

"*Sacred Dimensions of Women's Experience* is an important book. It is one of the few theological books I know that addresses the meaning of the sacred out of the experiences of women. I could hardly believe it when I went through the index and found 'myself' there, having experienced (along with other women) housework, falling in love, giving birth, caretaking, raising children, creating a home.

"Naming the sacred in our own experience is an absolutely essential theological task for women. For so long we have been afraid to do that, either because we thought we didn't know enough, or because we have internalized the message that our lives and work are trivial, or because our theological comments are not always in keeping with the classical theology we have been taught.

"This book is one of the most exciting books I've read for some time, both for its subject matter and for the insights that my sisters have underlined for me as they name the sacred in their own experience.

"The most surprising and affirming thing about the book is to find how the sisters speak an authentic theological word to me, because we do our theology out of shared experiences familiar to women and speak out of that common bond."

(The Very Rev. Dr.)
LOIS M. WILSON,
The Ecumenical Forum of Canada;
President,
World Council of Churches

This book is based upon lectures at Harvard Divinity School in the fall of 1985 in the Theological Opportunities Program lecture series.

"This lovely and important book finds the golden strand that runs through the tapestry of women's lives and dares to name it sacred. Illuminating and profound."—Jean Kilbourne, author, *Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women*

"Puts into words the feelings that so many women, from a variety of religious backgrounds, have harbored inside themselves for generations. Leads the way into a more genuine spirituality for women of all faiths."—Doris Anne Younger, General Director, *Church Women United*

"This wonderful and very thoughtful book is long overdue. It takes seriously women's experiences, rites of passage, and sense of nature. I find it deeply religious. I will use it in my teaching."—Phyllis Chesler, author, *Women and Madness*

"A rich resource for feminist theological reflection. I recommend the book to anyone interested in women's spirituality and experience of the sacred."—Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, author, *In Memory of Her*

"An important enterprise for us all to begin. Renaming the world is something Adam and God did in the Bible, and today most women and children bear the names of their husbands and fathers. When we begin renaming things, we recreate how we see our world and ourselves. This work is a sign of women's growing social power and awareness, and a cause for optimism."—Naomi Goldenberg, University of Ottawa; author, *Changing of the Gods*

"Patriarchy has been built on the negation of women's body, women's space, women's work. This book is an important expression of the ongoing process of reclaiming women's body and women's work as sacred."—Rosemary Radford Ruether, author, *Sexism and God-Talk*

"Speaking in many voices, thoughtful, brave and intensely personal, this passionate book is universal in its reach. It teaches me, again, that the way to the sacred is through a searing honesty that spares nothing, includes all."—Joanna Macy, author, *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age*

"Women who feel the feminist perspective has little to do with their lives will find in this book a guide for opening up to new growth and deepening their roots in their own soil. Reading other women's experiences, and having them name those experiences, made me exclaim over and over again, 'Oh—This is what that experience of mine was all about!' It gave a new depth to my life."

—Mary Virginia Stieb-Hales, Director for Women's Program, *Program Agency, Presbyterian Church (USA)*

"I am thrilled by the concept and even more impressed by the actual contributions. I can't wait for the book to be published so I can recommend it to both women and men."

—(The Very Rev. Dr.) Lois Wilson, *The Ecumenical Forum of Canada*;
President, *World Council of Churches*

Roundtable Press
Four Linden Square, Wellesley, Mass. 02181 USA

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"... we are engaged in a new revelational encounter with the divine in and through women's experience..."

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SACRED DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE

EDITED BY
ELIZABETH DODSON GRAY

It is an awesome thing to find a voice within to express one's feelings, and then to shape that voice into words that utter one's truth for a first tentative time—and then to come to believe that one has the right and indeed the power to do this. It is like being present at the creation of the world.

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“We felt we were using the language of our lives to sing the song of the universe.”
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“I think we women must claim it as a fact that we have lifted up a corner of the universe and gazed at what lies beneath. Every mother through birthing has this knowledge.”
(Section 2)

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The power to name the sacred is being claimed by Adam's silent partner. As if awakening from a long sleep, we women are slowly shaking the film of male concepts from our eyes and looking at life as if seeing it for the first bright time.
