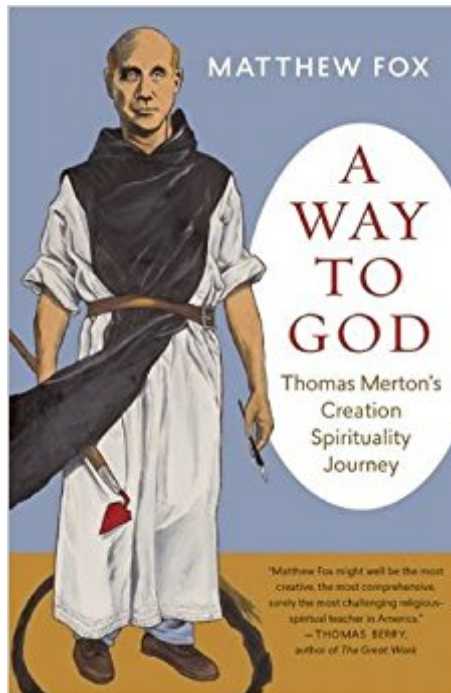


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A Way To God: Thomas Merton's Creation Spirituality Journey



Synopsis

This powerful book was prompted by an invitation Matthew Fox received to speak on the centennial of Thomas Merton's birth. Fox says that much of the trouble he's gotten into – such as being expelled from the Dominican Order in 1993, after thirty-four years, by Cardinal Ratzinger (who later became Pope Benedict) – was because of Merton, who prompted Fox to attend the Institut Catholique in Paris to undertake a doctoral program in spirituality. Fox reimmersed himself in Merton's journals, poetry, and religious writings, finding that Merton's marriage of mysticism and prophecy, contemplation and action closely paralleled that of Meister Eckhart, the thirteenth-century mystic who inspired Fox's own Creation Spirituality. In *A Way to God*, Fox explores Merton's pioneering work in interfaith, his essential teachings on mixing contemplation and action, and how the vision of Meister Eckhart profoundly influenced Merton in what Fox calls his Creation Spirituality journey.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I usually enjoy everything that Matthew Fox writes because it is in line with my own view of the goodness of creation and the manifestation of the Divine in everything on our planet. Fox's affirmation of biodiversity as important for revealing the Face of God aligns with the insights of scientists such as E. O. Wilson who see the necessity of balance in the ecosystem. My own twenty years of reading Matthew Fox with his affection for nature predisposed me to approach this new book with applause. Sadly, that is not the result: Fox is superimposing his own system of Creation

Spirituality on Thomas Merton, rather than acknowledging Merton's gradual evolution of thought toward what Esther de Waal insists is not "Creation Spirituality" but a creation-filled spirituality (The Celtic Way of Prayer [Doubleday, 1997] 141). Basing his position on a comment in The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia that Merton "could be considered an advocate of what has come to be called 'creation spirituality'" (543), Fox tries to show how Merton went through the Four Paths of Creation Spirituality as defined by Fox. Surely, Merton had a spiritual journey within nature that expanded his worldview and inflamed his prayer life, but he was not, as Fox insists, discovering the "system" of Creation Spirituality that Fox has articulated in his many publications. (The Encyclopedia passage in question goes on to note Merton's recognition of the validity of "a healthy wariness toward the world as well," in its fallen state "as a mirror of sinful, self-deluded humanity" – comments that Fox does not cite.) Unfortunately, this book is more about Matthew Fox than Thomas Merton. It functions primarily as a memoir – a list of moments when something in Merton, something in Fox, and often something in Meister Eckhart overlap.

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