



Called To Question: A Spiritual Memoir

Joan D. Chittister

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Called to Question is Sr. Joan Chittister's most personal and intense writing to date. Centered around a series of conversations with spiritual writers featured in her private journal, Sr. Joan looks at the common questions or dimensions of life as we know them in our daily lives-not answers as we've been given them-in an attempt to unravel their many meanings, to give them flesh, to honor their spiritual import now and here, in our time and in our own lives. By sharing the questions, doubts, and convictions in her own heart, Chittister explores the heart of faith itself and nurtures a spirituality that pushes readers beyond superficial questioning and unexamined faith. The paperback edition includes a new Prologue about the power of questions in today's society. Following a moving prologue on the nature of faith, Called to Question is broken into six parts that explore key themes- the inward life, immersion in life, resistance, feminist spirituality, ecology, dailiness. Within each theme is a wide array of topics that embody Sr. Joan's life's work as a sociologist, theologian, Benedictine nun, rights activist, and spiritual guide to countless people throughout the world. Alive with the raw energy of a journal and polished with the skill of a master storyteller, each chapter is an engaging dialogue between Sr. Joan and many different wisdom sources about such topics as God's existence and call, experience, struggle, justice, the role of women and men in society and church, living through doubt, and celebrating life. Called to Question is a rare and powerful invitation to look into the center of our own souls, name our questions about God and life, admit the worst, and pursue the best--even when we are unsure where that pursuit will take us.

Called To Question: A Spiritual Memoir Details

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Carly says

"Indeed feminism changes the way we see everything, not just the way we relate to men. It changes what we value and what we seek. It changes the way we see ourselves as women. And it turns a critical -- and calloused -- eye on both state and church. After that there is no going back to "ladylike" docility or clerical worship. After that there is only God and me."

"After that there is only God and me."

This book often feels like God's presence, to me. Joan Chittister's spiritual musings stick with me like gluey oatmeal. I just love her. Her magnanimity, her heart, her mind.

I'd actually give this 3.5 stars. Once I hit page 150, I was ready to move on to the next book, because the format got repetitive (journal quote, journal response, longer response). Additionally, Joan needs to update some of her views on "first world" v "third world" women, and needs to be introduced to the concept of intersectionality (often refers to black people and then refers to women; what about black women?). Maybe I am naive, but I believe Joan would openly embrace her failings and do better once she knows better. This, and better pacing, would have awarded this book 4 stars.

Read this book if you are a feminist who struggles to understand religious perspectives of feminism. You may not always agree with Chittister, but her writing will afford you a more expansive worldview.

This text is worth reading for the concept of God as mother, God as birthing woman, alone. That image will stick with me and my faith for the rest of my days.

JoAnn says

This is a personal journey which many will relate to. There is a candid compelling thrust in this book that only allows the reader to read a few pages at a time.

Each time I picked it up, it gave me pause to be reflective on the thoughts shared by the author.

This is not a book that is a buzz through, as some of the thrillers are.

This is a conscious personal journey that makes the reader question the basic essence of who we are and why we are here!

Evelyn says

No question is off limits for Sr. Joan and her honesty and sincerity is refreshing. As a woman who represents the institutional church, she is not afraid to call the church out for hypocrisy especially in regard to women. I highly recommend for those who want to be challenged and think theologically deep.

Wendy says

One of my favorite quotes can be found in the paperback version of the book on page 217. It reads: When we learn to love life more than we love loving our pain, we become spiritually invincible. What part of life is there that can defeat us then? It is a wonderful book which I highly recommend.

kristen says

Beautiful insight into a devoted follower's spiritual journey. In her constant contemplation and reflection on God's purpose in her creation, Chittister generously shares her journal, thus her life with us. So wise, rich, and incredibly thought provoking, I had to read small sections at a time to fully take it all in.

Mark says

Joan Chittister is a hidden treasure. Very well known in some circles, virtually unheard of in others, this Benedictine nun from Erie is passionately dedicated to peace and reform of the Catholic Church from within. She has pushed the issue of ordaining women as priests enough that a diocesan official in Pittsburgh once threatened to withhold continuing education credits to anyone who attended a conference at which she was the keynote speaker. She has written many books, but this one charts the influences from her youth and family life that shaped her ministry and her sometimes contentious relationship with Vatican authorities. I read it in preparatio for a profile of her (<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/05178/...>)

Pamela says

This book came to me at a very low time for me, spiritually speaking. All around were telling me, some ordering me, to abandon my beliefs for a very conservative outlook. Ms. Chittister gave support that I wasn't "nuts" or blasphemous, but perhaps, further along a path, a path that was one God meant for me to take. Theologically solid, well-spoken, this book resounds with the approachability of the Psalms. I will be looking forward to reading more of her works.

Tracy says

This is a good book for taking a chapter-a-day approach. Chittister arranges it around personal journal entries over a 4-year period, but has also checked her themes of spirituality against those of an array of people to pick out some common issues: the environment, women & the institutional church, relationships, the difference between religion and spirituality, and the spirituality of daily life, to name a few. It's valuable to read the perspective of a woman whose life has been spent in the Church (Chittister is a Benedictine nun) but who has questioned that role often.

Jeana says

Sister Joan is such a treat to read. I have not experienced the degree of gender frustration that she has, but her perspective is good to get you thinking. She challenges the boundaries, encourages the questions, and summons each individual back to the task of daily life.

Kara says

So far, this book has been the right topic at the right time. Sister Joan is a lovely writer, whose ideas deserve far wider distribution.

Mary Mccarty says

This is the first book of this author that I have read despite the fact that "Joan Chittister" was a highly honored person in my household when I was growing up. This book is giving me hope and has validated my Faith through the courage that Sr. Joan has demonstrated. Every paragraph requires reflection . It is thoughtful provoking and inspiring .

G'angela says

Joan is a spectacular author. This book is about the relationship between religion and spirituality with Joan supporting the spiritual side and personal relationship with God while breaking the bonds of religious dogma.

Carol Wigent says

I read this awhile ago, so details have faded; but, anything Joan Chittister has written is worth reading. I especially love this one because it dealt with issues I have been wrestling with myself. She has a lot of sage observations in her books, and this one is among the best I've read. It's an excellent book.

Doris Powell says

Sr. Chittister had some really good questions! She also had some really good quotes from other women, some I recognized, most I didn't. She didn't always agree with these women, but she always had a good answer. I liked her questioning about women, being a feminist at heart. Basically she said that we have a right to question anybody or any institution about why they do what they do. We have a right to seek the truth even if the question is unpleasant to the receiver. Sr. Chittister is a very good writer, and I understand just as good a motivational speaker.

K Kriesel says

The highs and lows of this book are completely at random. Shallow and deep are the most common extremes, wavering between lovey fluff and academic theology. The worst lows were racist comparisons to second-wave white feminist theory.

I'm glad to have read this book, but I don't know that I would recommend it to anyone other than feminist-theology students.
