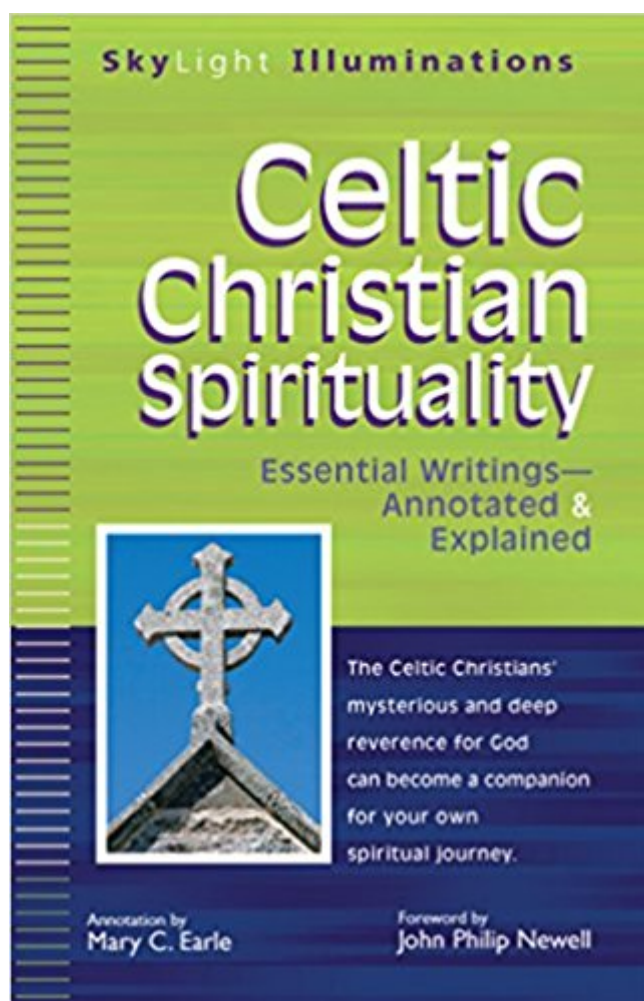


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# Celtic Christian Spirituality: Essential Writings Annotated & Explained (SkyLight Illuminations)



## Synopsis

The forgotten truths of Celtic Christianity provide a portal into a spiritual way of experiencing the world. The Celtic Christians beheld the world around them and perceived the divine life of God as upholding every aspect of the material universe. Their prayers and poems, their liturgies and theological interpretations give Christians a sense of faith that is confident in a merciful and infinitely creative, healing God. In this introduction to Celtic Christian spirituality, Mary Earle presents primary texts from the Celtic Christian tradition—selections from the works of Pelagius, Eriugena and St. Patrick, as well as prayers and poems from Wales, the Outer Hebrides and Ireland. These essential writings direct humanity to read the "book of creation" as well as the Bible, and call us to remember that "matter matters." Earle's engaging facing-page commentary explores how faithful Christians and spiritual seekers can take inspiration from this lively tradition's ways of embodying and living the gospel. Topics include: Creation, Daily life and work, Incarnation, Pilgrimage, Blessing, Social justice, Prayer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When Christianity came to Ireland, they embraced the faith with incredible vigor. Celtic Christian Spirituality: Essential Writings—Annotated & Explained discusses the faith of the Celtic Christians and how their fervency played well into their everyday life and spirituality. Drawing from many of their writings studied well by Mary Earle, Celtic Christian Spirituality is a very much recommended read for anyone who wants to better understand the spirituality of the Celts and their

haste in embracing Christianity. (Library Bookwatch)

