

I'm not a robot 
reCAPTCHA

Continue

Simone weil waiting for god pdf

Simone Weil, Waiting for God, Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2009, 208 pgs. Tortured by a careful desire for intellectual honesty, struggling with the paradoxes of Catholicism and attentive to the silent presence of neglected, Simone Weil is among the most persuasive Catholic thinkers of the twentieth century. Weil's calling was to remain on the fringes of the institutional church. Waiting for God, published posthumously in 1951, is a raw work. A third of the book consists of Weil's 1942 letter written to Fr. Joseph-Marie Perrin, a Dominican priest who served in Marseille who became her spiritual counselor. The collection also includes a handful of essays written by Weil, in which she draws from the deep well of Catholic mysticism, while adding it. Both the letters and the essays were written against the fiery background of World War II and the occupation of France. Weil's call for Catholicism becomes even more timely and burns by the fire around her. Weil was 32 years old at the time of her introduction to Fr. Perrin. She was also near the end of her life. Moved and fascinated by the concept of human affliction, she began her adulthood advocating for workers and tried to share the experiences of the working class, to the extent that this was even possible, given her family's privilege. She worked in a Renault factory, since 1936 briefly participated in the Spanish Civil War as part of an anarchist military column. She lived in emigration in England and hastened her death at the age of just 34 by refusing to eat anything but food similar to the meagre rations of the people of occupied France, although her body was already weakened by tuberculosis. Although Fr. Perrin's response to Weil's letter is not part of the collection, we can draw two conclusions about their relationship and how the Dominican priest saw this introspective young woman. Fr. Perrin had a deep respect for her introspection and her intellect. He was also focused on making her understand that her challenging and sometimes unorthodox theological reflections were not obstacles to her being formally received in the Catholic Church. Fr. Perrin very much wanted to see Weil—come from an agnostic Jewish family but since 1937 engaged with Catholic mysticism—finally participate in the doem sacrament. The overall context of the six letters in this collection is Weil's explanation of Fr. Perrin of her persistent decision to refuse baptism. On the one hand, Weil sees himself as unworthy or ill-prepared for the sacrament, even as Fr. Perrin tries to reassure her that this is not the case. On the other hand, intellectual honesty dictates that she refuses baptism in a Catholic church that is not Catholic enough to accept, just as they are, people with any religious background or of none religious faith; unable to appreciate in them what Weil speaks of as an implicit belief. In his fourth letter to Fr. Perrin, conceived as a kind of spiritual autobiography, Weil writes: Christianity is Catholic with the right but not in fact. So many things are outside of it, so many things that I love and don't want to give up, so many things that God loves, otherwise they wouldn't be in existence... Christianity is Catholic by right but not in fact, I regard it as legitimate on my part to be a member of the Church through right but not in fact not just for a time, but for my whole life if necessary to be... There is an absolutely insurmountable obstacle to the incarnation of Christianity. It is the use of the two small words anathema sit. It's not their existence, but how they've been employed so far. That is also what prevents me from crossing the threshold of the Church, the universal storeroom, because of these two small words. I remain beside them all the more because my own intelligence is numbered among them... Weil learned Sanskrit and valued much of the Bhagavad Gita. She also reflected on her own upbringing in an agnostical home and her involvement in secular trade union movements. This led her to explore the concept of an implicit belief, which exists in people outside the Church. Such people instinctively exercise a love for the created world that binds them to God, even when these same people are rejected or rejected by the Church. In his sixth letter to Fr. Perrin, Weil writes: Less vast things than the universe, among them the Church, impose obligations that can be extremely far-reaching. However, they do not include the obligation to love... Every existing thing is maintained equally in its existence by God's creative love. God's friends should love him to the point of pooling his love for His with respect to all the things below... It is true that we must love our neighbor, but in the example Christ gave as an illustration of this commandment, the neighbor is a creature of which nothing is known, lying naked, bleeding and unconscious on the road. It is a matter of completely anonymous, and for that reason, completely universal love. The reality of World War II reinforced Weil's conviction that striving for Catholicism is the great human challenge. Weil notes poignantly: in our current situation universality, which in the past could be implicit, must be completely explicit... It must permeate our language and our whole way of life. What