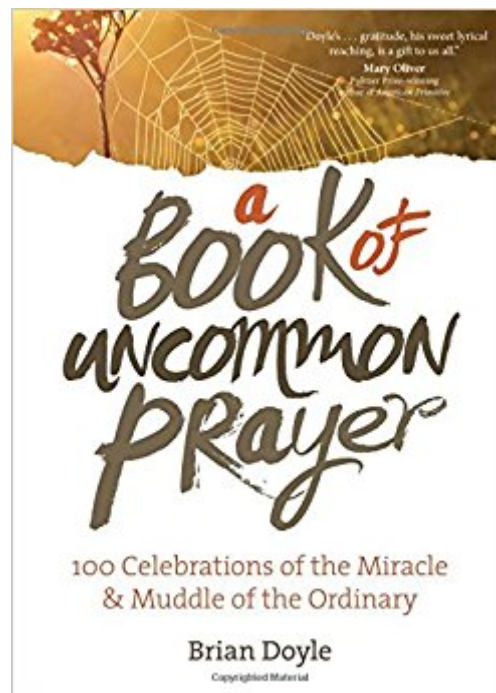




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# A Book Of Uncommon Prayer: 100 Celebrations Of The Miracle & Muddle Of The Ordinary



## Synopsis

Acclaimed, award-winning essayist and novelist Brian Doyle--whose writing, in the words of Mary Oliver, is "a gift to us all"--presents one hundred new prayers that evoke his deep Catholic belief in the mystery and miracle of the ordinary (and the whimsical) in human life. In Doyle's newest work, *A Book of Uncommon Prayer: 100 Celebrations of the Miracle & Muddle of the Ordinary*, which was named "A Best Spiritual Book of the Year" by *Spirituality & Practice*, his readers will find a series of prayers unlike any of the beautiful, formal, orthodox prayers of the Catholic tradition or the warm, extemporized prayers heard from pulpits and dinner tables. Doyle's often-dazzling, always-poignant prayers include eye-opening hymns to shoes and faith and family. In Doyle's words, "the world is crammed with miracles, so crammed and tumultuous that if we stop, see, savor, we are agog," and the pages of his newest book give voice and body to this credo. By focusing on experiences that may seem the most unprayerful (one prayer is titled "Prayer on Seeing Yet Another Egregious Parade of Muddy Paw Prints on the Floor"), he gives permission to discover the joys and treasures in what he often calls the muddle of everyday life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Brian Doyle's writing is driven by his passion for the human, touchable, daily life, and equally for the untouchable mystery of all else. [H]is gratitude, his sweet lyrical reaching, is a gift to us all."  
--Mary Oliver, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *American Primitive*

To read Brian Doyle is to apprehend, all at once, the force that drives Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman, and James Joyce, and Emily Dickinson, and Francis of Assisi, and Jonah under his gourd. Brian Doyle is an extraordinary

writer whose tales will endure." --Cynthia Ozick , National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author of Quarrel and Quandary "Brian Doyle has a fine quick mind alert for anomaly and quirk--none of them beyond his agile pen." --Peter Matthiessen, National Book Award-winning author of Shadow Country"Some people can write. Some people can feel. Brian Doyle, born with a silver tongue and a big heart, is among the lucky few who can do both." -- --Anne Fadiman, Author of The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

Brian Doyle (1956-2017) was an award-winning author who served as the editor of Portland Magazine at the University of Portland in Oregon from 1991 to 2017. Doyle wrote many books of fiction, essays, and poems, including A Book of Uncommon Prayer: 100 Celebrations of the Miracle & Muddle of the Ordinary, which was named "A Best Spiritual Book of the Year" by Spirituality & Practice and received an honorable mention in spiritual soft-cover books from the Catholic Press Association. His novels include Mink River, The Plover, Chicago, and Martin Marten, for which he won a 2016 Oregon Book Award for Young Adult Literature. His most recent novel, The Adventures of John Carson in Several Quarters of the World: A Novel of Robert Louis Stevenson, was published in March 2017. Other honors include a number of book awards from the Catholic Press Association, the Christopher Medal, three Pushcart Prizes, the University of Notre Dame's Griffin Award in literature, the Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Foreword Reviews Novel of the Year award, the John Burroughs Award for Nature Essays, and, most recently, the 2017 John Burroughs Medal for Distinguished Nature Writing for his novel Martin Marten, only the second work of fiction to be awarded the Medal in its 90-year history. Doyle's work has appeared in The New York Times, Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, Orion, American Scholar, Commonweal, America, Notre Dame Magazine, Boston College Magazine, US Catholic, Christian Century, St. Anthony Messenger, National Catholic Reporter, First Things, and Give Us This Day. His essays have been reprinted in the annual anthologies from Best American Essays, Best American Science and Nature Writing, and Best American Spiritual Writing.

