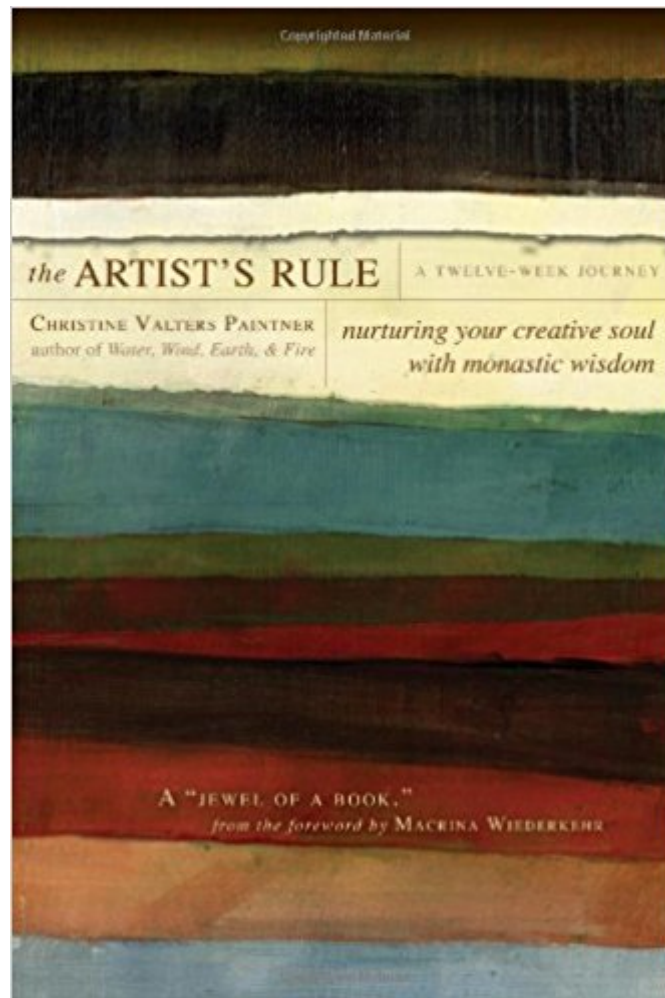




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# The Artist's Rule: Nurturing Your Creative Soul With Monastic Wisdom



## Synopsis

Christine Valters Paintner, author of *Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire*, invites readers to discover and develop their creative gifts in a spirit of prayer and reflection. This twelve-week course draws on the insights and practices of Benedictine spirituality to explore the interplay between contemplation and creativity. Summarized in the phrase "pray and work," *The Rule of St. Benedict* provides the inspiration for Christine Valters Paintner's newest exploration of the mutually nourishing relationship between contemplative practices and creative expression. Artists of all stripes and stations in life--poets or painters, potters or photographers--will discover how traditions of Benedictine, Celtic, and desert spirituality can offer new sources of inspiration for their work. Through this twelve-week course, themes like "Sacred Tools and Sacred Space," "Creative Solitude and Community," and "Nature as a Source of Revelation and Inspiration" are enriched by Paintner's perceptive discussion and enhanced by insightful quotations from well-known artists and writers. Each week offers suggestions for grounding both the creative and the spiritual life through three basic practices: walking, lectio divina, and journaling. In sync with Paintner's vibrant Internet presence, *The Artist's Rule* is supplemented with online resources, including guided meditation podcasts, video lessons, and discussions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gracefully written and ever-consoling, *The Artist's Rule* demands engagement from its reader. It challenges artists of every variety to journey actively with their Rule, and to thereby plumb the riches

of both a contemplative and generative discipline. ---from Image Journal

**The Artist's Rule** entices us to plunge into the riches of a contemplative, creative life. With hospitality, wisdom, and grace, Christine returns us to ancient monastic practices that have preserved the soul of spirituality across the ages and can restore us in our own time. --Jan -- Richardson "This jewel of a book will help you tap the eternal in your deep soul." --Macrina Wiederkehr, O.S.B., Author of *Seven Sacred Pauses* (from the Foreword) "It is a time of shift, of awakening, new challenges, greater complexity in every dimension of daily life. *The Artist's Rule* is a treasure for those of us who long to live a rich inner life, to be fully human and creative members of a creative Universe, to give expression to what is moving within us--to write, paint, make music, and dance. Christine frames her exploration in monastic wisdom, but in our present context where the whole world is our monastery. The inner guide of each of us is thoroughly welcomed and nourished throughout the chapters--in explorations, guided imagery, mystical insight, poetry, music, reflections, inspiration, practices of creativity, ritual--as we travel today's call to creativity and contemplation." --Mary Southard, C.S.J., Artist/Illustrator for *The Cosmic Dance: An Invitation to Experience Our Oneness* "Graciously offered, wisely conceived, carefully crafted, *The Artist's Rule* leads the reader ever more deeply into practices that recover the awareness that contemplation and creativity spring from the same Source. This work, grounded in Benedictine spirituality, offers us ways to rediscover the sacred art of living and serving, following the Spirit's lead and awakening to the artist's palette of our daily lives." --Mary C. Earle, Author of *The Desert Mothers: Spiritual Practices from the Women of the Wilderness* and *Days of Grace: Meditations and Practices for Living with Illness*

