

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world

Barbara Brown Taylor *An Altar in the World: Discovering Sacredness in Everyday Life*

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world is more than just the title of a widely acclaimed book; it's an invitation to see the sacred beyond traditional religious walls. In this beautifully written work, Barbara Brown Taylor challenges readers to find spirituality not just in churches or formal rituals, but in the very fabric of daily living. Her reflections inspire a fresh perspective on faith, one that blends the ordinary with the profound.

If you've ever wondered how to integrate spirituality seamlessly into your routine or what it means to create altars outside of physical church spaces, Barbara Brown Taylor offers thoughtful insights that resonate deeply. Let's explore the essence of **An Altar in the World**, its themes, and why it continues to impact readers searching for connection and meaning in the everyday.

Barbara Brown Taylor and the Essence of An Altar in the World

Barbara Brown Taylor is an Episcopal priest, theologian, and gifted storyteller known for her accessible approach to spirituality. In **An Altar in the World**, she invites readers to recognize that places and moments in our daily lives can serve as altars—holy spaces—where we encounter the divine.

This book is less about formal theology and more about practical spirituality. Taylor's writing encourages readers to slow down, pay attention, and discover the sacred in the mundane. Whether it's a quiet moment in the garden, the rhythm of walking, or the simple act of cooking, these everyday activities become opportunities to connect with something larger than ourselves.

Finding Sacred Spaces Beyond the Church

One of the central themes in **An Altar in the World** is the idea that altars aren't confined to church buildings. Taylor suggests that any place can become an altar if we approach it with mindfulness and reverence. This shift in perspective helps people who may feel disconnected from traditional religious institutions or who seek spirituality in a more personal, grounded way.

Taylor writes about how altars can be found in nature, at home, or even in the act of serving others. By identifying these sacred spaces, we can cultivate a sense of constant spiritual awareness, making faith a lived experience rather than a once-a-week event.

Key Themes Explored in An Altar in the World

An Altar in the World touches on several profound themes that invite reflection and practical

application. Here are some of the core ideas Taylor explores:

1. The Sacredness of Ordinary Life

Barbara Brown Taylor beautifully conveys that holiness is not only found in grand gestures or religious ceremonies but in the ordinary moments of life. She encourages readers to look closely—whether it's the feel of sunlight on their skin or the sound of rain—as these moments can become touchpoints for experiencing grace.

2. Spiritual Practices Rooted in Daily Activities

Taylor highlights simple spiritual disciplines that anyone can adopt, such as walking, eating, or even cleaning. These activities, when done with intention, become acts of worship that ground us in the present moment and deepen our awareness of the divine.

3. The Importance of Attention and Presence

A recurring message in the book is the power of paying attention. In a world full of distractions, Taylor urges readers to cultivate presence so they can recognize the sacred that is always around them. This mindful awareness is a key step toward building personal altars in the world.

4. The Role of Community and Relationships

While much of *An Altar in the World* focuses on individual experience, Taylor also acknowledges that relationships can be altars too. Interactions with others—marked by kindness, listening, and compassion—create spaces where the divine is encountered.

Why Barbara Brown Taylor's Approach Resonates Today

In an age where many feel disconnected from institutional religion, *An Altar in the World* offers a refreshing and inclusive approach to spirituality. Taylor doesn't demand adherence to a rigid belief system; instead, she opens the door for people of all backgrounds to explore faith in their own way.

Her writing style is warm, poetic, and deeply human, which makes complex theological ideas accessible and relatable. Readers appreciate how she bridges the gap between traditional Christian thought and contemporary spiritual longing.

Spiritual Ecology: Connecting Faith and Nature

Taylor's reflections often intertwine spirituality with the natural world, making **An Altar in the World** a favorite among those interested in spiritual ecology. She reminds us that nature itself is a living altar, a place where God's presence can be felt intimately. This perspective encourages environmental stewardship rooted in reverence, not just obligation.

Practical Tips from An Altar in the World

If you're inspired by Barbara Brown Taylor's ideas and want to create your own altars in daily life, here are some practical tips drawn from the book's wisdom:

- **Choose a physical space:** Dedicate a small corner in your home for reflection—a place with objects that inspire you, such as candles, stones, or plants.
- **Practice mindful walking:** Use ordinary walks as opportunities to notice the world around you and cultivate gratitude.
- **Engage in simple rituals:** Whether it's lighting a candle before a meal or pausing to breathe deeply, rituals anchor your awareness in the present.
- **Serve others intentionally:** Acts of kindness and service can become spiritual altars by focusing your heart on connection and love.
- **Keep a journal:** Record moments when you felt touched by grace or noticed something sacred, helping you recognize patterns in your spiritual life.

