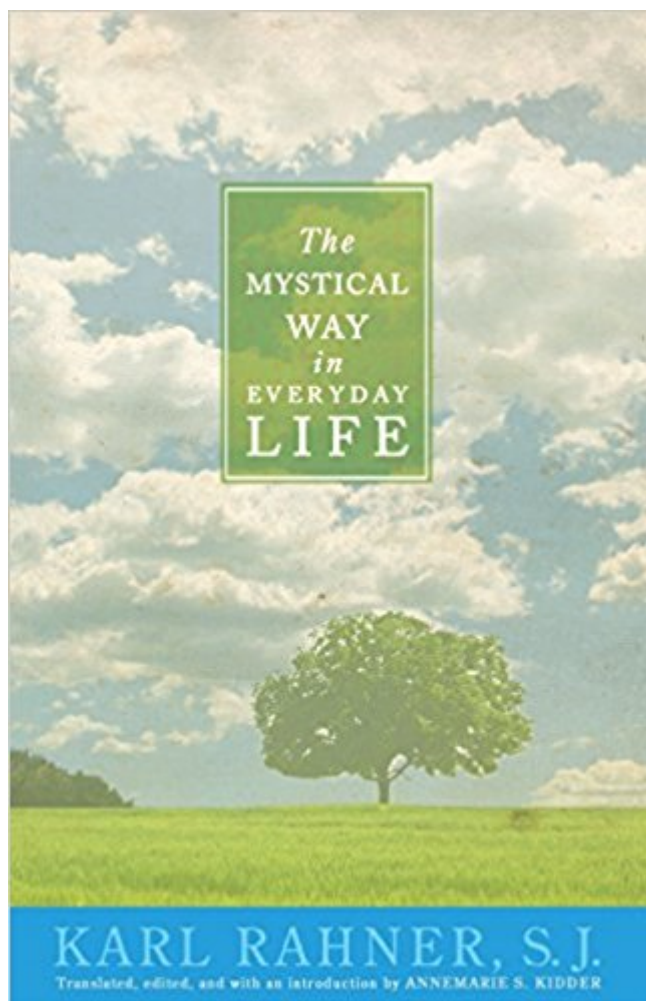


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The Mystical Way In Everyday Life



Synopsis

Karl Rahner, a Jesuit Priest who died in 1984, is widely regarded as one of the most influential Catholic theologians of the 20th century. His writings played an enormous role in shaping the documents of Vatican II. But while he is best known for his academic theology, his deepest goal was to help ordinary Christians to recognize and respond to the presence of grace in their everyday lives. Rahner famously observed that the Christians of the future will be mystics or there will be no Christianity. With readings for Advent, Lent, and the other liturgical seasons, these sermons, prayers, and reflections offer spiritual nourishment for the whole year.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In recent years the writings of Father Karl Rahner, SJ, renowned Jesuit theologian of the 20th century have continued to be explored. With this book Annemarie Kidder has made available some which are not well known in English but which reinforce his reputation as a profound and even poetic writer focusing on the spiritual life. They also respond to what has come to be more in demand now, exploration of the experience of God in everyday life, that is, mystical experience. Rahner, known for his deep and sometimes not-easy-to-follow probings in systematic theology, had always viewed himself as a pastoral theologian, one who saw theology as a servant to spirituality and indeed, from those who knew or encountered him, ultimately to give expression to his own deeply held beliefs. Having known Rahner as a professor and as a preacher I never felt there was a dichotomy between his theological thought and the practice of the spiritual life. It was

evident then and was reinforced later by reading again and again what have become recognized, as Kidder points out, his two seminal works on prayer, "Encounters with Silence" and "The Need and the Blessing of Prayer." Kidder has done us an immense service in making the sermons, essays and talks available in English, most of which Lehman first assembled for publication when he was an assistant to Rahner. Her extensive introduction clearly explains their context in his life, even for a contemporary reader not especially familiar with current or classic spirituality and mysticism. As Lehmann states in his foreword, "these texts are still--or, better yet, are especially today--of the greatest importance, fresh, and hence so very relevant. Rahner's prayers, as in all writings that honestly portray human experience, can easily be appropriated as our own. Seamlessly they incorporate gospel and other scripture passages, teachings of the Church and wisdom found in tradition and contemporary thought. And they are easy to follow, especially for the believing Christian. His initial audiences for what became his classic works on prayer were struggling in a pre and post-war Germany with profound faith and moral issues and devastating human conditions. So too we in our unsettled times can be enriched, moved and sustained by the simple yet profound reflections and prayers included in this book. Rahner presents both numerous feasts of the church year and many everyday events such as work, walking, laughter and song. He does so in a way that can lead the reader to understand and reflect more deeply on how they can lead to a deeper relationship with God. His reflections on the saints, especially St Thomas Aquinas and St. Ignatius of Loyola, seem to describe how he himself strived to live, as a theologian in awe of the mystery of God and as a loyal follower of Ignatius. Of Thomas he states, "Thomas has made his theology his spiritual life and his spiritual life is his theology. In him there does not yet exist the horrible gap often found in subsequent theological thought between theology and the spiritual life." And in his description of Thomas as a mystic he provides what could well be Rahner's own life objective when he says, "we should practice in our lives to attain to this final experience, where people fall silent and turn off all lights in order to allow God to speak and allow his light alone to shine." For me Kidder's translation of Rahner's writings did what she intimated it would do, "stimulate the urgency in one's search for an intimate God experience. And they offer concrete guidance in how to undertake the Christian pilgrimage in everyday life."

Beautiful piece of work! A rare book by the great XX century theologian Karl Rahner, and a classic in catholic mystical theology and spirituality. I recommend it for every catholic that want to take his theological knowledge to a new level!

I have the same reflections on Karl Rahner in reviewing his book Encounters With Silence. He speaks to the experience of everyday life. Thank you, Diane

Good Book

The body of the work involves translations of Rahner's publications. The introduction is an interesting summary of Rahnerian thought and life. The text editor is a German-born Presbyterian pastor living in Michigan, so she is able to give a fresh look at Rahner compared to those by American and British-born authors. The text is highly recommended as an intermediate level orientation in getting to know Karl Rahner.

Wonderful book

It's too soon for a review as I am reading the other Rahner purchase. I give it five stars because I know and appreciate Rahner's works.

Don't be put off by the Advent chapters that start the book, it gets great after that. Rahner is an inspiration for those who know that God is With Us. His thought is soaked with that realization, and he explains some of the implications of that reality. I can see why his work has influenced so much of the church. Rahner famously said that, "The devout Christian of the future will either be a mystic, one who has experienced something, or he will cease to be anything at all." He shows how God is in the middle of everyday life as a source of joy and peace.

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