

WFWP USA: Tending the Sacred Garden: Books to Nurture Your Spiritual Growth

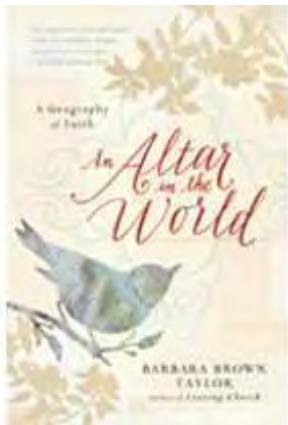
Katarina Connery  
May 15, 2025

Now that it's spring, many of us are planting and preparing our gardens. Do you enjoy planting vegetables, herbs, flowers, or a little bit of everything? Do you keep your plantings in neat rows, or do you delight in letting things run wild?

My own attempts to create wildflower plots in the yard remind me of a powerful analogy in *The Feminine Face of God: The Unfolding of the Sacred in Women*. The authors encourage women to consider our spiritual lives as sacred gardens. A garden can be complex and wild or carefully, neatly cultivated. But all gardens are alive - with cycles, seasons, and interdependent parts. Each one can be beautiful and, with careful tending, can be meaningful to its caretaker.

In the spirit of cultivating our gardens during this spring season, here are three mind- and heart-opening books that have helped me tend to the garden of my inner life. Perhaps they will support your journey as well.

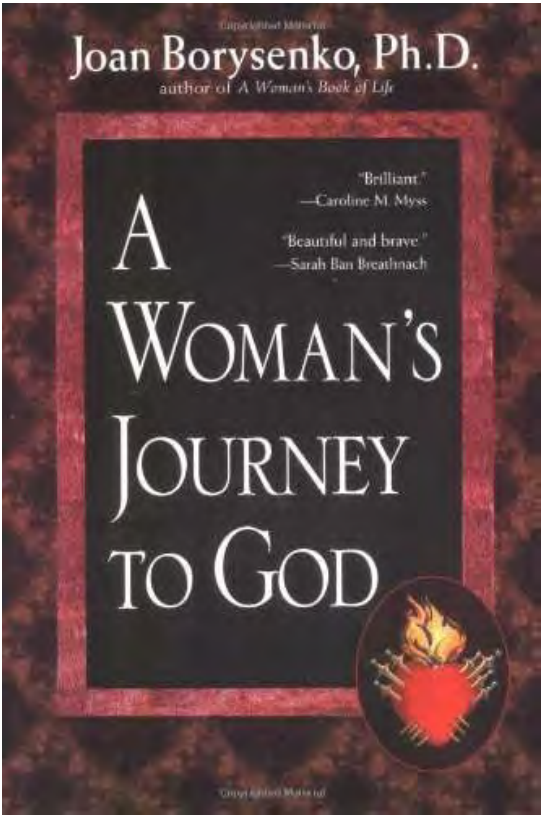
Discover the Sacred in the Ordinary



If you're longing to experience God's presence beyond the walls of a church, *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor offers a refreshing and deeply practical guide to spiritual life in everyday moments. Taylor challenges the idea that worship must happen only in formal settings, inviting readers to find God in the ordinary rhythms of life - walking, working, resting, even getting lost. Each chapter presents a "practice" that cultivates awareness of the sacred in what we often overlook, encouraging a deeper connection to God's presence in the world around us.

What makes this book so powerful is its authenticity. Taylor's reflections are rooted in lived experience and spiritual humility, making practices like paying attention, embracing pain, and saying no feel both holy and human. Taylor writes from a Christian perspective, but many of her practices feel refreshingly inclusive. Her style is inviting and encouraging, gently weaving in biblical stories but her insights can be relevant across different faith or spiritual backgrounds.