Barbara Brown Taylor's Impact on Modern Spirituality

Since its publication, **An Altar in the World** has influenced countless readers, spiritual leaders, and seekers. It is often recommended in spiritual formation classes, book clubs, and contemplative circles. Its impact lies in shifting the conversation about where and how we experience God.

By democratizing spirituality—removing it from the exclusive realm of churches and formal worship—Taylor empowers readers to live with greater awareness and intentionality. This has made her work particularly meaningful for those navigating faith in a pluralistic and fast-paced world.

Beyond the Book: Taylor's Broader Work

While **An Altar in the World** remains a seminal work, Barbara Brown Taylor has authored several other books that complement its themes. Works such as **Learning to Walk in the Dark** and **Holy*

Envy* continue to explore spiritual curiosity, doubt, and the beauty of diverse religious experiences.

For readers who connect deeply with **An Altar in the World**, these related titles offer a rich well of insight and encouragement to further their spiritual journey.

Barbara Brown Taylor's **An Altar in the World** invites us to see the sacred in places we might least expect—our homes, neighborhoods, and even within ourselves. It's a reminder that spirituality isn't confined to a building or a book but is woven into the very act of living attentively and lovingly. By embracing her invitation, we can begin to build altars in the world that nurture our souls and connect us to the divine presence in every moment.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Barbara Brown Taylor, the author of 'An Altar in the World'?

Barbara Brown Taylor is an Episcopal priest, theologian, and author known for her writings on spirituality and faith. She has taught at various seminaries and is celebrated for her accessible and poetic approach to Christian spirituality.

What is the main theme of 'An Altar in the World' by Barbara Brown Taylor?

'An Altar in the World' explores the idea that sacredness can be found in everyday life and ordinary places. Taylor encourages readers to discover God's presence beyond traditional church settings, turning the world into a sacred altar.

How does Barbara Brown Taylor define an 'altar' in 'An Altar in the World'?

In the book, Taylor defines an altar not just as a physical structure in a church but as any place or practice where people encounter the divine and offer their attention and gratitude, transforming everyday moments into acts of worship.

What practical practices does 'An Altar in the World' suggest for experiencing spirituality daily?

Taylor suggests simple practices such as walking, cooking, working, or paying attention to nature as ways to create altars in daily life. These practices help cultivate mindfulness and recognize the sacredness in the mundane.

Why is 'An Altar in the World' considered relevant for modern spiritual seekers?

The book is relevant because it speaks to those who may feel disconnected from traditional religious institutions but still seek a meaningful spiritual life. It offers an inclusive and accessible approach to finding holiness in everyday experiences.

Has 'An Altar in the World' influenced contemporary Christian spirituality?

Yes, 'An Altar in the World' has been influential in encouraging a broader understanding of spirituality. It has inspired many to integrate faith with daily life and to see the divine in ordinary places, impacting both individual practice and church teachings.

Additional Resources

Barbara Brown Taylor's **An Altar in the World**: Exploring Sacredness in Everyday Life

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world is a phrase that resonates deeply within contemporary spiritual discourse, capturing the essence of Taylor's influential work that challenges traditional notions of sacred spaces. In her book **An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith**, Taylor invites readers to discover the divine not just within church walls but in the ordinary, often overlooked moments and places of daily existence. This exploration has garnered widespread attention in theological circles, spiritual communities, and among readers seeking a more embodied, accessible spirituality.

Barbara Brown Taylor, an Episcopal priest and professor, is renowned for her eloquent writing and thoughtful reflections on faith and practice. Her work bridges academic theology and practical spirituality, making complex ideas approachable while maintaining intellectual rigor. **An Altar in the World** exemplifies this balance, offering a nuanced investigation into how sacredness can be integrated into everyday life. As such, this book is frequently referenced in discussions about modern spirituality, mindfulness, and the evolving landscape of religious experience.

Understanding **An Altar in the World**: A Theological Overview

At its core, **An Altar in the World** is a meditation on presence and attentiveness. Taylor posits that an altar is not confined to a physical structure but can be any place where one encounters the sacred. This theological premise challenges the traditional Christian emphasis on church as the sole locus of worship, opening up a broader, more inclusive understanding of faith practice.

