



# Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire: The Christian Practice of Praying with the Elements

*Christine Valters Paintner*

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Organized around "The Canticle of the Creatures" by St. Francis of Assisi, *Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire* is the first book to consider the ways in which praying with the natural elements can enliven Christian spiritual life. Teacher, artist, and Benedictine oblate Christine Valters Paintner offers concrete suggestions and guided contemplative exercises; for instance, she suggests that readers take time to "watch the sunrise or sunset and breathe in the beauty of the fiery sky. Contemplate what those beginnings and endings have to say in your own life." Readers benefit from Paintner's extensive training in theology and Benedictine spirituality, as well as her unique work in bringing the expressive arts to spiritual direction.

## Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire: The Christian Practice of Praying with the Elements Details

Date : Published March 1st 2010 by Ave Maria Press (first published 2010)

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Author : Christine Valters Paintner

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# From Reader Review Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire: The Christian Practice of Praying with the Elements for online ebook

## Catherine Casey says

I really enjoyed "Water, Wind, Earth and Fire..." there is much to ponder and revisit for me over the Summre with this book.

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## Jennifer says

I really enjoyed this book. it's filled with wonderful quotes ad poetry from many and varied sources. However, I most enjoyed the author's own words and reflections on the elements of nature and the way stations they provide for praying and connecting with God. I think this might be a valuable book for one who desires to reconnect with God or to deepen an already felt experience of the divine. It's a delicious book.

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## Jobie says

I read through this book slowly as I went through the seasons. It has great quotes and bits of poetry. It ties the seasons to the body and to Native American tradition (which I loved).

The book has exercises and Lectio Divina for each season.

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## Leanne says

I found things in this book which spoke to me and things that did not. In all though an interesting spiritual read.

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## writer... says

having won the Autumn Blessings poetry party from Abbey of the Arts, today i received Christine's autographed prize gift of her new book \*Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire: The Christian Practice of Praying with the Elements\*.

i'm already more than pleased in the reading. how about sharing an appetizer with you?

\*The element of wind invites us to "open our souls to Being," which means opening ourselves to a God who flows in directions we cannot predict. This element invites us to a radical posture of surrender in releasing our hold on our own plans and making room for God to blow us in the most life-giving direction. As a metaphor for God, wind reminds us that God's ways are not our ways. The invitation of wind requires of us a

detachment from our own longing to control the direction of our lives and a simultaneous surrender to Spirit to allow ourselves to be carried to places of growth and newness.\*

hungry? i know i am. looking forward to much more...

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### **Marcia Chapman says**

Fun and interesting. I'd like to read it again.

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### **Julie says**

Not heavy-handed, not pretentious, and full of beautiful quotes and insights. The culminating mediation/prayer was particularly heartfelt and touching.

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### **Francine says**

This is a book I have been meaning to read for quite some time (published in 2010) but I do believe that some books come to us when we are meant to read them. Coincidentally, I was reading Michael Pollan's Cooked at the same time. His chapters are Fire, Water, Air and Earth. Reading them together was such fun! I sometimes practice active meditation when cooking, gardening, etc. Reading these two books have enriched my life.

This is a short and accessible book, clearly written, with lots of quotes and inspiration. The author writes both beautifully and with great symbolism as she explores Scripture and the lives of the saints. This is clearly a book written out of the Christina tradition but I believe it is accessible and universal for all.

This book is especially interesting to me as a point of connection with the natural world especially as Pope Francis is reminding us of our responsibility to our Mother Earth.

This book could be used alone or with others; it is good for action as well as contemplation. Nature is a constantly unraveling Mystery and the author is clearly connected to it.

There is a great deal to reconnect to, or learn for the first time, in this book. A helpful bibliography for each of the chapters is included.

Highly recommended.

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### **Tucker says**

Short, simple book exploring nature imagery in traditional Christian writings, interspersed with examples of

poetry and "how-tos" on getting in touch with nature.

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### **Jenny says**

My review: <http://www.carrottopstudio.blogspot.com/2011/05/review-rituals-of-nature.html>

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### **Lydia says**

Per Lauren Winner, more about the place of metaphor in the spiritual life:

I discovered this book only recently. I wish that I'd known about it forever. It is a treasury of some of the ways Christians over the centuries have faithfully and engaged God in the company of the natural elements.

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### **Tiffany Bridge says**

I

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### **Linda says**

One of my favorite books. I constantly re-read it; make journals using it; teach classes. Love this book!

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### **Mark says**

As one who can often be blind to the beauty of my surroundings as I meander through each day, I wanted to like this book very much. And I indeed found it to be helpful in places. However, I also found it to be in places perhaps a bit too neo-paganistic and neo-pantheistic for my taste. Instead of helping me to appreciate God's handiwork in creation and grow in my relationship with Him, the focus all too often seemed to end on the objects themselves and the individual's inward journey. In summary, I enjoyed the book, but had to filter what I read with a critical mind. Perhaps a second read would be helpful as well. I recommend Rigney's *The Things of Earth* and older works by C.S. Lewis will perhaps be of more benefit to the reader.

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### **Kathy says**

Much better than I was expecting!

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