

For Immediate Release

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The Holy Card Tarot
By Patty Gallagher

In the 19th and 20th century the Catholic Church published images of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints and angels, and other imagery such as the sacraments in a form that came to be known as holy cards. Sometimes the cards drew their imagery from older iconography, such as Renaissance and Baroque paintings, but mostly they were crafted by anonymous artists to provide images for the faithful to contemplate and place in their bibles and missals. Frequently prayers relevant to the imagery were printed on the back.

Patty Gallagher created the Holy Card Tarot as a means for comparisons to be made and commonalities found between these frequently quaint, often beautiful, images and those of the Tarot.

Gallagher says that it started simply enough – she started noticing similarities between traditional Tarot images and the images on holy cards. She quickly discovered that the common symbols and images seemed to represent deeper shared truths. “For example, not only did the Hermit card look like traditional images of St. John the Baptist, but the significance of the meaning was the same too, a voice crying out in the wilderness, the trek into the lonely desert to find knowledge, the isolation of the hermit leading to great insight and wisdom. Would the seeker follow his or her own path, would the wisdom of those in tattered clothes be respected?” Gallagher says.

She quickly realized that it wasn't just images such as The Hermit that excited this response, and soon she was finding similar meaning and import in the holy cards she was collecting. Gallagher was surprised when she found inspiration and wisdom in the men and women of the church. Gallagher goes on, “Amazing and unforeseen parallels were uncovered. The lives of the saints became more lyrical and less bloody, more focused on their accomplishments than their gory deaths, more humane and less sensationalistic. The Tarot images expanded too, into real life and away from simple arcane symbolism. The comparisons led to a heightened reality for both of these traditions.”

Meanwhile, she found the beauty and imagery of the Tarot, always so meaningful and profound for her, growing and changing as well. From this “cross-pollination,” she was inspired to create a Tarot deck. Researching antique holy cards, bible cards and religious images, history and esoterica, Gallagher was able to complete a full Tarot deck, vibrant with beautiful color and striking imagery. Already an artist, she designed the deck and DVD with all graphic work done “in house.”

There has never been anything like this in terms of the comparison it makes to traditional religious imagery and that of the Tarot. The commonalities flow in simple but profound ways. Gallagher says she developed it as “a syncretic attempt to broaden the knowledge and wisdom of the Seeker.”

The Holy Card Essays, the companion book, is presented as a DVD, with an image and supporting text for each of the cards. Each card description includes an explanation of the holy card imagery as well as its meaning as a Tarot card.

The cards, in drawstring bag, decorated with a tiny golden bee – hearkening to the card backs - are presented with the DVD in a sturdy black fold over box with grosgrain ribbon ties.

This is a unique exploration of Tarot that stretches its limits in remarkable ways. The Tarot Media Company is excited to make this truly unique approach to Tarot available to Tarot enthusiasts and collectors, as well as those who may not have considered a more traditional tarot deck.

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