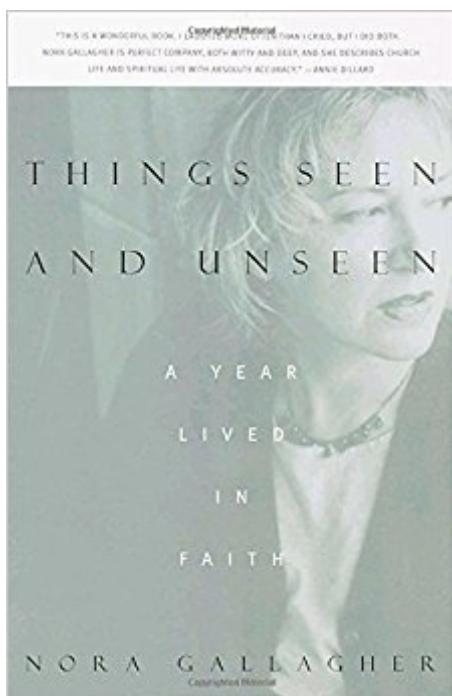


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# Things Seen And Unseen: A Year Lived In Faith



## Synopsis

"Gracefully written and moving ... Things Seen and Unseen starts with Nora Gallagher entering the labyrinth of her life ... and ultimately it leads to the center of her being."--The Boston Globe started with an occasional Sunday, a "tourist's" visit to a local church. Eventually Nora Gallagher entered into a yearlong journey to discover her faith and a relationship with God, using the Christian calendar as her compass. Whether writing about her brother's battle against cancer, talking to homeless men about the World Series, or questioning the afterlife ("One world at a time"), Gallagher draws us into a world of journeys and mysteries, yet grounded in a gritty reality. She braids together the symbols of the Christian calendar, the events of a year in one church, and her own spiritual journey, each strand combed out with harrowing intimacy. Thought provoking and profoundly perceptive, *Things Seen and Unseen* is a remarkable demonstration that "the road to the sacred is paved with the ordinary." "Like Kathleen Norris in *Amazing Grace*, Gallagher is renewing the language of ultimate concerns."--San Francisco Chronicle "The deep serenity that suffuses Gallagher's work, the lyrical cadences in which she writes, do not blunt the sharp edges of what she discovered in her quest for meaning."--Los Angeles Times

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Vintage (December 7, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0679775498

ISBN-13: 978-0679775492

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 46 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #448,800 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #136 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Episcopalian #657 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Faith #710 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Worship & Devotion > Faith

## Customer Reviews

"I came to this church five years ago as a tourist and ended up a pilgrim," writes Nora Gallagher, speaking of her year at Trinity Episcopal Church in Santa Barbara. It started with an occasional Sunday visit, a shy toe dip into the Episcopal Church. Eventually she delved into a yearlong journey

to discover her faith and a relationship with God, using the Christian calendar as her compass. What Kathleen Norris did for the language of the church in *Amazing Grace*, Gallagher does for the Christian calendar--finding contemporary meaning in an ancient calendar that is often misunderstood or overshadowed with oppressive dogma. Starting with the chapter titled "Advent," and ending with "Ordinary Time," Gallagher speaks to the biblical and historical themes of the church's calendar, then offers a translation for living in America at the end of the millennium. Most touching is her raw honesty, whether writing about feeding the homeless in the Community Kitchen or the unglamorous job of caring for a friend with AIDS. Indeed, it is Gallagher's humble interpretations of faith that make her seasonal wisdom so trustworthy. "I learned something about faith, its mucky nature, how it lies down in the mud with the pigs and the rabble," she says when writing about the darkness of Advent. "...God is not too good to hang out with jet-lagged women with cat-litter boxes in their dining rooms, or men dying of AIDS, or, for that matter, someone nailed in humiliation to a cross." --Gail Hudson --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This is a book for those who doubt their faith, resist the institutional church, and yet are drawn to both. Faith, says journalist Gallagher, is "an accumulation of events and experiences of a different order." The author offers her insight into faith in artfully written chapters sprinkled with the wisdom of an array of writers from C.S. Lewis to medieval mystic Mechthild of Magdeburg. This is not, however, a collection of platitudes but a story of faith practiced in understanding and supporting a gay priest and in helping the homeless, hungry, sick, and dying, primarily through the Episcopal church to which she belongs. She avoids "cheap and casual religious jargon" to tell of work, doubt, searching?and moments of grace. Recommended for most devotional collections.?Linda V. Carlisle, Southern Illinois Univ., EdwardsvilleCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Nora Gallagher's journey of faith is really a journey of life with faith adding clarity and definition to the journey. If you happen to be Episcopalian the book will resonate with you as you see people living into their faith in a variety of ways at an Episcopal church in Santa Barbara. You journey through the liturgical year and experience the cycle of life in the church and how it plays out in the lives of the parishioners. "Life is what happens while we are making other plans" is brought home in a variety of ways. You see people find purpose and meaning in their lives as they reach out to others who are at the margins in our society. They also learn their new Priest is unusual in many different aspects which both challenges and enriches their respective journey's of faith. A good read

which is both touching emotionally and thought provoking.

I found this book boring. It had many inaccuracies regarding the Church Year, religious orders, etc. It did not demonstrate the life of a Christian only of a person who does good works. Her characters and situations were left hanging. The more I read the less I liked it. I finally chalked it up to a person with little Christian Education trying to tell her story.

Gallagher has written a beautiful book, giving us a year-long chronicle of her faith, using the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church as her guide. She shows us that faith encompasses the whole human person--doubt, pain, loss, and joy. She reminds us that God's in it all, for better or worse--"God is not too good to hang out with jet-lagged women with cat-litter boxes in their dining rooms, or men dying of AIDS, or, for that matter, someone nailed in humiliation to a cross." This is real faith--faith that faces life rather than hiding from it. Nora reminds us that prayer is not simply the words we say to God, but what happens when we throw our lives into God's work. For her this involves helping the homeless, working in a soup kitchen, caring for dying friends... Her book has a lot to offer and remind us. So buy a copy and share it with your friends... it's what I've done. ;)...and as for the reviewer below who states "I'd only recommend this book if you are a feminist or leftist" I ask, Wasn't Jesus both?

Nora Gallagher is a wonderful writer and a faithful witness to the lives and struggles at an Episcopal church in Santa Barbara. I love this book. However, I cannot but wonder if perhaps the homeless she meets in Santa Barbara have higher educational achievement and perhaps higher incomes than many of the members in my Episcopal congregation in Michigan's thumb!

If you have never participated in Holy Week, now is the time to read the chapters in this book, which starts with Advent, and winds its way through Lent and Holy Week and into Eastertide and Ordinary Time. This book is best read over several weeks, if not during each church calendar season. Highly recommended.

Helpful and wisdom and great insights on every page. Thank you, Nora Gallagher.

An insightful story of her walk with faith

I use this book for a course I teach on American religion. Gallagher provides an account of her experience as a seeker, as someone on her own restless quest, in terms that many students can relate to. Her world of uncertainty is one we can all understand. But she points beyond mere "spirituality" to the meaningfulness of Christianity lived within a liturgical cycle, in a community with a tradition and a sense of vocation to serve God and humanity. Highly recommended.

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