



Chalmers Summer School 2007

March 13, 2007

A Raw Experience of the Holy: Learning from the Life of Hildegard von Bingen

Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress

July 23-27; 1:30-4:30pm

Course Description

Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), an early Rhineland mystic, is considered one of the most creative human beings to have ever lived. She was a Benedictine Abbess, a prophetess, author of ten books, composer of the first opera and over 70 liturgical songs and a spiritual guide to other religious as well as popes and kings. She received visions that were approved during her lifetime by Pope Eugenius III as authentic revelations. What does Hildegard have to say to us for our times? How can her experience with the Divine illuminate the spiritual path for us?

In this class we will study the life of Hildegard to reveal tenets of the mystical tradition functioning today. We will focus upon four themes: mystical experience through Hildegard's experience and the eyes of the Christian mystical tradition, nurturing the spirit of God within us, the creative path and how it is woven with illness and challenge and finding (and refining) the call of the Spirit within our own lives. We will use the labyrinth as a walking meditation to integrate the content.

Course Format

This course will integrate academic learning through lectures incorporating the required readings and experiential learning through group discussion of primary sources and walking the labyrinth for reflection several times during the week. A journaling method will help personal integration of the material. A Power Point presentation will show her illustrated visions as well as the convents Hildegard established in Germany.

Class Outline

Monday July 23

Introduction to the course, Definition of a mystic, noting various kinds. Why Christian mysticism differs. Introduction to Hildegard's life and the times she lived in.; samples of her writings from her letters and from Book of Divine Works

Tuesday July 24

Power point on Hildegard's established convents and her visions that were painted during her lifetime. Open-eyed mysticism. The Symbolic School that Hildegard is recognized under and the demise of that School as Analytical Theology become accepted through the establishment of universities.

Wednesday July 25

Hildegard's definition of the Holy Spirit and of sin. How it differs from Augustine. The Living Light. The spiritual challenges of Hildegard. Our spiritual challenges today. Our mystical encounters. How do we hear, receive the guidance of God? Contemplative reading from her writings.

Thursday July 6

Spiritual reflection through the reading of Hildegard's letters. Her music. Her medical knowledge. Was Hildegard a feminist?

Friday July 7

What is her message today? How do we discern healthy encounters as compared to distorted experiences with God? Consolidation and review.

Required Course Texts: (Students expected to read these texts prior to course)

1. *The Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and her World*, Barbara Newman
University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1998 ISBN 0-520-20826-9
2. *Hildegard of Bingen, A Visionary Life*, Sabina Flanagan, Routledge, New York, 1989 ISBN 0-415-01340-2
3. *The Journal of Hildegard of Bingen*, Barbara Lachman, Bell Tower Publishers, New York, 1993. ISBN 0-517-59169-3 (Historical Fiction)
4. *The Mystic Heart: Discovering Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions* by Wayne Teasdale, New World Library, 1057731-140-X, 1999.

Recommended Reading: (Referred to in class, and for research, not necessary to purchase.)

Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice by Lauren Artress, Riverhead, New York, Second Ed. March, 2006

The Sacred Path Companion: A Guide to Using the Labyrinth to Heal and Transform by Lauren Artress Riverhead, New York, 2006.

Sister of Wisdom-St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine, Barbara Newman, University of California Press, 1989

The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen, trans by Joseph Baird and Radd K. Ehrman Vol. 1, Oxford Press, 1994

Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen by Matthew Fox, December 2002

Course Requirements

1. All participants are expected to attend class daily and engage the learning process for classroom lectures and seminars. Attendance is mandatory for credit students.
2. All students (credit and audit) are expected to do pre-reading of primary texts for the course, and do limited reading of handouts between classes (approximately one hour per day).
3. In order to receive credit for the course, all students taking the course for any type of credit must read three of the assigned texts.
4. For those taking the course for degree credit, (Diploma, M.Div., M.A.T.S., M.A.R.E., Th.M.), see “**Summer School Degree Credit Evaluation Information**” handout for paper requirements.
5. For those taking the course for Chalmers Institute Summer School Continuing Education credit, see handout, “**Summer School Continuing Education Credit Information,**” for requirements.
 - o For all credit students there will be an extra one-hour meeting with the course grading tutor, additional to class time, for each course, to review credit requirements and decide on an appropriate research topic.

The Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress is author of [Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice](#), [The Sand Labyrinth Kit](#) and [The Sacred Path Companion: A Guide to Walking the Labyrinth to Heal and Transform](#) (Putnam/Riverhead Books, New York). She serves as a Canon at Grace Cathedral and is Founder of Veriditas a non-profit dedicated to introduce people the healing, meditative powers of the labyrinth. She travels worldwide offering

workshops and lectures on the labyrinth including a yearly program in Chartres, France. In addition to being an Episcopal priest she is a spiritual director and licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the State of California.

**All books will be available from the UBC Bookstore after May 14th.
604-822-2665; Toll-Free Canada 1-800-661-3889**