The book is structured around the idea of "altars" as metaphorical spaces where people can cultivate awareness of the divine through ordinary activities. Taylor draws from multiple religious traditions, including Christianity, Buddhism, and indigenous spirituality, highlighting the universality of seeking sacredness in daily life. This interfaith sensitivity enriches the text, making it

a valuable resource for readers from diverse backgrounds.

Key Themes and Concepts in Taylor's Work

One of the central themes of *An Altar in the World* is the relationship between spirituality and place. Taylor emphasizes that recognizing sacredness in the world requires a shift in perception—a deliberate act of seeing the extraordinary within the ordinary. She writes about “learning to be lost” as a metaphor for embracing uncertainty and mystery, which contrasts with the modern impulse toward control and certainty.

Another important concept is the practice of mindfulness. Long before mindfulness became a popular secular trend, Taylor's reflections underscored the spiritual significance of paying attention to the present moment. Through practices such as walking, eating, or resting, individuals can create “altars” where they connect with God and with themselves in meaningful ways.

Taylor also addresses the tension between action and contemplation. *An Altar in the World* advocates for a balanced spirituality that honors both doing and being. This dual approach resonates with contemporary readers who seek to integrate faith into the busyness of modern life without sacrificing depth or authenticity.

Comparing *An Altar in the World* with Other Spiritual Texts

In the realm of spiritual literature, Barbara Brown Taylor's *An Altar in the World* stands alongside other influential works that explore everyday spirituality, such as Richard Rohr's *Falling Upward* and Parker Palmer's *Let Your Life Speak*. However, Taylor's distinctive focus on the physicality of place and the idea of altars as everyday encounters with the sacred sets her apart.

Unlike some books that emphasize doctrinal instruction or theological abstraction, *An Altar in the World* is deeply experiential. Taylor's prose invites readers into a lived spirituality that is accessible to both believers and seekers. This feature broadens the book's appeal beyond traditional Christian audiences, making it relevant in interfaith and secular contexts.

Additionally, Taylor's background as a former parish priest who chose to leave full-time ministry adds a layer of authenticity and vulnerability to her reflections. Her personal journey informs the text, providing insights into the challenges of sustaining faith amid institutional change and personal transformation.

Pros and Cons of Taylor's Approach

- **Pros:**

- Accessible language that bridges academic and popular spirituality.

- Inclusive perspective that incorporates insights from various religious traditions.
- Encourages practical applications of spirituality in everyday life.
- Challenges conventional boundaries of sacred spaces.

• **Cons:**

- Some readers seeking traditional orthodox theology may find the approach too broad or non-dogmatic.
- Occasional abstractness in metaphors may require careful reading to fully grasp.
- Less focus on systematic theological argumentation may limit appeal to scholars seeking rigorous doctrinal analysis.

The Impact of *An Altar in the World* on Contemporary Spiritual Practice

Since its publication, *An Altar in the World* has influenced a wide range of spiritual practitioners, educators, and religious leaders. Its call to find holiness in the mundane resonates strongly in an era where many feel disconnected from traditional religious institutions but still yearn for meaningful spiritual engagement.

The book's emphasis on embodiment and attentiveness aligns with growing interest in mindfulness and contemplative practices within both religious and secular communities. Taylor's work encourages readers to slow down, notice their surroundings, and discover spiritual significance in simple acts such as walking in nature or preparing a meal.

Moreover, *An Altar in the World* has contributed to conversations about environmental spirituality and the ethics of place. By framing the world itself as an altar, Taylor invites a renewed respect for the environment as a sacred space, thus intersecting with contemporary ecological concerns.

Barbara Brown Taylor's Legacy and Continuing Relevance

Barbara Brown Taylor remains a vital voice in modern spirituality, and *An Altar in the World* continues to be a go-to text for those exploring faith beyond institutional settings. Her ability to articulate a spirituality that is both profound and practical ensures the book's ongoing relevance.

Educational programs, spiritual retreats, and church study groups frequently incorporate *An Altar in the World* into their curricula, testament to its enduring appeal. The book's invitation to notice

the sacred in everyday life encourages a democratization of spiritual experience, empowering individuals to create altars wherever they may be.

In sum, *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor is more than just a book; it's a guide for reimagining the relationship between faith and daily living. Its insights continue to inspire readers to seek and recognize the divine presence woven through the fabric of the world around them.

