



## Monika K. Hellwig: The People's Theologian

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*You can't throw truth at people so that al they can do is duck.*

'Monika K. Hellwig

Though Monika Hellwig is well known in theological circles, what is not so widely known is how theology led her into a whole new way of life. Refugees from the Nazis, Monika and her two sisters were sent as children to live in Great Britain with an academic couple who provided them with a loving home and an excellent education. The notion of *home* became a central motif in Hellwig's spiritual/theological understanding of life.

For fourteen years she was at home" with the Medical Mission Sisters, expecting to be assigned to Pakistan. Instead she was sent to the Catholic University of America where systematic theology and scriptural studies enlarged her intellectual horizon. That experience, together with the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the imperative of the lay vocation, altered the course of her life. She left her religious community and enthusiastically embraced her baptismal calling. Everything that followed 'her academic work and writing, her masterful teaching within and outside the academy, her adopting three children as a single mother, her sense of responsibility to her parish and to several prayer groups 'reflects her intentional living out of the lay vocation until the moment of her death in 2005.

The contributors to this first biography of Hellwig write from their intimate knowledge of some facet of her rich and challenging life. Together they create a portrait of a woman who was teacher and author, poet and administrator, a mother and a contemplative in action 'a "people's theologian" 'with whom readers will feel at home.

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