

Via Feminina: Mystical Path of the Feminine

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Via Feminina—Latin for “the feminine way” or “the way of the feminine”—is a term I coined to address the emergence of a feminine mystical path to ultimate reality that is both contemporary and rooted in ancient cultures. In essence, Via Feminina is dedicated to the spiritual rights and dignity of women, men, and all creation; and to the mystical path of the feminine. Committed to a new spiritual path with ancient roots in women’s experience, Via Feminina explores the contemplative dimensions of women’s lives and work, the significance of gender in religious life, and the social and political implications of the spiritual rights of women.

The suppression of women and their spiritual voices is in turn an oppression of the entire earth community. For this reason, Via Feminina explores educational resources for women and men on the underlying causes of violence against the feminine spirit, and the vital role feminine consciousness plays in healing the heart of our world.

Via Feminina goes beyond classical depictions of the spiritual journey to represent a distinctly female mystical path that breaks through and breaks down the historical denigration of women encoded in world cultures and religions. Via Feminina explores the contemplative process of women’s journey from oppression to freedom and the specific soul sufferings, dark nights, and embodied spirituality women discover in their quest for full dignity of person. It also empowers women to live and practice the mystical path of the feminine, which heals deep spiritual wounds and transforms women’s inner and outer humanity.

Drawing especially on the relationship between women’s classical mysticism and feminist concerns, Via Feminina addresses the spiritual dimensions of violence against women and the contemplative techniques used by women spiritual masters to achieve their highest spiritual potential. It also investigates how unjust social and political conditions afflict women’s souls, and the spiritual disciplines women use to transform centuries-old structures of consciousness fundamentally damaging to the human spirit and to creation. In addition, Via Feminina studies and researches contemporary global issues, including the ravages that poverty, rape, hunger, and war inflict on millions of the world’s women and children. By providing resources that empower women to claim their inner soul-strength, it is my hope that the mystical path of the feminine can help women affirm the dignity of their bodies, their spiritual rights, and their ethical choices.

My work on Via Feminina encompasses four themes:

Historical: explores the mystical path of the feminine in texts, practices, rituals and methods used by women masters drawn from our collective religious heritage.

Social: investigates how unjust cultural, religious, and political conditions afflict women’s souls, and draws contemporary conclusions for how women understand their bodies, their dignity and rights, and their ethics in light of women’s inner strength and spiritual resiliency.

Spiritual: identifies and maps out a distinctly female mystical path—Via Feminina —that transforms soul oppression and heals women’s and men’s inner and outer humanity. Locates the primary source of a person’s healing in the Divine being at the center of one’s being.

Global: researches and develops a distinct category of “spiritual rights” as a necessary interpretative framework in which to evaluate the impact human rights violations and other egregious forms of violence have on the spiritual integrity of persons, nations, and the earth community as a whole.

Wound my soul with
tears of fire
May I be a servant of
your sorrow

Quench my thirst with
rivers of joy
May I be a servant of
your love

~Beverly Lanzetta

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