

# Essence of Prayer (Hiddenspring)

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Prayer is a word we take for granted. Ought we to do so? What do we mean by prayer? What does the word mean in the Christian context? Almost always when we talk about prayer we refer to something we do. From that standpoint, questions problems, confusion, discouragement and illusions multiply. For Ruth Burrows it is essential to correct this view. Our Christian knowledge assures us that prayer is essentially what God does, how God addresses us, looks at us. And what God is doing for us is giving us the Divine Self in love. What then is the core of the central message of the revelation of Jesus? It is the unconditional love of God for us, for each one of us. God the unutterable, incomprehensible Mystery, the Reality of all reality, the Life of all Life. And this means that divine Love desires to communicate its Holy Self to us. This is the richness of the vision of a contemplative nun who contradicts the heresy of so much modern writing about the spiritual life--namely that we reach God by running faster. The growing fascination for the public of the contemplative and monastic life is evidence of the profound appeal of this approach. For this there is a real hunger. At its simplest we do not look for success so as to be assured that we do believe. We give ourselves over completely to divine love. Ultimately, we live for God and not for ourselves.

Ruth Burrows is a Carmelite nun in Britain. 'Ruth Burrows, the experienced Carmelite writer: hard-headed, warm-hearted, helpful and positive about God's universal invitation to prayer.' ~ The Tablet, 22nd July 2006 (Christopher Howse The American Spectator)

'This is a book that should change lives. Its central message is that everyone can pray...Essence of Prayer is a collection of short essays on prayer..Surprisingly, this structure works better than a book hammered out to a continuous shape, because there is a chance to avoid misunderstanding by coming at a subject from a different angle.' ~ 16/09/2006 (Christopher Howse The American Spectator)

'It is useful as spiritual reading that will help the prayer and Christian lives of men and women living in the world. For that, it can be recommended.' ~ Prebendary John Gaskell, Church Times, 10/11/2006 (John Gaskell Church Times)

'a valuable contribution to the vast array of books offering advice and encouragement to Christians on the subject of prayer. This book is full of insights...Ruth Burrows...reflections are thought-provoking and described with encouragement and simplicity.' ~ John Mann, Church of Ireland Gazette, February 2007 (John Mann)

"The person who has most clearly written about this area in our own times is

**Ruth Burrows**

in books such as Essence of Prayer" (Christopher Howse The American Spectator)

'Here is a major contribution from the pen of a well-known writer on spiritual themes...An impressive offering...different from her earlier works, and well worth a little study.' Elizabeth CSF, Franciscan (Elizabeth CSF, Franciscan, January 2008)

'Essence of Prayer is a good introduction to the chief labour of Carmel.' (The Daily Telegraph)

'a genuine attempt to introduce the theory and practice of prayer to the uninitiated, in language that is accessible to all men and women.' Mount Carmel, July 2010

"The book has been written by one who clearly lives every word she writes. As Wendy Beckett says in her Foreword: 'to read Ruth Burrows...is to take into your mind and heart the insight of somebody who is close to God, and has the rare ability to share that closeness with others. God has given her great gifts, and she has opened herself to receive them' (p. vii). In this lies her appeal. Teresa of Avila wrote from her own experience. Ruth Burrows, too, writes from her own experience, albeit different from Teresa's. So she too writes with authority-and it shows! I especially appreciate how in this volume great care has been taken with the use of language, which is inclusive both as regards God and ourselves."  
-Elizabeth Ruth Obbard, Mount Carmel, July-Sept. 2010

'Ruth Burrows, the experienced Carmelite writer: hard-headed, warm-hearted, helpful and positive about God's universal invitation to prayer.'~ The Tablet, 22nd July 2006 (Sanford Lakoff The American Spectator)

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