Weil seems to be grappling with is an issue that must cross the mind of any reflective, thinking Catholic. If many outside the Church are instinctively good, loving and drawn to embrace those affected, then to what extent is being Catholic or Christian only temporary to ingrained human ability to be good, shared by all and practiced, in different by many? Later, in one of his essays, Weil frames the problem of the Church's lack of Catholicity in a particularly stark way: How can Christianity call itself catholic if the universe is omitted? To say that waiting for God is primarily about being inclusive would be an injustice to Simone Weil's complicated religious philosophy. At the heart of her thought is the concept—embraced, but not developed by her—that it is not in the gift of people to be in search of God, but it is specifically God's job to be in search of us. Our role is to pay attention to God's secret presence in the world. Learning to pay attention, according to Weil, is the ultimate goal of all education—both religious and secular. It is not the mathematical equation that counts, nor the lexical knowledge of any discipline, but the effort that is put into paying attention. It is attention that allows us to discover the presence of those who suffer silently, recognize in the afflicted the human being who is like us, and it also allows us to feel the transcendental. Attention is all the more important, given that God agrees to relate to his power and authority over the universe, decorating people instead with the illusion of their personal power and special importance. Attention enables us to discover a God who has made His presence weak and fleeting, while appreciating that our own power and centrality in a vast universe are imagined and illusory. As Weil sees it, people are given the choice to agree to renounce their illusory power. When in human relationships there is a power imbalance, yet the person exercising power agrees to renounce it so as to give the other, it is an act of kindness—even love. Weil writes: Just like God, being outside the universe, is simultaneously the center, so every man imagines that he is located in the middle of the world. The illusion of perspective places him at the center of space; an illusion of the same kind falsifies his idea of time; and yet another kind illusion arranges a whole hierarchy of values around him. This illusion also extends to our sense of existence, due to the intimate connection between our sense of value and our sense of being... We live in a world of unreality and dreams. To give up our imaginary position as a center, to renounce it, not only intellectually but in the imaginative part of our soul, it means waking up to what is real and eternal, seeing the true light and hearing the true silence... To empty us of our false divinity, to deny ourselves, to give up being the center of the world in the imagination, to discern that all points of the world are equal centers and that the true center is outside the world, this is to consent to the rule of mechanical necessity in question and of free choice at the center of every soul. Weil concepts of reality and unreality. One of her positions is that facts often blind us from the depths of reality. Among Weil's admirers in Europe was János Pilinszky, Hungary's most prominent Catholic thinker and poet from the twentieth century. In a 1978 broadcast Hungarian-language interview entitled Loyalty in the Labyrinth (Hűség a labirintusban), Pilinszky attributes the following quote to Weil, which he shares in Hungarian and which I will translate into English: The world exists. It's bad, it's unreal and it's absurd. God does not exist—He is good and He is real. In a way, this quote reads as an aforsim. It begs the question: do we have any ability, living in the midst of the limitations of facts, the finite nature of our intellect, of reality seen from our particular perspective and constrained by our minds, to at all understand or imagine anything more than small, tentative aspects of what we call God? Waiting for God begins with Weil's explanation of her refusal to participate in the Dopest sacrament. In this way, she is both self-critical, as well as critical of the institutional Catholic Church. Fr. Perrin, as both a priest and as the superior of the Montpellier Monastery, was a representative of this institutional church and he was also formed by it. Yet he showed great interest, understanding and patience when he spoke or corresponded with Weil—a complex, unorthodox and sometimes undoubtedly frustrating thinker. We also know that Fr. Perrin was courageous and principled—during these years he promoted dialogue between Christians and Jews and gave refuge to persecuted Jews, which ultimately led to his arrest by the Gestapo themselves. It is also thanks to Fr. Perrin that Weil's theological writings survived and were published nearly a decade after her death. When reading Weil, we feel that when she writes these essays and letters, she struggles with concepts of suffering, God, denial of self, love of the created world and love for the neighbor. She works through these concepts before our eyes. It feels like a work in progress. This is perhaps fitting, given that our understanding of the transcendental is such that it is always ready to slip through our fingers. Fingers.

