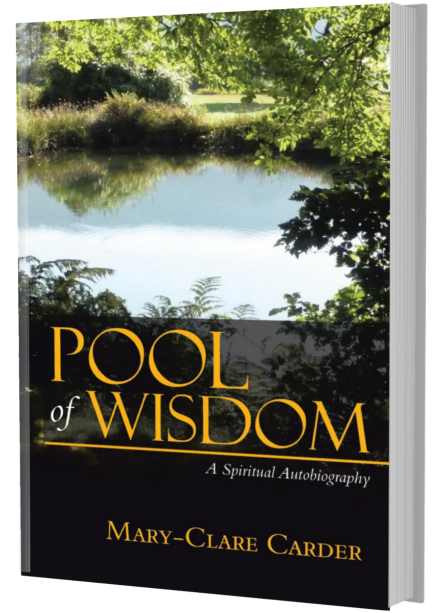


POOL OF WISDOM

A Spiritual Autobiography

From a fairly young age Mary-Clare Carder has had mystical encounters with the spiritual world. In her late twenties she developed Sjogren syndrome – a painful, incurable condition which blunted her career and made her life very challenging. This challenging life led her to a deeper spiritual path and an enriched interior life. Along the way she learned about the wisdom of silence, a form of meditation known as centering prayer, energy healing, and has after death communications (ADCs). There are also many wisdom-filled quotes from a host of people who have inspired her during her life. All these things have been a pool of wisdom for her.

Mary-Clare intends the book to offer help and support not just to those who face many challenges in life but to everyone. It is her greatest hope that by reading this book people will be more present to the wonders of their own inner life. She invites the reader to plunge in to this pool of wisdom – it is her joy to share.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



MARY-CLARE CARDER is a piano teacher by profession with a BMus from the University of Victoria. She is a lifelong Anglican and has participated in dozens of silent retreats and contemplative workshops over the last 30 years. She has led several contemplative workshops and quiet days.

When she has the money and energy, travel is a great joy in her life. She lives in Victoria, BC.

A LOOK INSIDE



INTRODUCTION



Welcome to this space—I pray it will be a blessing. I hope that this book will not only provide nourishment in difficult times but will also increase inner awareness and help us explore more fully our *inscape*, as Thomas Merton called it, with our whole heart sensing and exploring this inner landscape. The process of writing this book has helped me see the kingdom or the realm of God more clearly, and I hope the book itself will have the same effect for other seekers, bringing the realm more sharply into focus.

This book has two wellsprings. The first is a collection of ideas and writings that have moved me deeply and helped me on my journey in life. The second is my own spiritual experience. This book is in many ways a deeply personal study. Because Christianity is my chosen faith, and I am most familiar with Christian spirituality, this book focuses on the person of Jesus. However, you will also find wisdom from other major religions. As the Benedictine monk Bede Griffiths said, the five major world religions are like the fingers on a hand; if you go deep enough, they all merge.³

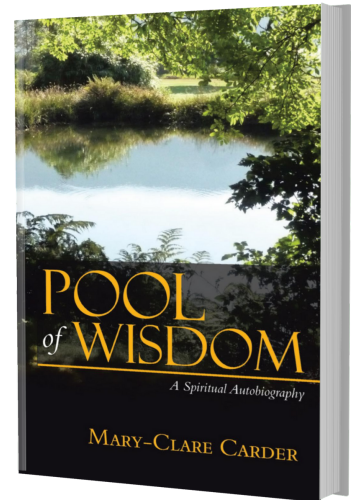
These two wellsprings form a pool of wisdom. When I think of a pool, I think of refreshing reservoirs. Pools of light and joy are important in our lives as they sustain us through our trials. Pools of water are absolutely necessary for our sustenance and growth. As to wisdom, it can be defined many ways, but I will use writer Paulo Coelho's description: "Wisdom means both to know and to transform."⁴ Thus, I hope this book will bring both knowledge and transformation. Cynthia Bourgeault has a very practical take on wisdom. She says, "The practice of attention and surrender—between those two banks wisdom flows."⁵ From time to time throughout the book I will refer to these two simple but enlightening "banks."

Like life, this book is a journey—a journey into interior space. My journey to the interior life has come partly as a result of what I consider to be a challenging, frustrating, and disappointing exterior life. Despite my best efforts, my exterior life has not turned out at all the way I hoped. I failed to have good health, failed to marry, failed to have children, failed to have the career I wanted. In some ways it seems like a life that didn't happen. With all the disappointment in my exterior life, it is hardly a surprise that I have gravitated toward, and been guided to, the interior life. The interior life has not disappointed me! Therefore, I hope this book will be a blessing and a comfort to people with challenging exterior lives.



AUTHOR

Q&A



What inspired you to write about your story?

I was inspired to write my story for two reasons. First because I have learned so much spiritually in my life and second, I had had what I thought were some very unusual experiences that really needed to be shared much more widely.

Why did you decide to publish?

I decided to publish partly because I had spent so much time on the book that it seemed a real waste not to publish. Also partly because I have experienced a lot spiritually in my life and believe my experiences would be helpful to many, many people.

What do you hope readers will get from reading your book?

I hope it will inspire people to do their own spiritual work and reflect on their own mystical experiences. I hope it will bring peace and healing to people especially for those struggling with disability and struggling in other ways.

This is a deeply personal story for you, what did you learn about yourself through the writing process?

At the beginning I wasn't sure that I could write a book but I did it. That was great to learn! I also learned that I really enjoy writing. The writing of the book brought some of the practices and experiences more sharply into focus which I am grateful for. Writing the book I believe also helped prepare me for the contemplative workshops which I led.

Tell me a piece of wisdom you would like to impart with your readers.

A piece of wisdom -- just as Jesus said, keep asking, knocking, and seeking the inner way and life. The spiritual life will at times surprise you and never disappoint you.