Barbara Brown Taylor An Altar In The World

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barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: An Altar in the World Barbara Brown Taylor, 2017-03-31 In this highly acclaimed and lyrical modern classic, bestselling author Barbara Brown Taylor reveals the countless ways we can discover divine depths in the small things we do and see every day. While people will often go to extraordinary lengths in search of a 'spiritual experience', she shows that the stuff of our everyday lives is a holy ground where we can encounter God at every turn. For her, as for Jacob in the Genesis story, even barren, empty deserts can become the house of God and the gate of heaven, places where a ladder of angels connects heaven to earth and earth to heaven. *An Altar in the World* reveals concrete ways to discover the sacred in such ordinary occurrences as hanging out the washing, doing the supermarket shop, feeding an animal, or losing our way. It will transform our understanding of ourselves and the world we live in, and renew our sense of wonder at the extraordinary gift of life.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: An Altar in the World Barbara Brown Taylor, 2009-10-06 In the New York Times bestseller *An Altar in the World*, acclaimed author Barbara Brown Taylor continues her spiritual journey by building upon where she left off in *Leaving Church*. With the honesty of Elizabeth Gilbert (*Eat, Pray, Love*) and the spiritual depth of Anne Lamott (*Grace, Eventually*), Taylor shares how she learned to find God beyond the church walls by embracing the sacred as a natural part of everyday life. In *An Altar in the World*, Taylor shows us how to discover altars everywhere we go and in nearly everything we do as we learn to live with purpose, pay attention, slow down, and revere the world we live in. The eBook includes a special excerpt from Barbara Brown Taylor's *Learning to Walk in the Dark*.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: The World as Sacrament Michael Plekon, 2017 Not a few figures--writers, poets, activists, teachers--have focused on the presence of the Holy One in the ordinary, on the many possibilities of worldly spirituality. In this book, pastor, teacher, and theologian Michael Plekon introduces us to several persons of faith from both the Western and Eastern Church traditions to illumine God's presence in everyday living: the world as sacrament. In this discovery of liturgy and life entwined, Plekon shows how these lives, and our own lives, are texts about looking for and following God in everyday existence.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: Twelve Great Spiritual Writers Liz Hoare, 2020-01-16 Liz Hoare's list of twelve great spiritual writers includes famous and lesser known women whose writings have touched her heart, illuminated her mind, and sharpened her spiritual vision. Liz believes they can do the same for you - which is why she has written this book. Each of these great writers - novelists, poets, preachers, philosophers and theologians - contributes something special to our understanding of the spiritual life today. With key extracts from each writer's best-loved books, and with suggestions for personal reflection or group discussion, here is

