



Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God

Meletios Webber

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God

Meletios Webber

Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God Meletios Webber

Worry, despair, insecurity, fear of death ... these are our daily companions, and even though we attempt to ignore them or try to crowd them out, they are there, waiting for us in our quieter moments. It is precisely where we hurt most that the experience of the Orthodox Church has much to offer. The remedy is not any simple admonitions to fight the good fight, cheer up, or think positively. Rather, the Orthodox method is to change the way we look at the human person (starting with ourselves). Orthodoxy shows us how to be transformed by the renewing of our mind--a process that is aided by participation in the traditional ascetic practices and Mysteries of the Church. In this unique and accessible book, Archimandrite Meletios Webber first explores the role of mystery in the Christian life, then walks the reader through the seven major Mysteries (or sacraments) of the Orthodox Church, showing the way to a richer, fuller life in Christ.

Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God Details

Date : Published October 1st 2007 by Conciliar Press

ISBN : 9781888212914

Author : Meletios Webber

Format : Paperback 195 pages

Genre : Religion, Theology, Spirituality

 [Download Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experi ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Expe ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God Meletios Webber

From Reader Review Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God for online ebook

Deborah says

I read this book as part of a book group that met every week for discussion so I am sure my five star rating reflects this as it has given me a lot to think about. The book itself is very good and challenges the way we think about our relationship with God and with one another by giving practical insights on how we can more deeply experience the life and sacraments of the Orthodox Church.

Angela Carlson says

This was a great foundational book for me while a catechumen. Met Webber has a way of explaining that is both informative and engaging. I'd recommend to anyone with questions about Orthodoxy.

Ian says

A very good book, but the first half I think was better than the second - he seemed to run out of steam and his writing kind of dried out there.

Still very worth a read especially for the first half.

Debbi says

I found this book to be even better the 2nd time around. I did struggle a bit in the first chapter, but listening to a lecture by Archimandrite Meletios on the Mind and Heart helped quite a bit. Like other reviewers, I found Part 1 to be much more insightful and helpful than Part 2 (although there were new things to learn there as well). I think I would benefit from a re-reading of Part 1 on an occasional basis.

Cameron says

First half of the book was very helpful in identifying the problem the modern person faces in prayer-- distraction, the mind being divorced from the heart, lack of askesis. I found the latter half less helpful but the psychological insight in the former is worth a lot.

Volkert says

Bread & Water, Wine &, Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God, by Archimandrite Meletios Webber

This is a significant book, one that could only be written by someone who has not only studied, but lived the Orthodox Christian faith for more than 35 years. I purchased my copy of "Bread & Water, Wine & Oil" in 2008 at the monastery in northern California where, less than a year later, Archimandrite Meletios would be installed as abbot. This says something about the respect that the Orthodox Church has for the ministry of this monk, priest, psychologist and author, who replaced the founding abbot after his elevation as Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America.

I first encountered the work of Archimandrite Meletios when I read his excellent examination of the Twelve Steps (Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.) entitled "Steps of Transformation." Shortly after reading that book several years ago, I had the opportunity to hear him speak at a local retreat.

What makes this book significant is that the author shows how God can use very ordinary, but essential, elements such as bread, water, wine and oil, not to mention fallible human beings, in order to draw us into his presence in a profound way. This book is all about getting out of the head and into the heart, which is what the great mystical writers have been pointing to throughout Christian history.

It is not surprising that this volume was published by Conciliar Press, well known for producing materials by, about and for converts to the Orthodox Christian faith. Many of us converts studied our way into the faith, examining things like Church history, theology and the Scriptures to find our way "home." What sets this volume apart is that the author moves us from the head knowledge into the heart.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, "Life is a Mystery," discusses the mind, heart, mystery, our relationship with God, distraction and prayer, making a sanctified effort, the sanctification of time, sacred places, and icons and the incarnation. The second part, "The Mysteries of the Church," discusses the Mysteries (often called "the sacraments") including birth and baptism, chrismation, Holy Communion, confession and forgiveness, anointing of the sick, marriage and ordination.

The first section alone is worth the purchase price of the book, and shows clearly how an Orthodox Christian mindset (or rather "heart") is different in many ways from what we may have learned in Western Christianity. At first I had trouble seeing how the second part of the book connected to the first, but in the end it works together beautifully.

I highly recommend this book to my fellow converts to the Orthodox Christian faith, as well as to inquirers, catechumens and others who would be interested in looking past the outward trappings of Orthodoxy to see how a relationship with God in this context can transform the heart.

I'll close with a quote from the last paragraph of the book, which more or less summarizes what it's all about:

"It is worth remembering that it is the act of seeking the place of the heart which is our goal, our highest aspiration, not the actual finding of it. It is the journey, not the destination, which is of utmost importance."
(July 28, 2009.)

Stephanie says

very simple, helpful book both as an introduction to orthodoxy and as encouragement in the spiritual life. I found the first part very helpful, he gives a great explanation of the dichotomy between mind and heart and their intended union. I'm glad to have read it, it named for me many things I have experienced and lent a perspective I will remember often.

Tiffany says

So far, this book is one of the most simple and powerful books I have ever had the privilege to read. It has really blown my mind. To me, it "de-robos" all of the pre-suppositions about "religion," showing how pure, pure religion can be. Orthodoxy. It's not about rules, it is about freedom. This book created the first understanding for me the relationship among the Father, the Son and The Holy Spirit. It speaks of God's efforts to create relationship with us. It is relevant, insightful, as if written from another, totally clear realm of understanding.

