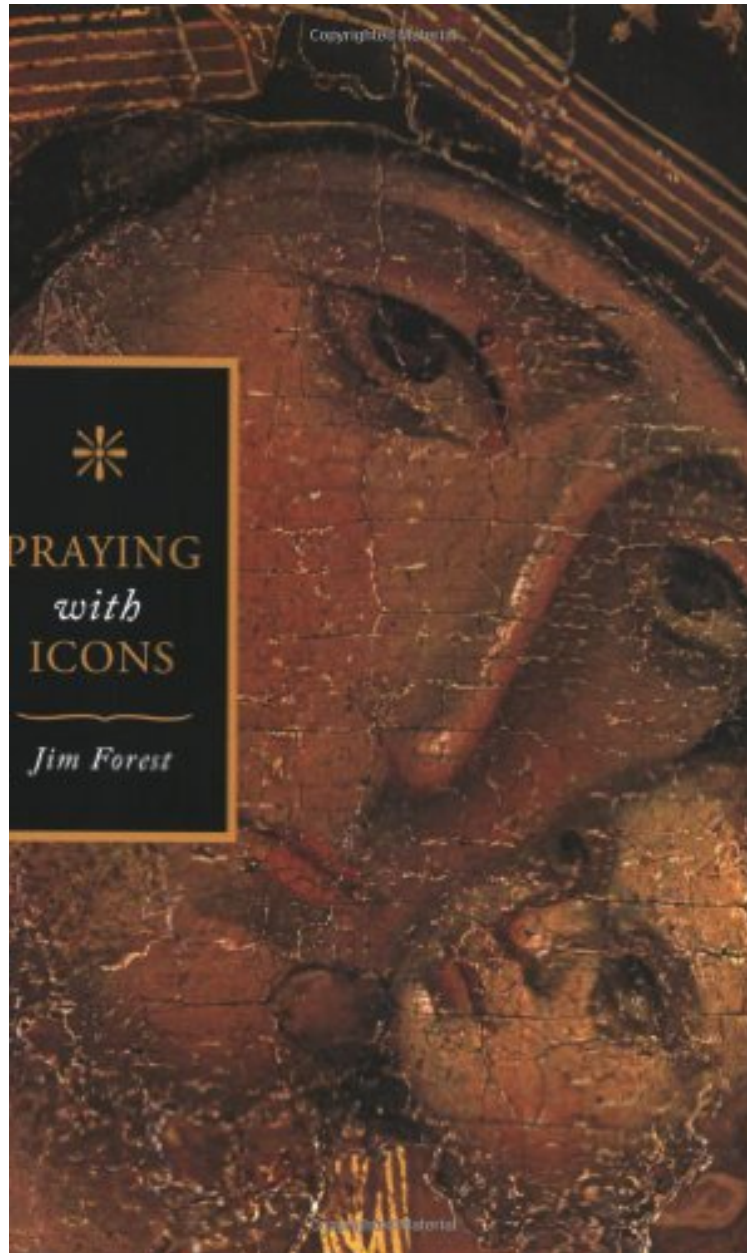


[Free read ebook] Praying with Icons

## Praying with Icons

*Jim Forest*

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**Jim Forest : Praying with Icons** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Praying with Icons:

31 of 31 people found the following review helpful. One of God's names is beautyBy Kerry WaltersI read Jim Forest's

