



An African Prayer Book

Desmond Tutu

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The great Archbishop of Capetown, South Africa, shares with us the simple but profound secrets of his extraordinary spiritual strength by unveiling his very own book of prayer. Prayer, our conversation with God, needs no set formulas or flowery phrases. It often needs no words at all. But for most believers, the words of others can be a wonderful aid to devotion, especially when these words come from faithful fellow pilgrims. *The African Prayer Book* is just such an aid, for in this collection all the spiritual riches of the vast and varied continent of Africa are bravely set forth. Here we may delight in Solomon's splendid encounter with the Queen of Sheba, overhear the simple prayer of a penniless Bushman, and glory in the sensuous sonorities of the mysterious liturgies of the Egyptian Copts. Here are Jesus' own encounters with Africa, which provided him refuge at the beginning of his life (from the murderous King Herod) and aid at its end (in the person of Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry his cross). Here are the prayers of some of the greatest among the mothers and fathers of the Church -- Monica, Augustine, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage -- as well as the prayers from the African diasporas of North America and the Caribbean. From thunderous multi-invocation litanies to quiet meditations, here are prayers that every heart can speak with strength and confidence. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who is for millions the very soul of Africa, is our guide on this unique spiritual journey. His introduction is destined to become a classic, his characteristic energy and optimism light our way, and the words of his favorite prayers (many composed by the Archbishop himself) will stay with us forever.

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