

Untie the Strong Woman: Blessed Mother's Immaculate Love for the Wild Soul

Clarissa Pinkola Estes

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Author of the phenomenally successful *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, Clarissa Pinkola Estés returns again to her passionate, persuasive storytelling in a work that celebrates the many manifestations of the Blessed Mother.

Estés writes, “She is known by many names and many images, and has appeared in different epochs of time, to people across the world, in exactly the shapes and images the soul would most readily understand her, apprehend her, be able to embrace her and to be embraced by her.”

No matter what she might be called—Our Lady, Holy Mother, Seat of Wisdom, Great Mother—the divine, feminine force of compassion and understanding is the same across generations and cultures, Estés believes. She’s a source of warmth, a balm to troubled souls, and a wellspring of infinite blessings.

Yet, in our modern society, where we are often “scraped down to the bone by those who leak scorn with such soul-sick pride,” Estés notes, our connection to this feminine energy and power has been erased, or at least fossilized. In describing her own encounters with the divine, Estés creates a beautiful framework in which to explore the empowerment that comes with opening one’s heart to the maternal force of the Blessed Mother.

With a blend of memoir, women’s studies, and spirituality, she takes readers on an unforgettable journey both backward through time, as she traces the history of how Our Lady was viewed by patriarchal society, and forward to a brighter future, when we can all know the calming, riveting power of the divine feminine. She includes poetry, images, family stories, and tales from many countries, combining them all into a heady mix of celebration and reverence.

By loosening themselves from preconceived ideas about the Blessed Mother, readers can “untie the Strong Woman” from the bonds that have been placed over her by the institutions and cultures that have tried to diminish her power, Estés asserts. By sharing her deep and abiding love for the sacred feminine, the author runs with the wolves yet again, but this time, she has a ferocious and remarkable Mother to lead the pack.

ELIZABETH MILLARD (Winter 2012)

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