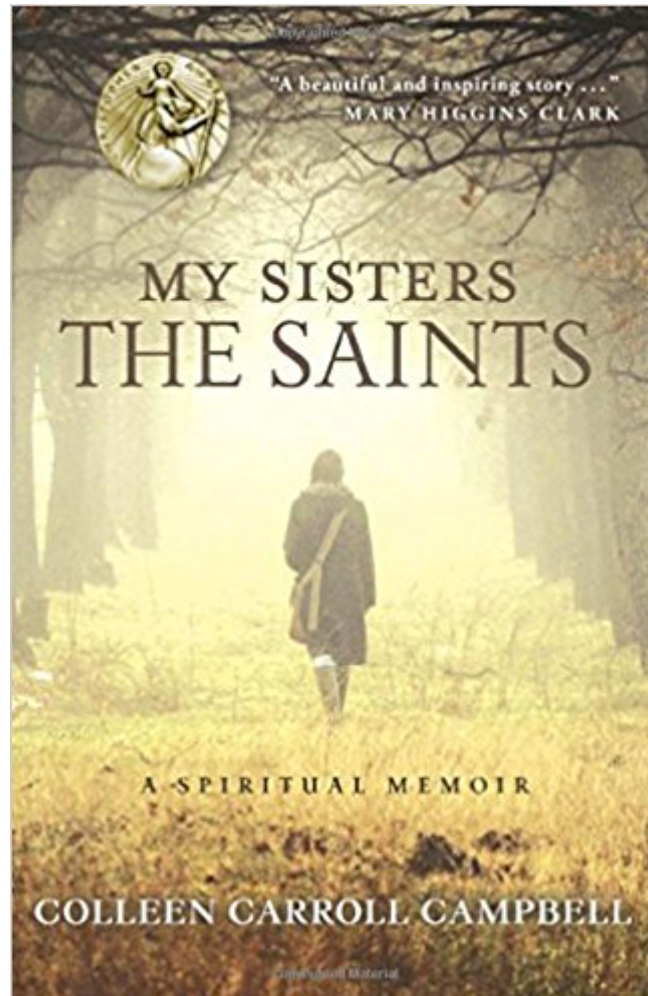




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# **My Sisters The Saints: A Spiritual Memoir**



## Synopsis

A poignant and powerful spiritual memoir about how the lives of the saints changed the life of a modern woman. In *My Sisters the Saints*, author Colleen Carroll Campbell blends her personal narrative of spiritual seeking, trials, stumbles, and breakthroughs with the stories of six women saints who profoundly changed her life: Teresa of Avila, Therese of Lisieux, Faustina of Poland, Edith Stein of Germany, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Mary of Nazareth. Drawing upon the rich writings and examples of these extraordinary women, the author reveals Christianity's liberating power for women and the relevance of the saints to the lives of contemporary Christians.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Author, journalist, and former speechwriter to George W. Bush, Campbell offers a touching memoir on family, loss, and career as filtered through the lives and writings of six women saints: Teresa of Ávila, Thérèse of Lisieux, Faustina of Poland, Edith Stein of Germany, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Mary of Nazareth. Campbell writes about her college years, drifting in chaos; meeting her future husband; the illness and death of her father; and the long quest to attain motherhood. During this very personal journey, she also enrolls in a feminist-thought class, which leaves her cold, while her superficial friendships and relationships lead to a nagging discontent. • Revisiting her Catholic upbringing, she turns to the saints for guidance and to help her reconcile a desire for a career with a yearning for marriage. Thoughtful and gracious, Campbell's story will serve as an inspiration for many young women who are attempting to straddle two very different worlds—the sacred and the profane—in a society with little patience for subtlety or complexity.

