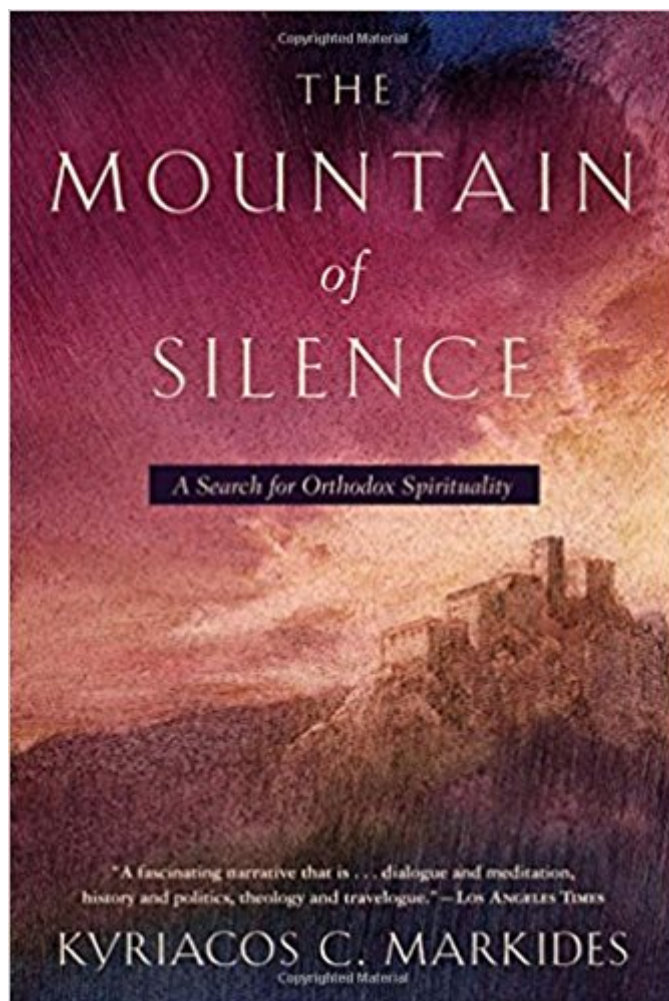


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The Mountain Of Silence: A Search For Orthodox Spirituality



Synopsis

An acclaimed expert in Christian mysticism travels to a monastery high in the Trodos Mountains of Cyprus and offers a fascinating look at the Greek Orthodox approach to spirituality that will appeal to readers of Carlos Castaneda. In an engaging combination of dialogues, reflections, conversations, history, and travel information, Kyriacos C. Markides continues the exploration of a spiritual tradition and practice little known in the West he began in *Riding with the Lion*. His earlier book took readers to the isolated peninsula of Mount Athos in northern Greece and into the group of ancient monasteries. There, in what might be called a "Christian Tibet," two thousand monks and hermits practice the spiritual arts to attain a oneness with God. In his new book, Markides follows Father Maximos, one of Mount Athos's monks, to the troubled island of Cyprus. As Father Maximos establishes churches, convents, and monasteries in this deeply divided land, Markides is awakened anew to the magnificent spirituality of the Greek Orthodox Church. Images of the land and the people of Cyprus and details of its tragic history enrich the *Mountain of Silence*. Like the writings of Castaneda, the book brilliantly evokes the confluence of an inner and outer journey. The depth and richness of its spiritual message echo the thoughts and writings of Saint Francis of Assisi and other great saints of the Church as well. The result is a remarkable work—a moving, profoundly human examination of the role and the power of spirituality in a complex and confusing world.

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Customer Reviews

The spiritual traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church are all but unknown to most Christians in the West, who often think of Christianity as split into two camps: Bible-based Protestantism and sacramental Catholicism. Yet in *The Mountain of Silence*, sociologist Kyriacos Markides suggests that Orthodox spirituality offers rich resources for Western Christians to integrate the head and the heart, and to regain a more expansive view of Christian life. The book combines elements of memoir, travelogue, and history in a single story. Markides journeys to a cluster of monasteries on Mount Athos, an isolated peninsula in northern Greece and one of the holiest sites in the Orthodox tradition. He also visits the troubled island of Cyprus, largely occupied by Turkey since 1974, and makes the acquaintance of a monk named Father Maximos, who has established churches, convents, and monasteries. Markides, a native Cypriot, tells the tale of this journey in a tone that's loose and light, with many excursions on Church history and Greek and Turkish politics. But despite the easygoing tone, the importance of this book is potentially immense. *The Mountain of Silence* introduces a world that is entirely new to many Western readers, and unveils a Christian tradition that reveres the mystical approach to God as much as the rational, a tradition that Markides says "may have the potential to inject Christianity with the new vitality that it so desperately needs."