Mary C. Earle, an Episcopal priest, retreat leader and spiritual director, is the author of *Julian of Norwich: Selections from Revelations of Divine Love*—Annotated & Explained; *The Desert Mothers: Spiritual Practices from the Women of the Wilderness* and *Celtic Christian Spirituality: Essential Writings*—Annotated and Explained; and coauthor of *Holy Companions: Spiritual Practices from the Celtic Saints* and *Praying with the Celtic Saints*. In addition to four books on the spirituality of living with illness, she has written for [explorefaith.org](http://explorefaith.org). She has been introducing the writings of Julian in seminary classes, retreats and conferences for over twenty years. Mary C. Earle is available to speak on the following topics: *The Weaving of Heaven and Earth: Celtic Christian Spirituality for Today* *Befriending: The Heart of Celtic Prayer and Practice* *The Book of Creation* *The Desert Mothers* *The Gift of Divine Rhythms: Sabbath Rest* John Philip Newell, internationally acclaimed teacher, retreat leader and speaker, is the widely read author of several books, including *Listening for the Heartbeat of God*, *Praying with the Earth*; *A New Harmony: The Spirit, the Earth & the Human Soul* and *Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings* (SkyLight Paths). Formerly warden of Iona Abbey in the Western Isles of Scotland, he is now companion theologian for the American Spirituality Center of Casa del Sol at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico and the co-founder of *Heartbeat: A Journey Towards Earth's Wellbeing*.

Whether you know a lot or a little about the tradition of Celtic spirituality, this book will be an aid to teaching. Mary Earle organizes the subject around major themes--Pilgrimage, Creation, Incarnation, Prayer, Blessing, for example--and provides essential writings that illustrate the Celtic approach to each subject. Her introduction to the book is very respectful to the tradition, with explanations to the reader about sources and their contexts. She cautions her readers not to assume that the Celtic tradition is uniform across Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, the Isle of Man and Galicia, and she explains the etymology of the term "Celtic". The essential writings that illustrate each theme are delightful, and clearly reflect a deep familiarity and love of the subject. They include traditional poems, blessings and prose from St. Patrick, Pelagius, John Scotus Eriugena, *The Carmina Gadelica* and others, as well as modern poetry in the spirit of the tradition from John Philip Newell and John O'Donohue. This small book is accessible, respectful, well-researched. Highly recommended if you are preparing a short introduction to Celtic Christian Spirituality for others, or exploring the tradition on your own.

Once again, Mary C Earle has a delightful way of reaching the heart of the matter. She beautifully weaves various Celtic writings with an invitation for the reader to go deeper and expand their understanding of who God is and who we are in relationship with God. Celtic Christian Spirituality, is enlightening as it joins the likes of John Philip Newell and John O'Donohue in sharing the wisdom of the Celtic traditions and understandings of our intimate relationship with all of creation, with one another, and with God. The reader can hardly help but be inspired by this book.

If you only have shelf space for one (or one more) book on Celtic spirituality, choose this one. Priest and poet Mary Earle wears a lifetime's learning on this subject lightly, but her deep knowledge of and love for the tradition shine through in this volume. She has cast her net wide and wittily in gathering these essential writings: included here are familiar songs and prayers from the classic *Carmina Gadelica* and pithy passages from Pelagius--but there are also delightful surprises, from lesser-known traditional blessings (I especially liked the "herding blessing" on the flock and its "nibbling and munching" surrounded by unseen angels and saints), to 20th century Welsh poems. (My favorite modern selection is an ode to a refrigerator full of food, seeing in it evidence of the bounty of creation, the generosity of the Creator, and the gift of preserving the harvest of sea and pasture, orchard and farm: I may never open my own refrigerator thoughtlessly again.) The brief introduction--worth the price of the book in itself--is a gem of its kind: a nimble synthesis of the subject, and a charming invitation to its treasures. The format of the book is also excellent: each selection has Mary Earle's commentary (so thoughtful that it can profitably be read alone) on the facing page for ease of reference. This book will be gratefully received by scholars as well as seekers. It can be savored slowly and meditatively from beginning to end, or dipped into occasionally for refreshment of the spirit. It would be a superb text for any class on the subject. I predict it will be frequently consulted as the definitive anthology it is--as well as savored by ordinary readers as a well-balanced distillation of the rich Celtic Christian tradition. It will be particularly cherished as an aid to prayer--opening as it does a door into this ancient way of seeing and reverencing the world. Highly recommended.

St. Columba landed on the peninsula of Kintyre before moving on to the isle of Iona where he founded an abbey and from there Celtic Christianity was born. As a McIntyre, I find that delightful. But more importantly, I am appreciating the research others have done to provide needed historical and theological information.

I absolutely love this book! Powerful, beautiful prayers with wonderful annotations.

Saved me \$250 on a new monitor.

As good as it gets. Newell is a leading scholar in Celtic theology. Read, mark and inwardly digest.

This surprised me. It was a collection of old prayers and annotations to explain them. The prayers and poems cover many areas.

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