



Tools Matter: Beginning the Spiritual Journey (The Matters Series)

Mary Margaret Funk

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How can we tend the garden of our souls? Meg Funk turns to the wisdom of the desert fathers for the means of removing obstacles to spiritual growth, which include thoughts of food, sex, possessions, anger, dejection, and pride, among other preoccupations. Redirecting thought away from such weeds in the garden of the spirit can lead to a greater awareness of God and purity of prayer.

This method to mental discipline may seem impossible at first, Funk admits, but those who succeed at it are rewarded with a liberating experience as they come to observe and control individual thought processes. Drawing on the writings of the fifth-century monk John Cassian, Funk goes on to explore deeply using such tools as memory, imagination, and rational thinking-tools right out of early Christianity-to work on inner healing. She also explains how other positive tools, such as ceaseless prayer, manual labor, and isolation, may lead to uncluttering the mind and purifying the heart.

Mary Margaret Funk is a Benedictine nun of Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, Indiana. From 1994 through 2004, she served as executive director of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, which fosters dialogue among monastics of the world's religions. In addition to the volumes of the Matters Series, she is the author of Islam Is...: An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion and Into the Depths: A Journey of Loss and Vocation.

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