Christine Valters Paintner is the online Abbess of [AbbeyoftheArts.com](http://AbbeyoftheArts.com), a virtual monastery without walls offering resources, classes, and books -- on contemplative practice and creative expression. -- She is a writer, artist, spiritual director, retreat facilitator, -- teacher -- and the author of several books including *Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire: The Christian Practice of Praying with the Elements* (Ave Maria Press 2010). -- Christine -- earned her doctorate in Christian spirituality from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and her professional status as registered expressive arts consultant and educator from the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association. She also serves as an adjunct faculty at Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry. Paintner is a Benedictine Oblate -- and lives out her lay monastic commitment as a Benedictine Oblate in the heart of Seattle with her husband.

recommended this book (and her other two) and for some unknown (at the time) reason, I clicked on

ordering all three...and I have NOT been disappointed! Her assignments at the end of each chapter are wonderfully healing. I read the book all the way thru first, and now am going chapter by chapter, reading slowly and carefully, pondering her wise insights. If you are not sure about ordering all three at once, order and read this one first!

I am reading this book as part of an ecourse through the Story Sessions writing community, and let me just say, this book is all kinds of good, and grace, and redeeming, and reminding, and inspiring. There is so much of the call to live now and be wholly who we're meant to be. It's one of those books that reads you while you're reading it. You'll leave with a deeper awareness of what it means to be truly connected to faith, community, and your soul. Perhaps there are not as many references to christianity, but like all things, read with a discerning heart. You know the Shepherd's voice, and you'll know what "junk" to chunk, and what treasures to keep. We are each responsible for our own spiritual growth. This book is one way see one's art as a spiritual practice.

The Artist's Rule is an evocative and useful exploration of the intersection between art and spirituality through the lens of Benedictine wisdom. Christine explores twelve themes found in Benedict's Rule and suggests various artistic practices to go deeper into the theme. The artistic practices are clearly explained, accessible to poets, painters, photographers, writers - anyone with a creative impulse, which is all of us. The Artist's Rule doesn't require any art or writing training at all, yet is still valuable for seasoned creatives who want to ground their art-making in monastic wisdom. This is my favorite of Christine's books. Highly recommended!

I purchased this book as a 'textbook' for the online class 'Way of the Monk, Path of the Artist' as offered by [...] and conducted by the author. In the spirit of full disclosure, I'm deliberately working through the book at the pace of the class and have not completed it yet, so this is only as regards the first four chapters so far! I'll be happy to come back and either edit this review or create a new one at such time as I'm done the class. It comes out of a background of Benedictine and Celtic spirituality and the meditative traditions: as such, there is what I can only describe as a 'Christian-friendly' aroma or atmosphere to the writing. At the same time, it's evident that the author has made a sincere effort towards inclusivity, non-offensiveness, and non-denominationalism. This may distress some people who are looking for a very explicit Christ-focused examination of our artistic gifts and talents, but in my opinion it also makes the book far more accessible to 'seekers', theists of various flavours, and avoids an unpleasant religiosity or aggressive piousness. If you are

open to that perspective, you will get a great deal out of *The Artist's Rule*, whether you are from a Catholic tradition, a conservative Protestant like myself (from a Reformed, Calvinistic heritage, now worshipping in a non-denominational cross-cultural setting!), or simply someone who believes that there is a higher power and a divine motivation in the world which is accessible by humanity. There are wisdom writings and poems from other traditions that strengthen and enrich the text, but the meditative techniques are based on the monastic 'lectio divina' and on Biblical texts.

Non-Christians/believers from other faiths are encouraged to use other wisdom literature from a tradition in which they are comfortable; mystics, authors, poets, and philosophers, such as Rumi, are quoted. The author's style is personal, affectionate, and supportive, exactly like a firm, kindly mother abbess sharing her thoughts and her collected sagacity. The art challenges that go along with the book are so appropriate and spiritually-based, with a variety of techniques ranging from collage to poetry to construction. I've been doing a lot of prayer, 'inner work' and self-examination as a result of the class - very empowering, and getting me closer to God's desires for my life - but the book itself will also encourage and inspire you as you read and interact with it. Read slowly, reread, ponder, allow yourself to come to understanding, and savour the concepts, counsel, and wisdom contained.

I am delighted to have this book. I read the author's blog regularly and having a book that I can return to again and again is wonderful. She provides well researched information about each chapter's content. She also gives the reader exercises to help with internalizing the concepts presented. The book is insightful, inspirational, practical and encouraging. It helps me to remain focused on caring for the spiritual and creative part of myself.

A 12 week study perfect for a writing, art, or book group. Paintner bring together contemplative study, scripture and poetry and encouragement for artists in this beautiful book. I especially love the lectio divina exercises and her descriptions of art journaling. This is one of those marked-up books that I will read again and again.

Christine Valters Paintner takes her readers on a journey to their own creative soul. While I never considered myself a REAL artist, this work has allowed me to experience my own sense of creativity in a most rewarding way and discover I have more talent than I would have ever imagined. In addition, I have learned to enjoy my urge to be creative without the constant committee of my mind telling me "you're not doing it right!" It would be difficult not to love the lady and her work.

I love this book! So much so, that I have ordered five additional copies for friends. It has helped me get back in touch with my spirituality -,magical things happen when I'm more connected with this part of me. It is amazing. I highly recommend this book, especially for artists...but in some way, we are all artists and creators, so it is a great book for anyone, really. Beautiful poetry as well, and the exercises help in going inward and exploring.

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