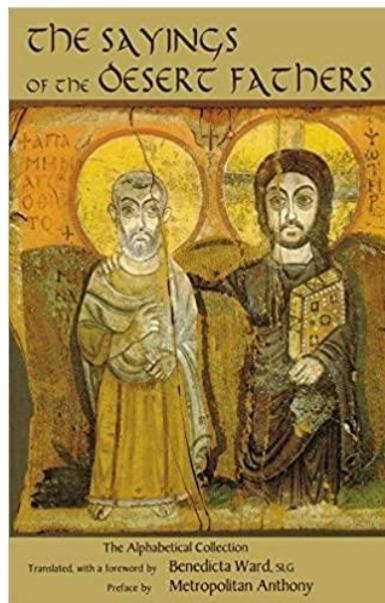


As disciples of Jesus, our hearts are meant to burn with love unceasingly. Solitude is a wonderful place to learn how to kindle this sacred Spirit-filled fire into flame. It can then become a constant source of delight. This warmth is unique and does not compare with any other stirrings the heart can experience. In the stillness of solitude, the Holy Spirit will come to us and make his home in us. Solitude delivers us into the “zone” of the Holy Spirit. Join Father Mark (virtually) on a raft for eight days as he seeks to prove the efficacy of seven principles for thriving in solitude.

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We will read Fr. Goring's book in conjunction with *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. These are fourth-century ascetics who sought solitude in the desert. The faithful who did not embrace the austerity of the desert admired those who did and sought them out for counsel and consolation. The 'words' the monks gave were collected and communicated across Christendom. We have a great deal to learn from their integrity and their unrelenting courage, from their vision of God - so holy, so great, possessed of such a love, that nothing less than one's whole being could respond to it. These were men and women who had reached an awesome humility rooted in the vision of God. These ascetics, were austere to themselves, yet immensely compassionate to the needs of men and their frailty and sins. The inner silence of the desert fathers spoke volumes: 'If a man cannot understand my silence, he will never understand my words.' Let us emulate their earnestness in the search, their ruthless determination, their infinite compassion and their own silent communion with God.

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