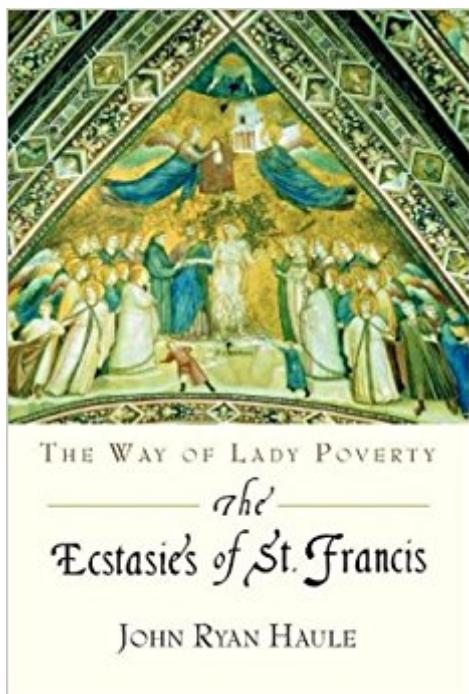


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The Ecstasies Of St. Francis: The Way Of Lady Poverty



Synopsis

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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Customer Reviews

Reviewed: 2004-03-15 Francis of Assisi, the most written-about saint in Western Christianity, is the subject of two more books. Haule (Divine Madness) is a Jungian analyst interested in the mechanics and dynamics of the saint's spiritual life, while Cunningham is a theologian and longtime Francis scholar who situates the saint's life and work within the larger life of the Western Christian church. Both authors agree that Francis's experience and understanding of poverty are central to his originality. Haule presents poverty for Francis as the transcendent, personified Lady, the object of the troubadour's desire. Repeating a 19th-century argument exemplified by Paul Sabatier's still-circulating 1894 biography, Haule portrays Francis as a self-actualized individual whose hardscrabble poverty placed him in conflict with cold-eyed practitioners of theology and law. This study focuses on the inner life of the saint and his ecstatic experiences. Taking a more traditional biographical approach, Cunningham proposes poverty as a way in which Francis, the biblical literalist, could imitate the humble God disclosed in Jesus. Cunningham defends the more recent argument that Francis was, in fact, an orthodox Catholic who tried to be a Catholic reformer, preaching and living the ideals of the reform Councils of the Lateran. Another recent biography of Francis is Donald Spoto's Reluctant Saint; this reviewer's favorite is the little work by G.K. Chesterton, St. Francis of Assisi. Both these new books are suitable for larger public libraries where interest in Catholic saints is strong. Cunningham's book, with its more scholarly approach, is also recommended for academic and seminary libraries.-David I. Fulton, Coll. of St. Elizabeth, Morristown, NJ

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Book Review by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

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

John Ryan Haule

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During the life of St. Francis of Assisi, the church authorities were not comfortable with his radical view of poverty. He modeled his actions on Jesus and lived a way of service that inspired generations. In

this compelling work, Jungian analyst John Ryan Haule (Divine Madness: The Archetypes of Romantic Love, The Love Cure, and Perils of the Soul) examines Lady Poverty as Francis's guide in love. For the saint, she represented a reversal of values which put the proper emphasis on generosity and dependence on God's grace. This reversal, in turn, gave him a technique of ecstasy and a way of combating the ego. Of course, as Francis found out, the ego is so tricky that it can even take pride in doing good: "When Francis caught himself indulging in vainglory after giving his mantle to the old woman, he was horrified to discover that he was loving himself. The ideal of giving away 'for the love of God' had served only as a self-deceptive cover to hide the fact that he was redirecting the glory to himself." Haule has some very interesting things to say about how Francis battled his emotions through the practice of equanimity. He had regular spiritual practices which kept him focused on the sacred cosmos. He silently recited verses from the Bible and his own compositions, a practice similar to Hindus doing japa or mantra prayer. Haule also looks at this saint's wonderful connection with the natural world and his closeness to animals, who could sense his inward peace and kindness. He concludes with an assessment of Francis's stigmata. This is a very unusual treatment of the beloved saint that is sure to arouse many emotions and perhaps even give you some new spiritual practices. Reviews and database copyright © 1980-2003 by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat.

John Ryan Haule is a Jungian analyst with a practice in Boston Massachusetts. A series of mystical experiences during his college years led him to enter a religious order after graduation, but he left after five years in response to persistent messages in his dreams. In 1973, he earned a Ph.D. in religious studies from Temple University and was Assistant Professor of Religion and Culture at Northeastern University, before leaving to train as a Jungian analyst in Zurich. He has been president of the New England society of Jungian Analysts and of the C.G. Jung Institute-Boston, as well as a member of the executive committee of the International Association of Analytical Psychology, based in Zurich. He is also the author of Divine Madness (Shambhala, 1990), The Love Cure (Spring, 1996) and Perils of the Soul (Weiser, 1999)

Really fine piece of work!

As a student of transformation... most religious works leave me cold. They are simply out of touch with anything but religious dogma. This work however... cut out all the nonsense and gave me a real, straight to the point understanding of the process of transformation as Francis encountered life. He

was human just like us and he struggled just like we do... and overcame and didn't stop. Read this book if you are serious... this is a must own and study. Haule lends his expertise from the therapeutic process in analyzing process... a GREAT BOOK !!!

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