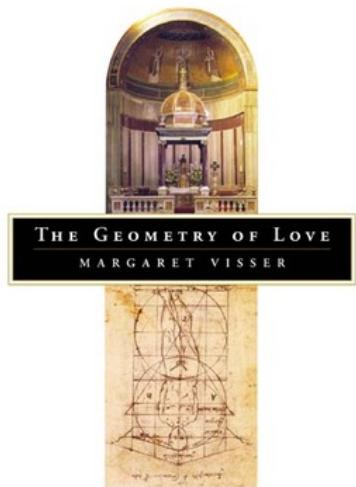


*Space, Time, Mystery, and Meaning
in an Ordinary Church*



The Geometry of Love: Space, Time, Mystery, and Meaning in an Ordinary Church

Margaret Visser

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The Geometry of Love: Space, Time, Mystery, and Meaning in an Ordinary Church Margaret Visser
Margaret Visser's desire to find answers to her own questions -- as a traveler, a believer, and an insatiable "anthropologist of everyday life" -- led her to undertake this unique and revelatory book. Guiding the reader through a church outside Rome, Sant'Agnese fuori le Mura, she draws upon history, theology, anthropology, and folklore to illuminate the spiritual meanings embedded in its architecture.

The Geometry of Love: Space, Time, Mystery, and Meaning in an Ordinary Church Details

Date : Published May 31st 2002 by North Point Press (first published 2000)

ISBN : 9780865476400

Author : Margaret Visser

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, History, Architecture, Religion, Cultural, Italy, Travel, Anthropology



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From Reader Review The Geometry of Love: Space, Time, Mystery, and Meaning in an Ordinary Church for online ebook

Shane says

Often brilliant and occasionally flawed anthropological reflection on a specific church in Rome, that brilliantly reflects some key symbols and themes (altars, bells, feminism) while retaining an interesting narrative. Some sensational choices of language mar sections - the author is a self-confessed subjective observer (a Catholic writing about Catholic history). Some sections, particularly those relating to contemporary public response to the place of a church, feel underdeveloped. The book nevertheless has great nuggets of information that make it more than worthy of a read.

Anne Van says

A very readable and enjoyable book by the writer of "Much Depends on Dinner". This time the writer brings a wealth of material, from Roman history, archaeology, mythology, and architecture in thinking about one particular church in Rome. This is an early Christian church dedicated to St. Agnes. Much thoughtful writing about the Catholic church and catechism.

Richard says

This book contains a wealth of detail about Sant'Agnese fuori le Mura, a third-century shrine housing relics of a young virgin-martyr, St. Agnes (died c. 304, feast January 21). Margaret Visser explores the church and the catacombs underneath, delving into art, architecture, history and religious symbolism. While I enjoyed reading this immensely, and would recommend it without hesitation to anyone who is interested in early Christianity, I felt the abundance of facts to be slightly bewildering at times. For me personally, the last chapter, which analyses the passion-narrative of Agnes against a backdrop of both Greco-Roman mythology and other Christian martyr stories, seemed the most focused and the most interesting chapter.

5greenway says

A brilliant thing. Pretty dense, but I'm damned if I'm going to knock a point off for being dense. By the end, probably the best part of a really good book, it felt like the achievement of some kind of pilgrimage.

Katie says

An interesting consideration of the "meaning" of a church building. Although Visser describes her subject as "an ordinary church", historically, archaeologically and architecturally it is far from being at all ordinary. Somewhat like a guided tour of the church, but with such a erudite guide leading the way. It does make one want to either visit the church, or look on line for images - which were very sadly lacking in this paperback

version. I would have liked illustrations and floor and area plans to fill out the descriptions.

Much as I enjoy Visser, in this case I think the insider anthropology doesn't communicate to those on the outside. She is a committed Christian, and at times comes off like a Catholic apologist. Yes indeed, there are heroes and martyrs of the Church, but there have also been a lot horrendous deeds done in the name of the same Church as well, and in my opinion there is still no real room for women to fully participate in the Church as men do.

