



The Ecstasies of St. Francis: The Way of Lady Poverty

John Haule

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Just when I thought there was nothing more I could know about St. Francis, this lovely book fell into my hands. John Haule brings together good Franciscan history, excellent psychology, and a profound understanding of spirituality in one 'ecstatic' study. Read and be satisfied.

?Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M., Center for Action and Contemplation, Albuquerque, New Mexico

"There seems to be an inexhaustible interest in St. Francis and as many lenses for seeing him as there are writers and artists who engage his simple, yet complex, personality. John Ryan Haule views Francis from within his own Jungian consciousness, enriched by Buddhist and Muslim mysticism. The result is a rich, multidimensional portrait of the transformation of the Saint of Assisi, one that many twenty-first century readers will relate to.

? Murray Bodo, O.F.M., author of *Landscape of Prayer* and *The Way of St. Francis*.

In this fascinating account of St. Francis' inner life, Haule, a Jungian analyst and student of Hindu Tantra, shows that, like tantrikas, Francis relentlessly pursued the most disturbing experiences in life to achieve higher states of consciousness?ecstasies in which he stood outside his ordinary self while contemplating and living a higher reality. Francis embraced poverty and sorrows, cared for lepers and outcasts, begged for his bread.

Fascinated early on by romantic and troubadour literature, Francis took "Lady Poverty" as his guide in love, walking her path to change the world. She demanded that he change his whole nature, and he became the beloved saint known today. Haule tells the story of Francis' life from this point of view and looks at the path of Lady Poverty, trying to understand what Francis meant by "perfect joy." He also compares Francis' relationship with Lady Poverty to that with Clare, who began the Franciscan sisterhood, revealing the erotic element of his practice. The author goes on to examine Francis' daily practice of prayer and meditation, the states of consciousness he achieved, and how these bore fruit in his daily life. Finally, we come to the last crisis of Francis' life?the final embrace of God and the world?marked by the vision of the Seraph and the appearance of the stigmata.

This is an important book for a deeper understanding of St. Francis and his spiritual life.

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Daniel Bailey:

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