

About *Making Sense of God: A Woman's Perspective*

The moment is ripe for ordinary Catholic women to “do Christian theology.” Times such as these challenge us to be holy, to be alive in the Spirit, to summon the energy and make the commitment to help one another grow spiritually. *Now* is the time for Catholic women to make sense of God.

In this introductory volume to the groundbreaking eight-volume series, *Called to Holiness: Spirituality for Catholic Women*, Catholic theologian Elizabeth Dreyer encourages us to acknowledge our dignity, harvest our gifts and empower all women in church and society. Dreyer helps us to shape what we think about God, justice, love, prayer, family life, the destiny of humanity and the entire universe.

Discussion Questions

Chapter One

1. Describe what you understand by the term “spirituality.” What does “spirituality” look like in your everyday life? Be as concrete and specific as possible. Are there theological aspects to your description?
2. What do you see as the most pressing needs of the church and/or the world that lay women theologians can address and to which they might bring insight and healing?

Chapter Two

3. If the world is sacred and loved by God, how do you account for all the evil in our hearts and in conflicts throughout the world?

Chapter Three

4. Discuss ways in which your image of God does or does not include God as Trinity. What makes the Trinity difficult or remote for you?
5. Draw a picture (in words or images) of what you consider to be an ideal community. Are you a part of such a community? Connect your ideas about loving community to the Trinity. What do you discover? In what way does your image of God affect your interactions in the various communities of which you are a part?

Chapter Four

6. What does nature teach you about human life? Trees stand tall and strong, yet bend in the wind. Wind knocks out power lines and destroys homes, but also spreads seeds, clears the air, and moves storm systems out to sea.

Chapter Five

7. We are asked to imitate Christ and yet we live in circumstances dramatically different from his. Identify one deep, enduring aspect of Jesus' life and discuss how women might "imitate" it in the world of the twenty-first century.

Chapter Six

8. When you hear the word *power*, what comes to mind? What positive or negative associations do you have with this term? What happens when you link the idea and practice of power with the Holy Spirit?
9. In the Christian tradition, the Holy Spirit is most often represented with a dove. Is this an adequate image for you? Identify two or three fresh images that perhaps more adequately reflect the being and role of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Chapter Seven

10. Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not? How do you describe your efforts to work for the full inclusion of women in the community of faith?
11. What language do you use for God? Are there ways you would like to expand your vocabulary and imagery about God? How so?

Chapter Eight

12. Reflect on the differences between a chosen practice or mandated ascetic act (Catholics used to be known for eating fish on Fridays and giving up candy for Lent), and one that has been brought into your life unbidden. How do you see them relating to each other?

Chapter Nine

13. How do you react to the term *humility*? Discuss some of the dangers for women of misunderstanding and misusing this virtue.

Chapter Ten

14. Discuss your sense of yourself as a theologian before and after you read this book.
15. Are there elements of spirituality—as practiced in our present culture—that you feel are at odds with the Christian tradition as you understand it?

About the Author

ELIZABETH A. DREYER is general editor of the *Called to Holiness* series and professor of religious studies at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut. She lectures widely on the Christian tradition, especially medieval mysticism, grace, the Holy Spirit and contemporary lay spirituality. She wrote *Holy Power, Holy Presence: Medieval Metaphors of the Holy Spirit; Passionate Spirituality: Hildegard of Bingen and Hadewijch of Brabant; Earth Crammed With Heaven: A Spirituality of Everyday Life* and *A Retreat with Catherine of Siena: Living the Truth in Love*. With Mark Burrows she edited *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*. She lives in Hamden, Connecticut, with her husband, John Bennett.