an exceptionally rich resource that you will want to return to time and time again, wherever you may be on your journey.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: Warum ich da noch hingehe Christina Schöffler, 2017-08-14 In ihrem zweiten Buch wirft Christina Schöffler eine Frage auf, die viele - nicht nur in ihrer Generation - umtreibt: Warum sollten wir denn da noch hingehen? Kann ich nicht einfach alleine oder mit meinen Freunden Jesus nachfolgen und ab und zu eine Predigt auf Youtube schauen und diesen ganzen komplizierten Anhang mit Gemeinde und Kirche hinter mir lassen? Und doch ertappt sie sich dabei, wie sie leidenschaftlich dafür argumentiert, dass es sich lohnt, bewusst Teil einer Gemeinschaft am Leib Jesu zu sein - selbst wenn es oft mühsam und anstrengend ist. Denn die größte Herausforderung kann zugleich der größte Segen sein.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: Bridging Theory and Practice in Children's Spirituality Zondervan,, 2020-04-21 Bridging Theory and Practice in Children's Spirituality explores the different contexts, methods, and situations that influence and foster a child's spirituality and faith development. Through a blend of theoretical understanding held in tension with practical application, it equips those who are in, or being prepared for, the varied contexts where children are spiritually formed. It represents a broad range of Christian expression writing from a Christ-centered perspective that furthers the conversation about the next steps in children's spirituality and faith development. Moving beyond the basics of faith nurture and what makes for effective ministry, this resource deepens our understanding of the practices in children's lives by bringing together the best of theory and practice and includes contributions from: Dr. Scottie May (Wheaton College) Dr. Kevin Lawson (Biola University) Dr. Erik Carter (Vanderbilt University) John Roberto (Vibrant Faith) Dr. Dana Kennamer Pemberton (Abilene Christian University) Dr. Shirley Morganthaler (Concordia University - Chicago) Dr. Holly Catterton Allen (Lipscomb University) Dr. Robert Keeley (Calvin College and Calvin Seminary) Dr. Mimi Larson (Wheaton College) Lacy Finn Borgo (Renovaré Institute) and others. Pastors, professors, seminary students and children's ministry leaders and practitioners all believe that nurturing a child's spiritual development is important. Yet often they are unsure about which current trends should be embraced. This book will help equip these people with the grounding needed to evaluate trends and with specific suggestions for moving forward. With short, accessibly written chapters it helps pastors and leaders stay up to date with current trends and is an excellent resource for teaching in college and seminary classrooms.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: Learning to Walk in the Dark Barbara Brown Taylor , 2015-06-30 In this long awaited follow-up to the best-selling An Altar in the World, Barbara Brown Taylor explores 'the treasures of darkness' that the Bible speaks about. What can we learn about the ways of God when we cannot see the way ahead, are lost, alone, frightened, not in control or when the world around us seems to have descended into darkness? Contemporary culture throws many brightly lit distractions at us to divert our attention away from the dark, but Barbara Brown Taylor combines her great grace, sensitivity and insight as a writer and priest with the deep wisdom of the biblical and Christian traditions to discover how God is more present to our vulnerable, open night-time selves than to our pre-occupied daylight selves.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: Uncovering Your Path Charles Lattimore Howard, 2025-05-06 From an Ivy-League university chaplain comes a profound collection of spiritual reflections designed for people everywhere, including recent college graduates, looking to find their "way" and their "why." "Who am I?", "What is my purpose?", and "What should I do with my life?" are questions that all of us find ourselves asking at some point or another. In this deeply transformative and lyrical book, Charles Chaz Lattimore Howard offers a helpful guide as we venture to answer these questions for ourselves, inviting us to slow down, to actually walk the journey of life, and to allow our path to reveal itself to us. From an enlightening conversation with a Jain college student about the principle of non-violence to a heartwarming episode coaching basketball to an anxious school-aged child, Chaz shares how everyday moments can help you discern your purpose in the universe. Bolstered with poignant anecdotes that follow Chaz's journey as a

priest, professor, student, parent, spouse, social justice advocate, and religious leader, *Uncovering Your Path* will fill you with renewed vigor, inspire introspection, and encourage you to find your place in God's world.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *Building Bridges* Kendra Weddle, Jann Aldredge-Clanton, 2018-05-03 Letha Dawson Scanzoni changed the landscape of American evangelicalism through her groundbreaking work on the gospel-based intersection of gender and LGBTQ justice. She coauthored two of the first books that support women's equality and LGBTQ rights with the Bible: *All We're Meant to Be* and *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?* In all her work Scanzoni applies the liberating message of Jesus to women and to people who have been marginalized by church and society because of sexual orientation. *Building Bridges* combines an exploration of the life and work of Letha Dawson Scanzoni with stories of people she continues to empower through her writing and the Evangelical & Ecumenical Women's Caucus - Christian Feminism Today, an organization she cofounded. This book illustrates her growing influence as she continues her prophetic collaboration with new generations. In addition, it provides resources for churches as they build bridges for their ministries of liberation, justice, and peace.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *Der Mensch ist da, um gut zu sein* Desmond Tutu, 2010-12-28 Desmond Tutu, neben Nelson Mandela die große Persönlichkeit Südafrikas, hat in seinem bewegten Leben die dunkelsten Seiten der Menschheit kennengelernt. Gerade deshalb gilt er als glaubwürdiger Botschafter der Versöhnung in vielen Konflikten. Dabei wird er oft gefragt, warum er so sicher ist, dass das Gute am Ende triumphieren wird. In diesem Buch gibt er die Antwort: »Wir alle kennen die Grausamkeiten, die Verwundungen und den Hass, der das Leben auf unserem Planeten vergiftet. Meine Tochter und ich haben dieses Buch geschrieben, weil wir wissen, dass die Liste der Verletzungen, die wir Menschen einander zufügen, nicht die ganze Geschichte der Menschheit erzählt. Wir sind in der Tat zu mehr geschaffen – wir sind da, um Gutes zu tun.« Erstmals gewährt Desmond Tutu Einblick in sein spirituelles Leben und erzählt berührende wie aufwühlende Geschichten aus seiner Arbeit als Geistlicher in den Krisengebieten dieser Welt. *Der Mensch ist da, um gut zu sein* von Desmond Tutu: als eBook erhältlich!