Reveal the Sacred Within the Feminine Soul



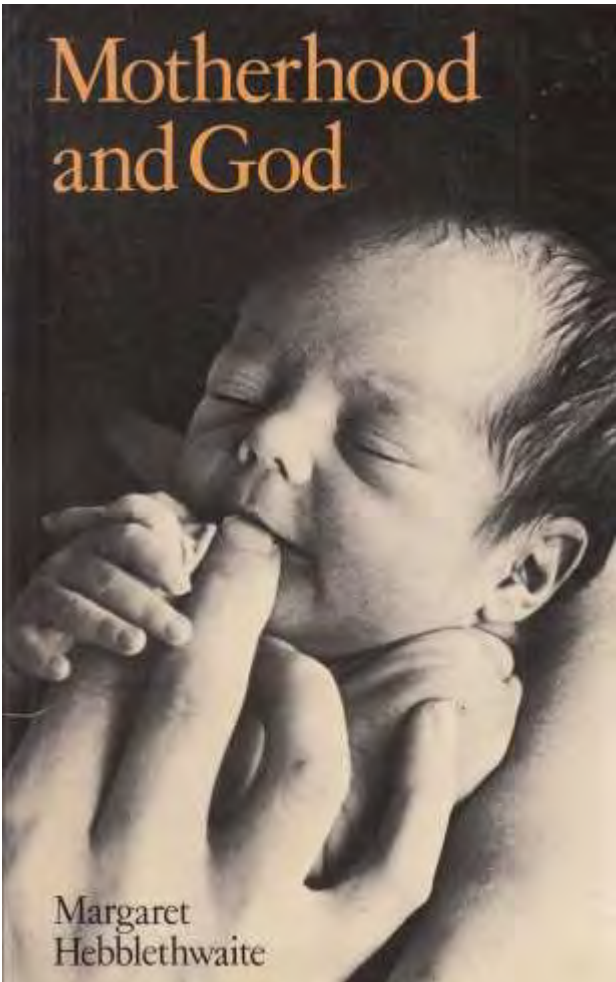
This next book delves a little bit deeper into how women uniquely can walk the paths through our sacred gardens. In *A Woman's Journey to God*, Joan Borysenko draws out a powerful analogy for women's spiritual growth. Rather than the metaphorical ladder typical of spiritual growth models appropriate for men, Borysenko highlights the distinct ways women experience the divine by walking the sacred circle of intuition, relationship, and inner light. "The center of the circle for a woman is her heart, the Inner Light, the intuition, the voice of God. Her journey is one of orienting to the center of the circle so that she can hear the guidance that always comes from within and use it wisely for the greater good." Drawing from psychology, personal stories, and spiritual wisdom, Borysenko invites women to find God not in distant heavens, but at the heart of their daily lives and within their own being as a reflection of the divine.

With compassion and insight, Borysenko highlights that there is no "better way", but simply methods to which we are more suited due to biology and development. Thus, there is no need to compare or compete, but simply loving understanding of ourselves. For women, the spiritual journey requires courage, forgiveness, and trust in the voice within. This book offers a gentle guide back to

yourself - and to a God who is as nurturing as She is powerful.

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**God in Motherhood and Motherhood in God**



I was immediately drawn to this next book when I saw it described as "finding God in motherhood, and finding motherhood in God." For mothers - or anyone longing to understand God's motherly love more deeply - *Motherhood and God* by Margaret Hebblethwaite is a short yet profoundly insightful read. It's a personal reflection on the author's own experiences of motherhood - from longing for children to giving birth and raising them - and how she encountered God as Mother in those sacred, painful, and often chaotic moments.

I felt especially seen and affirmed reading the chapter where she humorously recounts the many hiccups involved in simply trying to leave the house with two young children. It's in those very moments of struggle - when our expectations and reality clash - that we most need a vision of God who meets us in the mess.

One image from the book that stays with me is her reflection on how close we are to God: as close as a baby in the womb. "Wherever God our mother takes us, we will be safe and provided for... God is closer to us than the ground we stand on. Even though we have never seen our mother, perhaps are quite unaware of her, or even deny her existence, she is in perfect and constant intimacy with us, and when we are born into the light of her presence, we will recognize that she has been with us all along."

Just as no two gardens are alike, no two spiritual journeys are the same. Whether you're discovering the sacred in your daily routines, reconnecting with your intuitive center, or finding divinity in the trenches of motherhood, these books offer pathways for nurturing the garden of your soul. Spring reminds us that growth is possible, even after seasons of stillness. May you find inspiration in these words, and may your sacred garden flourish in its own wild and wonderful way - bearing fruit that is deeply rooted, uniquely yours, and lovingly tended.

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