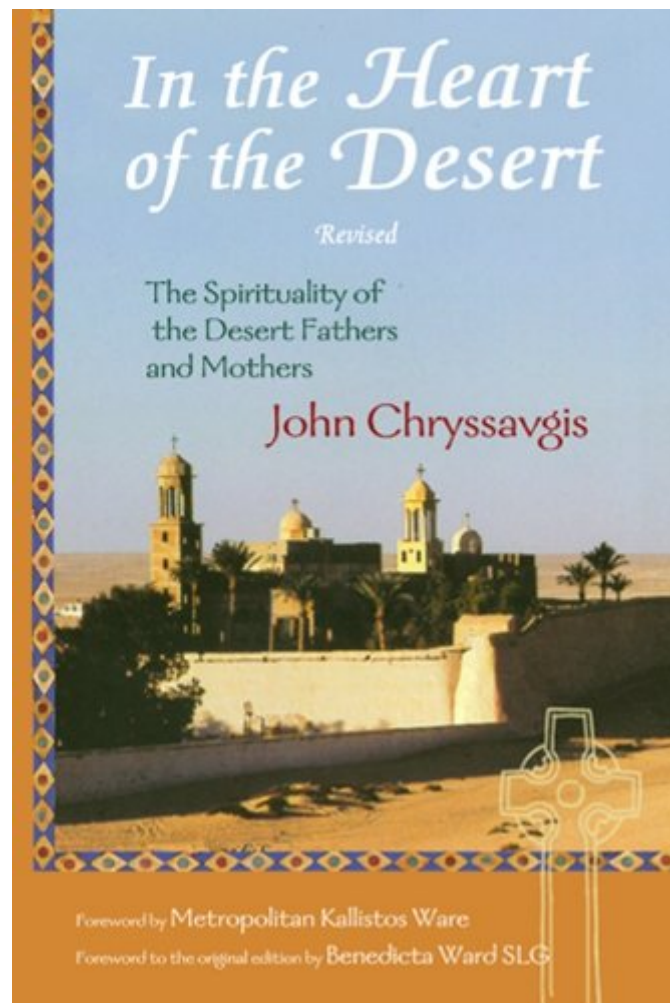


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In The Heart Of The Desert: The Spirituality Of The Desert Fathers And Mothers (Treasures Of The World's Religions)



Synopsis

The Desert Fathers and Mothers—those early Christian ascetics who withdrew from the world to seek God—have influenced the spiritual lives of many people, from Saint Augustine to Thomas Merton. Their words, sometimes inspiring and uplifting, sometimes agonizingly painful, sometimes humorous, always speak straight from the heart. They resonate through the centuries because they tell the story of the “deserted” soul in its pilgrimage from darkness to light, from ignorance to truth, from sin to sanctity. This revised edition of Father John Chryssavgis’ fresh and vital introduction to the spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers brings their words to life and provides a key which unlocks their relevance for the reader of today. It features a new foreword by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, eight new photos, a selection of sayings by the Desert Fathers and Mothers, and an Index.

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Customer Reviews

I purchased this thinking it was an exploration of the theology and practices of the desert Fathers and Mothers. It wasn't quite that. It was less hardcore theology and practices and more a fluffy

expose on the sayings. From the beginning the author made it clear that while this was based entirely on early Christian monks, the teachings are intended for anyone seeking spirituality, Christian or not. This is probably because it is part of the Treasures of World Religions Series and is intended for a wider audience than just those of the Judeo-Christian Traditions. Because of this, often advice and prose felt less based on Christ and more like nebulous hippie advice. Additionally, Chrysavgis's prose felt loosely organized and disconnected – "more esoteric verbal vomit than concise study. It read like a companion to the actual Sayings of the Desert Fathers, almost a study guide of sorts. Having never read the Sayings, I felt occasionally lost as to the point. That being said, Chrysavgis made some important points, particularly his section on passion. He explained that some say we are to kill passions, but Chrysavgis said the desert fathers taught passion was good as long as it was directed in the right direction (p. 58). While I am uncertain as to the theological veracity of this teaching, it's unique and worth further studying. The other idea he spoke about was this concept of Detachment (Ch. 10) and that it isn't removing oneself from the world, but rather the ability to live in the world without being affected by the desire for its offerings (p. 69). And while I thought his words on prayer were mostly fluff – "nonsense, I liked the following, "Prayer is the acceptance of frailty and failure" in ourselves and then in the world around us" (p.98).

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