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *The Grandparenting Effect* Trevecca Okholm, 2020-07-21 Whatever life gives you and wherever life takes you, there is always a story. Life and relationships all begin and are sustained in the context of a story. This is not a how-to-do-it-right book as much as it is a book of stories--personal stories from the author, biblical stories, and stories of ordinary grandparents and grandchildren who have been willing to share their own stories with which you may be able to identify and be encouraged in your own adventures of grandparenting. This is a book for everyone that either has biological grandchildren or has the potential to influence the lives of non-biological youth and children in the role of grandparenting. This is also a book for churches to consider while planning for ministry to bring generations together in meaningful interactions, and in doing so, to create space for generations to share their stories and share in God's overarching Story of reconciling the world . . . one story at a time.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *Letting the Other Speak* Tracy Hartman, 2011-11-17 From prostitutes to polygamy, witches to widows, foreigners to slaves, the Bible is full of texts about women who have been classified as "other" and pushed to the margins of society. In the academy, feminist, liberation and post-colonial theologians have challenged the disparaging categorization of these biblical women and redefined them as sacred insiders, whose contributions to Judeo-Christian history offer ongoing lessons about the inclusive nature of God. *Letting the Other Speak: Proclaiming the Stories of Biblical Women* helps pastors, Christian educators, professors and theological students bring the stories of six controversial biblical women to congregations by surveying historical and contemporary exegetical work on each passage, modeling exegesis a congregation in preparation for moving from text to sermon, and providing two sample sermons, one prophetic and one pastoral, for each text.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *Pro Ecclesia Vol 26-N2* Pro Ecclesia, Joseph Mangina, Associate Professor of Theology & Director of Advanced Degree Studies, Wycliffe College,