--Michael Joseph Gross --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Markides, a Maine sociologist who was raised in the Greek Orthodox faith and later drifted into agnosticism, continues his spiritual journey homeward in this collection of captivating conversations with the monk Father Maximos. The book is set on the island of Cyprus, where the author and his monastic mentor spent extended periods of time together due to unexpected circumstances that moved Father Maximos from the "Holy Mountain" of Mount Athos. Markides (*Riding with the Lion*), his interest piqued by an earlier pilgrimage to Mount Athos, used a sabbatical from the University of Maine to further explore the body of Christian mysticism that Mount Athos's monks have preserved since the ninth century. Here, Markides and others pepper the charismatic Maximos with questions on a wide range of topics from angels, saints and demons to the role of icons in worship and the place of hell in Christian belief. Markides is a skillful and skeptical inquisitor whose queries surely must have tried the patience of his mentor. But Maximos rises to the occasion, providing gentle, thoughtful answers that by necessity often transcend the Western mind's reliance on logic in spiritual matters. Markides's work is an excellent resource for spiritual seekers of all levels, answering questions about Christianity in general and Eastern monasticism in particular. It will be of special interest to those who may be unaware of Christianity's deep roots in mysticism. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of

this title.

A spiritual teacher I had once said that spirituality is not taught, but caught - by spending time in the presence of enlightened master teachers who have the gift of spirituality themselves. That seems to be Kyriakos Markides' main method or approach in this work, which is presented as an ongoing dialogue on matters of Christian spirituality by his enlightened teacher, Father Maximos. Although liberally sprinkled with tales of the miraculous and the fantastic, there is a lot of substance in this work concerning Orthodox Christian spiritual doctrine and practice. It may be a little rambling or meandering at times, but the topics covered do not fit neatly into a didactic or academic outline. The book opens with a real attention grabber, which demonstrates that miracles still occur amongst the elders on Mount Athos, and are not limited to some distant, mythical past. The reason I am giving this book four stars instead of five is that for some reason, maybe just my own predisposition to wander hither and thither in my reading and research, I repeatedly found myself putting the book down - and then picking it up again at a later date, after finishing another work. It may not be an absolutely riveting page turner, but there is still a lot in this book that will inspire and inform the reader, and give him or her ample food for thought and contemplation.

I've been on a spiritual exploration for several years now, attempting to read all types of works, from traditional religions to New Age, and even quantum physics. Only one book have I read from cover to cover, and as quickly as my schedule has allowed. This is the one. I'm surprised myself. This book for me, as well as the third book entitled Inner River, provides (present tense on purpose) the bridges between. That's the best way I can describe it. I agree with many others that the words of the monk are authentic and deeply spiritual - inspired by the holy spirit, while the perspective of the author is not. Instead the author is completely of this world and his perspective is common and rather unfulfilling. Nonetheless, I give the author kudos for obviously capturing and transcribing deeply spiritual and holy truths that reside in the lives and hearts of the monks. This is a book I plan on reading again in the near future.

Only wish my mom had not left the planet before this book came out. I've given away copies like Bible tracks to yoga teachers and the like, New Age friends who think they've taken a look at Christianity. The author will grate on some churchy types, I think, as he is a college prof on the east coast. It's refreshing that more lay people are writing about the ancient church, not just monks or clergy or polished theologians. The author signs up to be a taxi driver for a local bishop, deciding

that having gone to India and the like, he should perhaps be fair to himself and take another look at the guru folk of the faith of his youth, Eastern Orthodoxy. And where to go but to the Holy Mountain. I've since been introduced to Elder Porphyrios in all five of the books written about him, but heard of him first in Mountain of Silence. Stories about him and little things like God talking through lizards will make your New Age friends heads spin toward heaven. That's my guess. I've a couple copies on my shelf, ready to be given away. This is a must book for converts to Eastern Orthodoxy, those who want to explain why they've made the trip back to the ancient faith. I plan to go to the Holy Mountain next year...and I'll make a trip to the bones of "the saint of love", Elder Porphyrios. I will take this book along, too; one of my top twenty favorite titles I've read in recent years. The follow up book-Gifts from the Desert-is better, some say. I liked the first one here.

As a protestant pastor I've been discovering that my/our spiritual heritage, whether we like it or not, was founded in a Orthodox/Catholic foundation. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who desires to go beyond the surface and sometimes façade of modern Christianity. Even though there may be some doctrinal issues, the heart and hunger of the monastery monks that are referenced in this work can be a great model for every believer.

I can't recommend this book enough. While I don't think it is the intention of the author, this book helped lead me to the Orthodox Church. Read this book with an open mind (whether Orthodox or not) and I think you will find it very fulfilling.

Markides got a few points wrong about Orthodoxy and the ascetic tradition. He gave the impression that Orthodoxy or perhaps the Athonite fathers don't think that hell can be the eternal state of some. That is simply not true despite the fact that some very holy people such as St. Gregory the Theologian made that error. It's a grave error but the saints are not without error at times. Never-the-less, Markides does an excellent job of introducing some important terminology and in exposing the weakness of a merely scientific world view.

Very inspiring! it teaches us some history about the Orthodox Church and help us to see more clearly the way to salvation, by discussing the life of monks in Cyprus and the life of holy elders that lived on Mount Athos. I recommend every Christian to read this book. I couldn't stop reading it after I started the first page and I finished it in a week by reading every night. My husband is not usually interested in reading religious books, but I finally convinced him to read The Mountain of Silence and

he loved it. There are a lot of experiences that the Saints have lived and that were mentioned in this book, that I didn't know about before even though I go to Church regularly. I bought the book from Amazon and it arrived on time and was in great conditions even though it was a used book.

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