Nezka says

The multi-faceted history of this church and the people who had a hand in inspiring, creating, and adding to it and the complex surrounding it were fascinating! This St. Agnes is "my" saint, and reading this book propelled me to visit Rome during her (and my) feast day, January 21, and the author described the mass and ceremony perfectly. The only shame was that I didn't get to go inside Constantia's adjoining mausoleum.

Chris says

Disclaimer: ARC via Netgalley.

Usually when I get approved on Netgalley, I try my best to write at least 250-500 words. I find that for this book I cannot do so.

Simply put: **This is the best book I have ever read about a church or other building.**

I collect and read Pitkin guides as if they are going out of style. But this book blasts them all to shame. I pre-ordered a Kindle copy after reading the digital ARC.

In this book Margaret Visser gives a complete guide to the church of Sant'Agnese di fuori Mura (in Rome). Along the way, she deals with church history, art history, architectural history, feminism, martyrs, and ancient history. It is brilliant. One would think a book of this length on such subject matter would be boring.

It's not. It's sheer poetry.

I never heard of this church before, and Visser makes you feel as if you were there, but now I want – I need – to see it.

If you're interested in any of the above topics, please read this book.

I cannot thank Open Road Media enough for re-issuing this for Kindle and for allowing me to read a digital ARC.

It's magnificent.

Ken says

A fascinating yet simple book. By simple I do not mean simplistic, but simply and beautifully written. Her word portraits are wonderful along with her digressions and asides.

Sskous says

Visser is a fabulous writer with a depth of insight that takes one's breath away. She is dedicated to seeking meaning in the ordinary, like dinner (see other books), and in this jewel takes us on an excursion to St Agnes Outside the Walls. Using St Agnes as a model of the ordinary church, Visser explains every detail of the architecture of the church building, which signifies the architecture of our search for God. I read and re-read this book; it's fabulous. One can just read the chapter on the nave, or the door swinging open ~ it's a wonder.

Lydia says

The recommendation on Slowtravel said something like "you will never look at a church in the same way." The reviewer was spot-on. If you're going to spend any time in Rome, this is definitely one of the best travel books I have read--I would recommend even if you are not going to Rome, lc

julie says

i love visser's books about food, but this church book was just a bit much for me. since i'm getting old and life is short, i didn't finish it.

Bob says

There are parts of this book that are extrodinary and a true inspiration to one's faith. It is remarkable to read stories of the early years of the Chrisitan faith. At times it was hard reading, but that fault was more than made up with extraordinary revelations

Mandy says

Taking one small church, St Agnes Outside the Walls, in Rome, as her starting point, Margaret Visser has written a fascinating and absorbing account that relates this one church to all churches, and examines the theology, architecture, history, symbolism and just about everything you can possibly think of to do with religion and church buildings. Her research has been thorough and painstaking but she wears her knowledge lightly. Short chapters means the reader can pace his or herself – it's certainly not a book that can be read in large chunks. Not that Visser's writing is dense or inaccessible – not at all. But there's so much to take in that I certainly found little and often was the best approach. This book is a true treasure trove of facts and

ideas and concepts, and I learnt a great deal. But oh how I longed for some illustrations. The book cries out for them. Such a shame that the author or publisher decided not to add any. That apart this is a wonderful book and essential reading for lovers of churches everywhere.

Dwight Penas says

This is a sublime book. I don't know how to categorize it to friends. It is a classicist "reading" an ancient building. But this book is an intricate web of history, etymology, architecture, theology and liturgical theology (all of it excellent). It was so rich that I could only read a couple sections at a time. Then I'd have to pause to think, or to catch my breath. I mean, it took me a while to get my mind around "narthex" as a fennel bulb. Just to have such information -- if not insight -- was heady.

Medlibrarian says

Visser takes one church and deconstructs it. I've been in many churches over the years, albeit never to this one (Sant'Agnese fuori le mura in Rome), but this book makes me understand how very little I know about them. She looks at every aspect of Sant'Agnese fuori le mura, its architecture, its rich history, its physical location. Fascinating read.