Toronto, 2017-05-19 Pro Ecclesia is a quarterly journal of theology published by the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *The Way of Jesus* Toby Jones, 2010-02-01
Countless books have been written about the impending death of the institutional church, but this one both celebrates the resurrection that will follow and lights the way toward a new kind of spiritual community. *The Way of Jesus* identifies seven principles upon which authentic and vibrant Christian communities can be built in today's diverse and ever shrinking world. Toby Jones traveled across the country, from San Francisco's Glide Memorial Church to New York's Church of the Holy Apostles, and from Chicago's Wicker Park Grace to Minneapolis's Solomon's Porch. He sojourned with seven communities in all and conducted in-depth interviews with their leaders and participants to reveal what distinguishes resurrection communities from those in precipitous decline. In *The Way of Jesus*, Jones draws both from the scriptures and from such fresh thinkers as Brian McLaren, Dallas Willard, Doug Pagitt, and Shane Claiborne, offering genuine hope and practical direction to the millions of spiritually homeless. But just as importantly, *The Way of Jesus* offers a clear path to struggling, shrinking congregations who desire to re-form themselves in a way that is both more faithful to the Gospel and compelling to post-modern generations, who have long since abandoned the institutional church.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *Decision Making & Spiritual Discernment* Nancy L. Bieber, 2012-12-14 Stay spiritually grounded and open to divine wisdom as you shape your life. To make wise decisions, we need the aid of that wise and loving Spirit whose wisdom and light exceed our own. With the Spirit illuminating the complexities of our decisions, we can see and understand more about ourselves and our choices. —from the Introduction
Spiritual discernment is the traditional name for listening and responding to divine guidance. In this book you will approach decision making as an active participant, a co-creator with God in shaping your life. Drawing on twenty-five years of experience as a psychologist and fifteen years as a spiritual director, Nancy L. Bieber presents three essential aspects of Spirit-led decision making: • Willingness—being open to God's wisdom and love • Attentiveness—noticing what is true, discerning the right path • Responsiveness—taking steps forward as the way becomes clear. With gentle encouragement, Bieber shows how to weave these themes together to discover the best path for you. Each chapter is enriched by practical spiritual exercises to help you understand yourself and your specific situation, as well as to strengthen spiritual discernment as a daily way of life. An appendix includes a detailed guide for using the book in group study.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *When You Pray* Rueben P. Job, 2010-10-01
Prayer is one of the most important areas of a Christian's life. In *When You Pray*, Bishop Rueben P. Job explores the daily practices of living a prayerful life with this thoughtful devotional. *When You Pray* is an excellent tool to use in daily prayer time and, while linked to the Revised Common Lectionary, non-lectionary users will feel comfortable reading this as well. This stand-alone devotional can also be used for churches participating in *Becoming A Praying Congregation* as the leader, team members, congregation, small groups, families and individuals will be encouraged to use this resource in their prayer time.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *Places People Pray* Karen Appleby, 2014-10-07
Inspired by author Karen Appleby's childhood experiences and new insights gained from a recent trip to Italy, she finally feels comfortable and blessed in her prayer life. Even though she served in ministry professionally for thirty years until her retirement and considers herself a spiritual person, prayer had seemed a mystery. Karen firmly believes that there are many people who struggle with prayer as well. Through a creative structure of contemplative writing, photography, scripture, spiritual-guiding questions, and an opportunity for the reader to journal, Reverend Appleby leads readers through a journey on a variety of themes centered on prayer, including the presence of God, places of rest, nature, forgiveness, community, revelations, communion, blessing, and thanksgiving, just to name a few. We believe that readers interested in deepening their prayer life will find this book helpful and hopefully inspire them to practice prayer in new ways and new places.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: Work Ben Witherington III, Ben Witherington, 2011-01-15 Most Christians spend most of their waking hours working, yet many regard work as at best a necessary evil just one more unfortunate by-product of humanity's fall from grace. Not so, says Ben Witherington III, and in *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, he considers work as neither the curse nor the cure of human life but, rather, as something good that God has given us to do. In this brief primer on the biblical theology and ethics of work, Witherington carefully unpacks the concept of work, considering its relationship to rest, play, worship, the normal cycle of human life, and the coming Kingdom of God. Work as calling, work as ministry, work as a way to make a living, and the notably unbiblical notion of retirement Witherington's *Work* engages these subjects and more, combining scholarly acumen with good humor, common sense, cultural awareness, and biblically based insights from Genesis to Revelation. Ben Witherington has given the whole people of God something desperately needed to make sense of Monday to Friday a theology of work that breaks down the heretical sacred-secular distinction. . . . Offers a work-view and life-view that, if embraced, would revitalize the mission of God's people in the world. It's that good. R. Paul Stevens author of *The Other Six Days* and *Taking Your Soul to Work* Conducting a critical dialogue with the theological voices of our day, drawing upon the wisdom of the Christian tradition, and offering a sensitive reading of New Testament parables, Witherington delivers sound counsel on the Kingdom meaning of work and its implications for our lives today. Lee Hardy author of *The Fabric of This World*

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *Jump into the Story* Ray R. Friesen, 2019-02-27 Preaching is a challenging, privileged, and awesome responsibility. As important as mining the text for its meaning and message and making connections to our twenty-first-century world is the responsibility to engage the imaginations of the people in the pews (or chairs). In this book, Ray Friesen—life-long preacher and retired pastor—has provided twenty examples of how to be creative and engage those imaginations. Most were written under the pressures of bi-vocational ministry (preaching forty times a year as half-time pastor and operating a mediation practice). They are offered to you, not as sermons for you to preach, but as examples of what is possible, even with all the other responsibilities you may have. Each sermon and type of creativity will create an opportunity to set your imagination and creativity free to engage the imaginations, hearts, and dreams of your parishioners.

barbara brown taylor an altar in the world: *Benedictions* Julie K. Aageson, 2016-03-18 *Benedictions* is about the presence of the sacred in ordinary things: the ground beneath our feet, the ways we bless each other, loss and grief, the making of our homes, even doubt and darkness. In the everyday experiences described here, God's presence is palpable and real. Cleave the wood and I am there, says Isaiah in the apocryphal gospel of Thomas. Lift up the stone and you will find me there. These benedictions—literally good words, blessings, tastes of God—remind readers to live life with feeling and passion and art, to pay attention to the holiness of the commonplace. Each reflection opens a door inviting the reader into an experience they might understand as an encounter with God, and an exploration of the many meanings of the sacred. *Benedictions* is also a personal collection about places and people, seasons of life, and seasons of experience that convey much more than the ordinary. A statement and questions for further conversation and discussion follow each reflection. Hopefully, readers will discover their own benedictions here in the wonder, grace, and mystery of God's presence in daily life.

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