Mr. Doyle, thank you for the prayer inside this book called "Prayer for Osama bin Laden yes Even Him the Stupid Murderous Slime." We prayed this prayer just this past Sunday (with proper citation) in worship. Yes, Osama bin Laden is dead, but we prayed this prayer to help us learn how to do what Jesus said according to Matthew 5:43-44: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I saw to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,..." We prayed your prayer and held in prayer the Dallas sniper and those who've

been making threats against the police since last Thursday. We prayed for police officers who shoot and kill outside of the boundaries of acceptable law enforcement. We prayed for the enemy that is racism.

Standard prayer books are all well and good: it's handy to have the Angelus or the prayer to St. Joseph for a happy death near at hand. But there are circumstances that just aren't covered in standard prayer books, and that's where this book steps in. Doyle's prayers here include 'Desperate Prayer for Patience with Politicians with Excellent Suits and Shoes and Meticulous Hair and Gobs of Television Makeup Who Have Utterly Forgotten That Their Jobs Are Finally About Feeding and Clothing and Protecting and Schooling Children', 'Prayer for the Elderly Woman on the Train Eating One Almond Every Five Minutes for Two Hours for a Grand Total of Forty Almonds and Believe Me I Counted, Fascinated', 'Quiet Prayer for Friends Whose Teenage Child Just Stormed Out of the House', and 'Grinning Prayer at the Gentle Arrogance & Foolishness of Saying that There Are Only Five Forms of Catholic Prayer'. Reverent, wry, compassionate, humble, funny, honest, touching, but above all, faith-filled.

Brian Doyle has a gift for seeing and celebrating the common in uncommon words (mewling, muddled) and an unorthodox style that pays no attention to commonly accepted rules of composition. When he finishes what he has to say on a particular topic, he simply stops with these words, "And so: Amen." In that he is consistent and true to his prayer theme. He kept me reading page after page. Prayer after prayer. (For sisters related by blood. For sisters not related by blood.). All the way through to his Last Prayer. I like that he calls "God" by anything but that name, but that I always knew who he addressed because he used upper case letters. (Boss. You. Love.). I liked that Doyle is honest in expressing joy, love, frustration, pain. I like that I have this book to read and pray with. And so: I recommend it.

Brian Doyle is an amazing ambassador of gratitude. He helps us see the beauty and specialness of everyday things. When I am feeling self pity or crabbiness, I open this book and read one of the prayers. I always feel better and much more aware of the goodness that surrounds us. This is a book designed to uplift anyone as we live in selfish times.

This little book is marvelous. It is witty, unconventional, a bit irreverent, whimsical and altogether a joy. The prayers that the author, Brian Doyle, has written in this book probably occur to all of us. It's

just that we really should say them. We should, and often. Being prayerful, for me at least, means listening for the voice of the Lord. He can not be heard in the roar of the waves or the clap of thunder but He can be heard in whispers. This book whispers. So listen. I preach from time to time in my church and during one of my homilies I took this book out and read two of the prayers. Then I displayed the book and recommended it to all present. If you believe in prayer as I do please get yourself a copy of this wonderful book.

In my mind Brian Doyle can do no wrong, so start knowing that. This book is full of prayers that remind us what prayer can be. They don't have to be fully of ecclesiastical words. They can be about the dog, the clerk at the corner store, the rain, whatever it is you feel inspired to pray about. Doyle offers these prayers and many more. And they are inspiring.

Outstanding, thoughtful, inspiring!

Bryan Doyle's humor is brilliant and his gratitude is contagious. He, through his unique perspectives, challenge me to look at the world differently. This is an absolutely inspiring book that will make you laugh and make you reconsider what gratitude and prayer are all about.

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