Praying with Icons a few years ago when it first appeared. I just finished re-reading it, and am even more impressed this time around. Anyone familiar with Forest's other books knows how comfortably fluid his style is, and how insightful his ideas are. Both of these qualities make this the single best introduction to icons I know. To my mind, there are three different but interrelated aspects of this book that are especially worth noting. The first is Forest's argument that "beauty bears witness to God," and that in depicting holy things beautifully, icons enhance our relationship with the Divine. This is a point well worth considering. Too often, I fear, beauty in the context of worship is either dismissed as irrelevant (all that matters is the word), venerated for its own sake (high church preciousness), or overdone and distractingly gaudy. But Forest reminds us that the beauty of icons is intended to aid in the transfiguration of those who pray before them. Icons are images of the wholeness of God, and they convey and impart some of that wholeness to us through their beauty. It takes a great deal of artistry to manifest that kind of beauty. The second point worth noting is Forest's observation that the writing/painting of an icon is in itself an act of worship and service, entered into reverently and prayerfully. There are traditions that dictate how the wood is prepared, how the colors are selected, what they represent, and so on. The care and love with which icons are made is a good reminder that all work with God's creation is, or ought to be, mindful and reverential. The fruits of all our mental and physical labor are, in one manner of speaking, iconic. The third especially noteworthy aspect of Forest's treatment is his tie-in of prayer with icons. It might seem that the connection between the two is obvious, but I'm not sure this is the case, at least not in the contemporary U.S.. I've been in many homes where icons are displayed as curiosities, by totally secular hosts, on the walls right next to African masks and Peruvian weavings. Forest's reflections on prayer--that it involves the whole person, not just the intellect, that it requires the cultivation of stillness and silence, that a good prayer life is one that requires a great deal of deliberate discipline, and that the goal of our prayer life is theosis--are wonderful. In addition, as earlier reviewers have pointed out, the last 150 pages of the book discuss specific icons--Christ, Mary, the saints, the Transfiguration, etc--pointing out their language, their significance, and their histories. Readers of Forest's book will be well prepared to begin praying with icons, and to move on to other reflections on icons such as John of Damascus' On the Divine Images or Leonid Ouspensky Vladimir Lossky's The Meaning of Icons. Finally, the illustrations, in color as well as black-and-white, are fabulous. A book to read and re-read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beautifully written book that is both easy to read and ...By Patrick Allen Beautifully written book that is both easy to read and profoundly aware of the theology and mystery behind icons within the Orthodox liturgical and theological traditions. No detail in an icon goes unnoticed in this book, and I originally purchased it as part of an inquiry class. I would absolutely recommend this book to any inquirer into Eastern Orthodoxy or Eastern Catholicism, or any Orthodox/Byzantine Catholic looking to learn more about their own traditions.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Praying with Art By Customer I had always looked at Icons and labeled them 'primitive christian art'. But after reading Jim Forest's book 'Praying with Icons', I have fallen in love with iconography. The Icon artist does not paint without intention; each item in an icon has theological significance. For me, reading this book, has been a journey, an opportunity to reflect and deepen my faith. The excerpts from the Orthodox writings and liturgy are profoundly moving. It also is a lesson to view ALL religious art in a deeper way. What was the artist trying to communicate? How did he feel about his subject matter? Why did he choose the colors, are they significant to his vision? What compositional elements did the artist use to communicate his message? These are some of the questions one can ask when they view ANY religious art. Lastly, an icon or a painting, can bring one to prayer; where one can clear away the clutter of modern life to reach that inner place within where one encounters truth, and communicates with the God who loves us.

In this beautifully illustrated book Jim Forest explains the use of icons in prayer to the uninitiated. Icons are not just "art" but a powerful aid to prayer and contemplation.

Recent years have seen a marked increase in the popular and ecumenical appeal of icons (for centuries an integral feature of Orthodox Christianity). Jim Forest's Praying With Icons offers a simple introduction to the tradition of icons with special emphasis on their practical function in the spiritual life. Beautifully illustrated both with color plans and b/w photography, Praying With Icons begins with a history of iconography. Icons are not simply illustrations or "art" in the usual sense, but aids to prayer and contemplation, windows on the divine. Forest also provides a personal and practical guide to how one prays with icons. Forest then concludes with a series of meditative reflections on some of the most typical icons, including the Annunciation, the Nativity, Christ's Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, representations of Mary, the trinity, and the Saints. Praying With Icons is a superlative introduction to icons and is highly recommended for readers seeking to expand their spiritual experience to encompass the entire Christian spiritual legacy. --Midwest Book About the Author Jim Forest served for twelve years as General Secretary of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. A popular speaker and writer his books include Living with Wisdom: A Life of Thomas Merton, The Ladder of the Beatitudes, Confession, and The Wormwood File. He lives in Alkmaar, the Netherlands