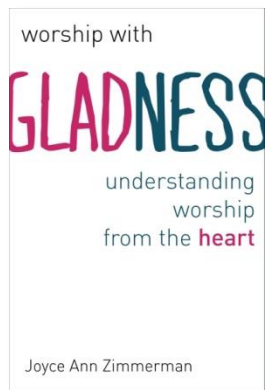


# [Review] *Worship with Gladness: Understanding Worship from the Heart*, by Joyce Ann Zimmerman

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**Joyce Ann Zimmerman.** *Worship with Gladness: Understanding Worship from the Heart*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2014. 192pp. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6948-5.

It is dizzying, keeping up with the publication of new books and resources on worship. Anyone who has been involved in planning, leading, studying, or teaching about the topic can attest to this. Very few of us can afford to purchase them all, much less read them all. We are forced to make choices. Most of us have shelves lined with volumes we cherish and from which we've benefited, along with some we regret purchasing in the first place. Books from my shelf for which I'm particularly grateful include Dawn 1999, Best 2003, Block 2014, and Opstal 2016.

I am pleased to recommend another easy choice for you. Joyce Ann Zimmerman's *Worship with Gladness: Understanding Worship from the Heart* will definitely find a warm welcome among books I value highly.

There are two things you should know about the author and the book. First, *Worship with Gladness* was published as part of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies Series, a series well worth the attention of anyone reading this review. In addition to that distinction, this book rises from Zimmerman's experiences as a member of the Advisory Board for the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW) Vital Worship Grants Program. Anyone reading this review who is not familiar with the CICW and its valuable contributions to liturgical understanding, practices, and renewal should explore the Institute at <http://worship.calvin.edu/>.

Second, Joyce Ann Zimmerman brings her unique voice to the CICW community—and, through this book, to what is likely a predominately Protestant–Evangelical readership—as a Roman Catholic theologian and director of the Institute for Liturgical Ministry. Commensurate with CICW's commitment to a lively ecumenism, her writing is full of deep generosity, wisdom, and passion.



There is much to appreciate about *Worship with Gladness*. I am always happy with anyone who exhibits a great love for the church and the people who make up the body of Christ locally and globally. Zimmerman cares deeply for the people of God, and that care transcends the unfortunate boundary many attempt to construct between the communal and personal dimensions of Christian worship.

Zimmerman deals effectively with several perspectives on worship. The opening chapter predictably addresses the essential question, “What is worship,” along with identifying some basic elements of the conversation. She also writes capably regarding biblical foundations, sacramental practices, and communally necessary dimensions of worship. A concluding section encourages more thought and work on these issues by offering closing reflections on the topic and acknowledging the challenges of faced by any of us who attempt to write about this essential subject.

As one might expect, there is some attention to liturgy—both in terms of practices in which Christians may be engaged as well as the relationship between the concepts represented by the words *liturgy* and *worship*—for example, “all liturgy is worship . . . not all worship is liturgy” (20). This particular discussion is intriguing and well-ordered, mentioned here as an example of Zimmerman’s ability to bring her perspective to a broad audience, offered for the benefit of all who take the time to read and consider.

Perhaps the section I most appreciated is found in chapter 3, “A New and Shared Vision of Worship.” Here Zimmerman highlights the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) produced by the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The Constitution was but one of a number of documents confirmed by the Council, yet its implications have influenced worship among Christians across the spectrum of traditions. It was the result of decades of study, some reaching back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and involving academic and pastoral efforts both from within the Roman Catholic and the Protestant traditions.

Writes Zimmerman regarding the influence of the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “The decades after the Council were a time of worship renewal that included experimentation, change, ecumenical sharing, and joint learning. . . . [it] can be so helpful for so many different Christian congregations because its real focus is not at all on ‘how to,’ but on the principles that are essential for Christ worship renewal . . . [principles] that make the Constitution such a fruitful resource for worship renewal across denominational boundaries” ( 100).

Zimmerman’s reflections on the Constitution's oft-cited concept of full, conscious, and active participation are well placed at about the middle of the book. The exploration of this principle here marks the heart of this

book; all else emanates from these vibrant roots.

Additional valuable writing is found in brief sections on worship and its relationship to justice and mission. Several recent volumes have addressed these topics more deeply, including Kreider and Kreider 2011, Meyers 2014, Krabill et al. 2012, Schmit 2009, and Opstal 2012. Yet Zimmerman adds her voice effectively, reminding us that there is nothing new about how mission and justice and worship are seamlessly interwoven within a biblical framework.

Given the multitude of available books on the topic of worship, do we need yet another? If the book is *Worship with Gladness* the answer is a resounding “Yes!” There are fresh perspectives on quite a few essentials that invite readers into new and deeply meaningful ways of thinking—and worshiping.

Any book that leads to contemplation of important matters of worship among God’s people, with a call toward renewal, is a book worthy of attention. So it is with Joyce Ann Zimmerman’s *Worship with Gladness*.

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