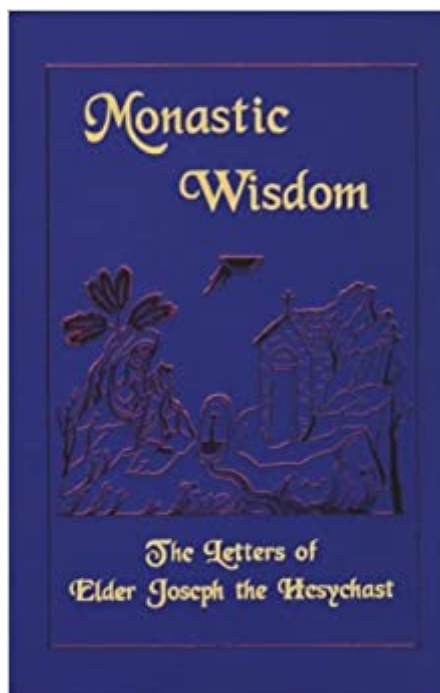


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Monastic Wisdom: The Letters Of Elder Joseph The Hesychast



Synopsis

Book by Joseph

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Customer Reviews

The wisdom and sweetness of the Elder's words make this book a true treasure. He epitomizes the very essence of spiritual fatherhood. It comes as no surprise to learn that Elder Joseph's spiritual children and grandchildren (if you will), number in the thousands, and that his blessed memory lives on in all of their hearts. --D. Golden, Jefferson, Wisconsin

This is a collection of letters written by an illumined Eastern Orthodox holy man who lived in the 20th century on the holy mountain of Athos in caves and huts. It is a book for those who want to go more deeply into the interior life of Christ, girded by the written instructions of an experienced guide and elder, without having to go outside the Christian tradition to do so. I am finding it an invaluable tool and motivation. One must understand however that it is a book by a monk and ascetic. Not all of what he instructs is practical or even possible for those of us who live in the world. But in the same way that one might read a book by Lance Armstrong on bicycle racing, without having any hope or possibility of achieving his level of accomplishment, this book will motivate and challenge you! --K. Allen, California

A real gem! I would say that Elder Joseph's letters are eminently readable and that, although it is true he maintained a standard of asceticism far beyond that which most people are capable of, there are many practical aspects of this book that the ordinary individual can use and apply in his own spiritual journey. --Susan Hancock

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

While Elder Joseph's letters are easy to read, they are difficult to grasp without having read the lives of the saints beforehand, and without having a basic understanding of Orthodox theology---in particular, Palamite hesychasm.

The wisdom of Elder Joseph has been a source of inspiration and spiritual edification. I highly recommend this to Christians who are not content to live Christianity on Sundays only, but want to dig into the deeper aspects of prayer in their daily lives. The book will be useless to those who read it with idle curiosity, but those who actually try to apply the concepts here (as much as is possible for us laypeople) will find spiritual reward...though it will come with much effort and "shedding of blood."The chapters/letters are short and it makes a good morning devotional, which is how I used it.

Best book ever after The Holy Bible

I'm listing many books I purchased here on so others can see what's in my Orthodox library. I will come back in the future and rate each one separately. Nearly all these books were suggested by a Romanian monk. I purchased all these books for him several years ago. I bought two copies each and kept one for me. I've enjoyed everything so far. Happy reading...

They are amazing people who care about you. I enjoyed their e-mails and good care. I encourage dealing with them by anyone. God bless them.

Nice reading book love it.

It took me several years to read this book, small doses every few days seemed most compatible with letting sink in Elder Joseph's teachings. The book is divided into letters to students comprising about 80% of the text, while the remainder is a review of Orthodox theology and practice. As a Jew I found some of his comments about "Jews" reprehensible; but I wonder how many Jews he actually ever knew, since he entered Greek Orthodox Christian monastic life at such a young age and appears never to have lived a worldly existence. Thus, he simply may have been repeating what he'd been told for decades and offering an unimaginative acceptance of a particular view of the New Testament's account of Jesus' death. And, as a Jew, the question of Jesus' divinity is a non-starter;

nevertheless, substituting "God" for "Jesus" worked fine for me as a way to bypass this particular issue and I simply passed over mentions of the Trinity or "Triune God." I found especially helpful, as a researcher of psychedelic drug states, his comments about visions, angels, demons, and other contents of spiritual experience (also found in psychedelic states). He repeatedly drives home the point that the purpose of religious training in a theistic context is not seeing angels, having out-of-body experiences, and so on, but purifying one's soul and seeking God's forgiveness for our miscreant thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Everything else follows; and if you don't have those experiences in this lifetime, simply wait until after you've died. Like Seraphim Rose's "The Soul After Death," this book provides a potent counterpoint to New Age fluff about "spirit helpers," spiritual practice, "God," "the white light," the nature of suffering, master-disciple relationships, prayer, out of body experiences, and other hot button topics. Finally, Elder Joseph's writing emanates a tremendous amount of love, compassion, mastery of both the Hebrew and Christian bibles, spiritual evolution, and strength. He clearly was a "realized person" by anyone's definition of the term. Those qualities, contained in the book (if one can overcome resistances to specific Orthodox aspects of his message) makes reading it a uniquely worthwhile experience.

Elder Joseph's letters are awe-inspiring as well as action inspiring. This collection of letters comes from several sources (they don't all have the same recipient.) He addresses clergy, monastics, laity (both in Greece and abroad.) The level of asceticism he practiced he never pushed on anyone else. He expected much out of people, but made them want to be that way of their own will. He wasn't interested in having a bunch of puppets. He was a true spiritual father, not a spiritual dictator. Many of his ideas, sayings, etc will seem "radical" to most English speakers. After a while though, you realize Elder Joseph isn't the radical one, he is living the God-inspired life, while the rest of us aren't quite hitting the mark. More than anything though, you realize how his love of God has caused him to have extreme love for all of creation...even those that didn't like him. Elder Joseph was a man of incredible discipline, humility and love. He was always strict with himself, willing to admit when he was wrong. He was kind, generous, and loving to others. I can't say enough good things about this book. The Elder's words just melt you with joy and challenge you to become like Christ. I also want to comment on the literal book itself. The hardcover edition is beautifully put together. Embossed cover, multicolor printing, nice art, quality paper, binding etc. If taken care of, this book should exist for generations. Buy this book, and challenge yourself.

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