

Everyday Sacred



Everyday Sacred: Meditations and Paintings to Inspire Reflection and Prayer

by Clarence Heller

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110 pages

Reviewed by Bobbie Bonk

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then when spiritual directees find themselves without words or are drawn to creative expression, they can follow and expand on Clarence Heller's example and paint, watercolor, sketch, cut out shapes, or play with color using paper, fabric, or nature to manifest God's abiding presence. How often does a spiritual director ask the question, "How and where is God in this experience?" Art can reveal untapped ways of discovering answers and insight. Heller offers many expressions of wisdom and invitations for contemplation between the covers of *Everyday Sacred: Meditations and Paintings to Inspire Reflection and Prayer*. His works of art, created by using his "non-dominant hand and fingerpaints" (xi), are bright, bold, colorful expressions of the way that God moves in his life. They draw the observer in to discover the depths of his soul, which he shares with spiritual power and vulnerability.

His poem *How Often* speaks truthfully to any spiritual directee who is willing to listen: "How often / the person God / is most inviting / us to love / is ourselves" (35). Who is this God who wants us to love ourselves? Heller speaks to a "mysterious God" (28), a "glorious God" (24) who beams with delight at what God has done and is doing (24), a "God who gives us a taste of heaven" (40), and "the Mother Father God" (45). He relates putting a hand over the heart in order to hear the pulsing of God's "I love you" again and again (25). It takes a spiritual directee willing to feel her own heart beat and a spiritual director with keen listening skills and an open spirit to not only recognize but also celebrate the profound, passionate love experience that God

offers. Heller's poetry touches those deeply rooted places within us and begs the reader to sit and be still with the words, the emotions, and the possibility that remain hidden yet willing to be revealed. His poems flow into the soul and spring forth with a refreshed knowing that becomes prayer.

Everyday Sacred uses the very stuff of our ordinary lives and acknowledges the Sacred is manifest in nature, home, family, Jesus, holy communion, church, and living in the present moment—the chapters of the book. Heller's work is conveyed with humility and holy words, both of which are essential to the process of spiritual direction and formation. Only in that place of humility can both the spiritual director and directee hear the sacred whispering of the Holy Spirit.

Bobbie Bonk, MA, is a spiritual director and retreat facilitator living in Fort Collins, Colorado, USA. Through additional training in workshops for adult survivors of childhood abuse led by Mary's Hope and advanced certification in "Soul Healing for the Spiritual Director," she has enhanced her spiritual direction training from The Center for Spirituality at Work in Denver, Colorado.