul exhorts us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Most people pray, and some pray

often, but how can we pray unceasingly? One of the best ways to accomplish this is through the Jesus Prayer. This prayer is very simple: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." And yet it is very powerful: perhaps the best means of communion with God outside the Eucharist. First of all, it is firmly rooted in Scripture. It is based on the prayer of the blind man: "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me," and that of the repentant Publican: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." In addition, it invokes the Most-Holy Name of Jesus: "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), and "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth" (Phil. 2:9,10). The apostle also tells, "No man can say, Lord Jesus, except by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3). Furthermore, this prayer is awesome in its simplicity, consisting of only a dozen words. It is at once an affirmation of faith and repentance. When said in full diligence, humility and sincerity, avoiding vain repetition, the words and message of this beautiful prayer will engrain themselves in our being; as Saint Theophan the Recluse put it so beautifully, the Prayer becomes "a murmuring stream within our souls." This book is an anthology by Igumen Chariton of Valamo, based on the notes he took out of the works of Sts. Theophan, Ignatii Branchianinov, the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, and of course, the Philokalia. Herein we learn what true prayer must be, its fruits, how to overcome the sins and passions in our hearts, and achieve union with Christ. Although he dedicated most of his life to prayer, Igumen Chariton in his humility attributed nothing within this book to himself. He understood that he merely drew from the deep well that is the wisdom of God. We can be sure that within we also will find that which will be of great help in our search for fulfillment in Christ, a sure guide up the narrow path of salvation. In an age where spiritual hedonism (vis-à-vis Deepak Chopra) and the illicit search for self-gain (T.D. Jakes, "Prayer of Jabez") pervade most devotional works; we can be confident that within this book we will truly find Christian perfection.

Every christian who wants to learn to pray w/out ceasing, & to develop the remembrance of God in all things, or who wonders why their faith is not what it should be, would benefit from this book.

When this anthology by Igumen Chariton (1872-1947) came out in 1936 the catastrophies of the coming War were already 'in the air'. Archbishop Paul of Finland was a Valaam monk and lived through these difficult times when Finland lost the war and Valaam to the Soviet. He writes in the Finnish translation of 'The Art of Prayer': "Two years after 1936 when the Art of Prayer was

published Igumen Chariton published another book on the same subject with over 500 pages." This book had a subtitle called "Discussions Aroused by the Anthology of the Jesus' Prayer Between and Elder and a Priest Acting in the World". Most of the publication was destroyed during the Winter War. Let us hope that it will be published some time! Igumen Chariton's book is meant for daily reading. A guide is invaluable, but lack of one is no reason for not starting to practice the Prayer of the Heart; at some stage God will help!

This is one of the best books I have ever read on prayer in general and on the prayer of the heart - the Jesus Prayer. The book is based on the writings of two great Russian Saints of the nineteenth century. Anyone who is looking for the inner Kingdom shall purchase this book.

In as few words as possible I would like to say that this is like a Bible for me - I have just started reading it and already I can feel the sheer power in its utter humility - the way in which the use of prayer is explained to be the essence of any method or practice is unique in its directness - I have not read a book on Christian Prayer or any Christian book for that matter which covers simply and unswervingly, what I call, the Heart of All Religion - I have always been scared by the word 'orthodox'...until now - now I understand what the word means to me - I recommend this book over any other like it - I guarantee you will not be displeased - now for the practice..."Pray without ceasing" (5:17)

If you want answers to the questions? WHAT IS PRAYER? WHAT IS ITS ESSENCE? HOW CAN WE LEARN TO PRAY? WHAT DOES THE SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AS HE PRAYS IN HUMILITY OF HEART? pg. 51. Then read this book. I even bought a copy and gave it to a Pentacostal friend of mine, for his birthday. This book is unquestionably destined to become equal to the Philikolia.

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