



Virtuous Magic: Women Saints and Their Meanings

Sara Maitland, Wendy Mulford

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Ideas of holiness continue to haunt us even in this secular age. Too often banished from rational discourse, these ideas lurk like shadows in the imagination. In *Virtuous Magic*, a novelist and a poet describe the lives and legends of 45 holy women from the beginnings of Christianity until today, from Martha of Bethany and Mary Magdalene to Edith Stein, Dorothy Day, and the women religious and poverty workers martyred in El Salvador in 1980. The focus is on women in three areas: the arts of healing, the exercise of power, and the practice of mysticism. Playfully exploring the complex relationship between historical fact and spiritual truth, the authors employ poetry and fiction as well as historical narrative and the local records of cult centers to explore the many "meanings" of female sanctity. Intended as a book for browsing as well as for continuous reading, *Virtuous Magic* is for pilgrims, feminists, ordinary Christians, and anyone who has ever wondered about the strange magic exerted by saints throughout Christian history. Contents include: Veronica -- Bernadette of Lourdes -- Clare of Assisi -- Catherine of Sienna -- Katherine of Alexandria -- Empress Helena -- Brigit of Kildare -- Bridget of Sweden -- Hildegard of Bingen -- Wendreda -- Wilgefortis -- Rose of Lima -- Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz -- Margaret Clitherow -- Josephine Butler -- Amanda Berry Smith -- Julian of Norwich -- Teresa of Avila -- Godiva of Coventry

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