--June Sawyers --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

“A beautiful and inspiring story of a woman’s deep faith and the saints who became her sisters along the path to her answered prayers.” • “ Mary Higgins Clark, worldwide bestselling novelist” “Colleen Carroll Campbell has encountered most of the challenges confronting young women today—balancing dating, courtship, and marriage with a successful career, caring for a parent with Alzheimer’s, dealing with infertility—but she hasn’t faced these challenges alone. In *My Sisters the Saints*, Campbell introduces us to the women who helped her along the way—women like Teresa of Avila, Therese of Lisieux, Edith Stein, and, of course, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Completely contemporary and totally timeless, *My Sisters the Saints* is an engaging spiritual memoir and the perfect guidebook for anyone who is looking for a companion to help her navigate life’s sometimes difficult and confusing journey.” • “ Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York” “In this fascinating memoir, Colleen Carroll Campbell recounts her discovery of kinship with six great women saints at crucial junctures on her journey through life. *My Sisters the Saints* is the story of how a thoroughly modern woman drew inspiration and strength from her spiritual “sisters” while struggling with the mysteries of life, love, illness, and death in today’s world. This lovely and highly readable book will touch many lives.” • “- Mary Ann Glendon, former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, Harvard Law professor, and President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences” “Fully alive, authentically feminine, making a serious contribution to culture—and faithfully Catholic? In the minds of many still, an unlikely combination, at best. In *My Sisters the Saints*, Colleen Carroll Campbell recounts her own life’s story and the poignant struggles she encounters in fulfilling her dreams as an author, journalist, cultural commentator and woman. Campbell’s stories will resonate in the heart of every woman challenged by today’s culture and blessed with even a scintilla of faith. You won’t put this book down until you have finished the last page. And as you read, you will hold your breath in hopefulness experiencing with Colleen the grippingly real decisions in this woman’s life—both big and small—the response to which ultimately define who one is as a person. | Thank you, Colleen, for the courage to tell your own story. It makes an important and unique contribution to the lives of women by giving flesh to the beauty, meaning, and the purposes of human life and human love lived open to the mystery of God.” • “ Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, S.V., Superior General, Sisters of Life” “Colleen Carroll Campbell is one of the finest writers on the American Catholic scene, and *My Sisters the Saints* shows her heart, her skill, and her keen intelligence at their best. This is a wonderful, engaging personal memoir and a great witness of faith.” • “ Charles J.

Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Philadelphia

“This book is a powerful description of the long struggle Colleen Carroll Campbell had to undergo to go back to peace, to give God the place that belongs to Him: the first. The lesson she learned is not to be forgotten: When in need, let us remember that we have brothers and sisters in heaven whose lives and sufferings teach the way to peace.”

— Alice von Hildebrand, author of *The Privilege of Being a Woman* and *The Soul of a Lion: The Life of Dietrich von Hildebrand*

Colleen Carroll Campbell is a genuine icon of the “new feminism” called for by Blessed John Paul II. She has been on a long journey in search of the true meaning of women’s liberation and in *My Sisters the Saints* she tells the story of how six women mystics and her own personal trials and triumphs have helped her find that liberation at the foot of the cross. Refreshing, well written, down to earth, and a joy to read (I’d often find myself grinning as I read it), Colleen has given us a sincere gift: not only the gift of her intellect and skill as a writer, but, more importantly, she has opened her heart and given us the sincere gift of herself. Stop wondering whether you should read this book. You should!

— Christopher West, author of *At The Heart of the Gospel* and fellow at the Theology of the Body Institute

In *My Sisters the Saints*, Colleen Carroll Campbell shows how in our attentiveness to the saints we learn not only about the Lord and the way of life he imparts, but also how we discern the most important truths about who we are and the purpose for which we have been created. *My Sisters the Saints* brilliantly illuminates how the Christian life cannot be understood as an abstraction, but shows its radiant form in our friendship with heavenly companions who meet us in the real events and concrete circumstances of our lives.

— Father Robert Barron, author and host, *Catholicism* and founder of *Word on Fire Catholic Ministries*

In *My Sisters the Saints*, Colleen Carroll Campbell has liberated these great historical heroines from dusty altarpieces and stone effigies and has brought them into the new millennium. Through her literary portraits, they become sure-footed guides through the modern day spiritual minefield of the “hook-up” culture, the difficulties of commitment and family, and the ever-present reality of suffering and loss. By the end, one finds oneself with six new girlfriends whose wit, common sense and faith transcend any age.

— Elizabeth Lev, art historian and author of *The Tigress of Forlì*

From her own life’s story, Colleen Carroll Campbell has depicted a spiritual journey marked by waiting for and letting go. She learns of motherhood, both spiritual and biological, from the holy women whose lives reflect her own journey back to her. Her personal story teaches a universal lesson: living free is different from being in control. This is a moving and beautiful book.

— Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago

“The saints undo the world” for by their sheer existence, they tell us we may have gotten it wrong: all our conventions, all our agreements, all our correctnesses and easy thoughts no

help when things come crashing in. In troubled times, Colleen Carroll Campbell found herself by reading the lives of the great women saints. And you might find your own self, reading Campbell's *My Sisters the Saints*." — Joseph Bottum, author of *The Christmas Plains* and former editor of *First Things* — "With this intimate memoir, Colleen Carroll Campbell gives a moving witness to the 'cloud of witnesses' celebrated in sacred scripture." — Dawn Eden, author of *My Peace I Give You* and *The Thrill of the Chaste* — "This is an inspiring and insightful account of one young woman's journey through the challenges of contemporary culture, the ups and downs of life, and her encounter with the wisdom of the saints. This is the story of a journey told with refreshing honesty and great insight that will benefit many." — Ralph Martin, author of *The Fulfillment of All Desire* and president of Renewal Ministries — St. Louis Post-Dispatch — columnist Campbell (*The New Faithful: Why Young Adults Are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy*, 2002) relates a provocative life story centered on her experiences as a woman in the Catholic Church. Intertwined with the author's tale is her autobiography as a reader, her experiences with books by and about various saints who have deeply influenced every aspect of her life. — | Throughout the book, Campbell describes how various women saints helped her understand her situation and move ahead. — | A charming and instructive communion with saintly sisters. — " Kirkus Reviews

This goes down as one of my favourite reads of 2014. Spiritual memoirs abound these days, but this one stands out for a couple of reasons. First, this is not self-centred writing in any sense. She relays her experiences in simple narration. She deals with love, the slow loss of a parent, the ups and downs of trying to have children, and she never narrows in on herself. (And it just too easy to do just that when doing this kind of writing.) Second, it's a well written story of a modern woman connecting her life to six female saints: Teresa of Avila, Therese of Lisieux, Faustina of Poland, Edith Stein of Germany, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Mary of Nazareth. Their lives relate to her deepest longings, guide her through some difficult decisions, and lead her to rethink nearly everything she thought she knew about what it means to be a liberated woman in the twenty-first century. For someone who is not a Catholic, I don't understand the prayers to Mary that I have often heard when attending mass with my mother. I appreciated her explanation of why Mary is so revered in the Catholic tradition, even if I don't agree with it. Another aspect of the book that I enjoyed is her quest to understand the meaning of her life and identity in light of her faith and contemporary feminism. I love the wrestling she does with the dilemmas of her generation: confusion over the sexual chaos of the hookup culture, tension between her duelling desires for professional success and committed

love, ambivalence about the demands of marriage and motherhood, and anguish at her father's descent into dementia and her own infertility. This is a gem that would be great to share at a book club with mothers and daughters. Lots to discuss.

This book was recommended to me and what a great read! Colleen is not only a wonderful writer, she draws the reader in on her journey. The reader can relate to her story, as we've all faced challenges at different times in our lives. Despite my not knowing all the saints she draws upon, I feel my Lenten season is deeply enriched after reading her book and I'm looking forward to learning more about them. Our book group read this as well and it is the best book we've read in the past few years! Highly recommended!

This was such an easy read for me, and I usually don't enjoy reading or finish a book I start, but I did this one. So many situations one can relate to, like a father with an chronic illness while you are still a young adult or weighing one's career with one's family life. I love how she tells a story, it's just so engaging to read because of her choice of words. I also love how she learns from the lives of the saints along the way, and how their story helps her to live her own story with more faith, hope, and love. There is her and her husband's own struggle of trying to conceive for several years that also hit home for me, and I would recommend the book for any other woman who struggles in this area. Very helpful spiritual advice within.

I got the book on Kindle and read it in a very short time, I could not put it down. This is a very personal account of a woman in need of, and looking for, salvation. She found it by following saints that were introduced to her just when she most needed them. They are also some of my favorite saints. If you need guidance, a role model or someone to talk to, turn to the saints. They will never let you down or lead you astray, as this author attests.

There are many popular "memoirs" published today. We love to write about ourselves, our finding ourselves or creating ourselves. This work, however, is not self-centered, though it is a reflecting on Coleen Carroll Campbell's event-filled life. In many ways, readers can easily identify with the anxieties, hopes and sufferings of the author--most would say, "It happened to me!" But Campbell's depth, of feeling, reasoning, and spiritual awareness is a wonder to follow. Many would think--"This could be for me." She puts complex experiences in simple narration. Dealing with love, the slow loss of a parent, the ups and downs of trying to have children, Campbell never narrows to herself. She

captures surely the others in our life--the bigger picture. Without preaching at all, she provides spiritual insights, ties contemporary Christian life to those of saints in bonds of love, and leaves readers with a hopeful, joyful hope.

Colleen Carroll Campbell shares so openly and deeply about her personal faith life, struggles with a father who has Alzheimer's Disease, and fertility challenges. Her pain and vulnerability is linked so beautifully with the lives of 6 beautiful women Saints in a down-to-earth, relevant way. Thank you Colleen for sharing so deeply and honestly. I plan on reading this book from time to time and have highlighted sections to refer to when I'm working through various difficulties. I give thanks and praise to my Heavenly Father for you!

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