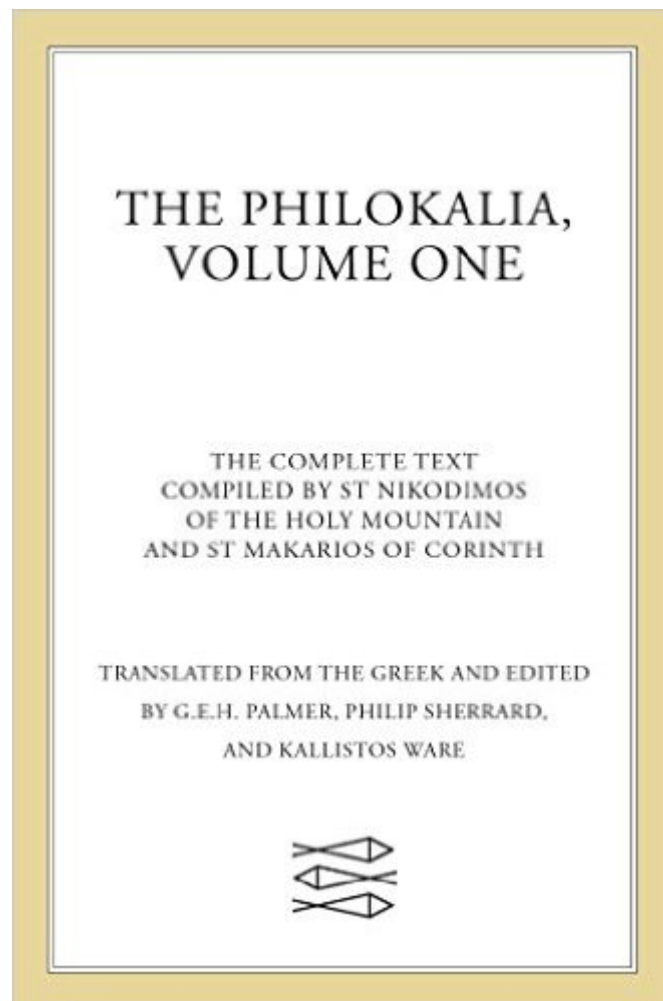


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The Philokalia: The Complete Text (Vol. 1); Compiled By St. Nikodimos Of The Holy Mountain And St. Markarios Of Corinth



Synopsis

The Philokalia is a collection of texts written between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries by spiritual masters of the Orthodox Christian tradition. First published in Greek in 1782, then translated into Slavonic and later into Russian, The Philokalia has exercised an influence in the recent history of the Orthodox Church far greater than that of any book apart from the Bible. It is concerned with themes of universal importance: how man may develop his inner powers and awake from illusion; how he may overcome fragmentation and achieve spiritual wholeness; how he may attain the life of contemplative stillness and union with God."This excellent English translation, which takes into account the latest scholarly research into the original works, represents a major 'gift' from the wise men of the East. The fluency of the literary style of this translation and the practical understanding which these writings reveal for the spiritual predicaments facing each Christian in every generation brings the book well within the range of the ordinary reader who seeks spiritual counsel. The complete Philokalia covers the period from the fourth to the fifteenth century. Volume One . . . takes us up to the eighth century and is thus the common heritage of Orthodox and Catholics." - Chrysostom

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Customer Reviews

The four volumes of the Philokalia represent the Essence of Christian spirituality from those who experienced it firsthand. As the Church became embraced by the Empire in the 4th century, monastics, following the example of St Anthony, withdrew to the deserts of Egypt and Palestine.

The Philokalia is the uncompromising witness to the experience of the desert - and the heart that finds God in the silence of prayer and repentance. The four volumes now in print should be read by every Christian - Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant - if they are truly interested in their salvation and eternal life! And the path they prescribe is one that can be lived today - though not without struggle - even as we enter the 21st century.

This book is for those who love God's wisdom in His saints and wish to practice it in their lives. It is a compilation of the works of great theologians and ascetics of the Early Church, not specifically concerning theology, but concerning the struggle to live the Faith. Time and again these writers reveal the primary temptations which all persons are heir to. They show how open we are to Satan's attacks when we fail to allow God's Spirit to prepare us to fight. They show how we can strive to prepare ourselves to best receive God's help. They also proclaim God's mercy in helping us even when we have been lax in our appreciation of Him. And finally, they live the joy of knowing God is with them and show His Glory reflected in their lives. Many of these writers died for their Faith. All suffered for it, because none were compromisers. Read their writings slowly and with prayer as they are not presenting intellectual puzzles for the satisfaction of the mind. Instead, they are offering clear, cold draughts of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of those who would count the cost and still give their lives to God.

Little can be said in review of a work which comprises the very essence and heart of Orthodox spirituality. Contained in these four volumes are the writings of two millennia; the wisdom of the faithful throughout the ages on the spiritual journey that is the life of man. And the message is practical: it is not a spirituality restricted to any time or place, but one that is evident and applicable today and tomorrow in the life of every Christian. All who with a whole heart desire a true depth of spiritual well being are doing themselves a great hurt by not reading this book.

I can't read too much at one time because the Philokalia is not simply an intellectual exercise. It requires prayer and reflection and time. If you're tired of the current trendy "spirituality" turn to this ancient source of Christian insight.

This collection of writings from the Desert Fathers of the Holy Church is indispensable for those who want grow into the likeness of Christ. The Christianity presented by the Philokalia will seem quite alien to an average American Christian, with its condemnation of virtually everything that American

culture holds dear, but make no mistake, the gospel of the Cross is no different for us than it was for them. I must disagree with another reviewer who said that the entire creed of the Philokalia is "know thyself". By far the central theme and issue is prayer. Not just any prayer per se, but prayer with a purified mind and heart, and so the other crucial theme is the need to purify ourselves and crucify our passions in order to make progress in the Christian life. The Fathers teach not to "know thyself", but to "purify thyself". I have found Philokalia to be extremely helpful, and cannot recommend it highly enough.

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The Philokalia can simply be regarded as the one treatise that captures the true spirit of Christianity. I have explored many Christian books from different "denominational" perspectives but none of them come near to the maturity, substance and integrity of the Philokalia treatise. The bible refers to the ONE body of Christ meaning the ONE church that fully embraces ALL the principles of Christianity. The Philokalia contains a plethora of evidence on how sincere and unadulterated Christianity can enrich every person. The Philokalia, in this English translation, can help break down denominational barriers for it only reveals the unity that once existed in the early church. As such, it must be read by all Christians and non-Christians seeking a true spiritual foundation. The disunity that exists in the Christian church through the myriad of "denominations", the aura of expediency and convenience that permeates today's Christian interpretations and approaches, the lack of conviction on issues of faith and morality, all for the sake of "embracing diversity" has only served to alienate people from each other, to create a culture of fear and mistrust in today's society and families. The Philokalia, in its honest and comprehensive adherence to an intrinsically true moral code which lies in Christianity, makes it possible to provide guidance and direction on matters of faith and spirituality for ALL people regardless of cultural, ethnic and religious background. Of all the post-biblical Christian books, the Philokalia may very well be the one treatise that gives justice the

meaning of the one true body of Jesus Christ which is the Orthodox Church.

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