ShareStories says

Bread & Water, Wine & Oil--An Orthodox Christian Experience of God by Archimandrite Meletios Webber is an excellent introduction to Eastern Christian spirituality. Archimandrite Webber writes in a way that is inspiring, clear and respectful.

Part I: Life as Mystery lays the groundwork for understanding the Orthodox approach to God and our relationship to God. It does an excellent job of explaining the difference between the "mind" (feelings and logic) and the "heart" (where God dwells), who God is and how we can really know Him (as opposed to what we *think* we know about Him), as well as specifics of fasting, prayer and icons.

Part II gets into the Divine Mysteries (sacraments) themselves, examining the specifics of how they are done and why.

This is a book that will be read again and again, dog-eared and highlighted beyond recognition.

David Gwartney says

In *Bread & Water, Wine & Oil*, the author Meletios Webber gives an overview of Orthodox belief and practice. The first half of the book delves into the "mystery" of Orthodox belief, explaining that this word "mystery ... lies at the heart of the Eastern Orthodox experience of God." Chapter 1 is one of the best explanations I have read regarding the battle within the human mind and the "fragmentation" we all experience between our mind and heart. "Apart from anything else, the mind uses noise constantly to reassure itself of its own existence. The language of the heart, on the other hand, is silence." This sets the tone for the rest of first part of the book, the joining of the heart to God's Spirit. "Mystery is the space where we meet God."

While not nearly as challenging as the first part of the book, part two gives a nice overview of the practices of the Orthodox Church. Overall, this was a good introduction to Orthodox theology. I wish I would have found a book like this a couple of years ago! The first chapter is worth a read all by itself.

Johns says

Here's a prescient quote from page 22: "In fallen humanity [that would be ALL of us!] the mind and the heart have been alienated from each other. The mind has started to function on its own, separated from the heart. It actually has the audacity to set up shop on its own and start behaving as if it has a life on its own. This is where the problems start. The mind is very good and valuable as a tool, but it does not have strength of character to be independent." The author, who has an earned PhD in psychology, goes on to explain the Eastern understanding of the heart (Greek term: nous.) Other than the Bible, this is the most valuable Christian book I have read this year.

Jackie Dean says

Great book for all Christians, not just Orthodox. very informative.

I recommend this book for all who love Jesus and want to know more about the sacraments and the liturgy. It was nice to find out that all people have "fractured minds", and not just me, and what we can do about it. Jesus Prayer really helps!

Courtney says

A great read and very helpful in explaining to me the path of my spiritual journey. I found that not all the chapters in the second part held my entire interest, but overall, an extremely informative book. I also greatly appreciated the reminder in the postscript that it is about the journey to the heart that should be our goal, not the actual attainment of the heart.

Christopher says

In BREAD & WATER, WINE & OIL Father Meletios Webber offers an explanation of aspects of Orthodox faith that benefits from his individual experiences. An English convert to Orthodoxy, Fr Meletios also has training as a psychologist. Initially Fr Meletios both applies psychological concepts to the Orthodox faith, which we modern people might swiftly understand, and sets the secular science of psychology in harmony with the teaching of the Church Fathers. He draws a distinction between the "mind", our ways of thinking which can only distract us from religious faith, and the "heart" (his translation of Greek nous), a human being's deeper insight. Orthodox practice, Fr. Meletios explains, is directed towards nourishing the heart, creating nothing less than a relationship with God, and its rich symbolism of bread and water, wine and oil serve that end. Part I clarifies issues of prayer, fasting (why and how do we fast?), the use of icons, and the church building. In Part II, each of the Orthodox sacraments receives its own chapter. Fr. Meletios walks through the steps of the church's ceremonies surrounding these, explaining the equally vital but distinct roles of both clergy and people in each. For converts coming from denominations without a sacramental tradition, this will prove very helpful to understanding what all is going on in church.

As a catechumen in the Orthodox Church with training in Classical Greek and an academic bent, I've read dozens of books on Orthodox practice written in specialist terminology and abundantly footnoted. But few books have impressed me as much as Fr. Meletios' work here, which casts greater light on Orthodoxy for the

Western convert with the most simple of tones. If you want a gentle and friendly--but still rigorous and spiritually challenging--introduction to the Orthodox faith, but find Frederica Matthewes-Green's books too cutesy (and nothing against Matushka, she focuses on her own important demographic), Fr. Meletios Webber's book is well worth reading.

Donna says

This book is one of the most valuable of Christian literature I have read. It has enhanced my belief and worship of the Trinity. In fact, I have twelve index cards of notes for future reflection.

I wanted to understand a Greek Orthodox perspective to the challenges of a faith journey to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. I discovered, I think, the essence of the Orthodox Church's way is to learn "to quiet our thoughts so that there is even the possibility of learning to use our hearts... [which] is a full and profound experience of being, and a deep awareness of God".

Archimandrite Meletios Webber, a respected convert to The Orthodox Church explains that staying in "the present moment is the only moment that is, in any sense, real. Moreover, in spiritual terms, the present moment is the only possible occasion in which we can meet God (or anyone else)." p.20.
