



My Penitente Land, Reflections of Spanish New Mexico (Southwest Heritage)

Fray Angelico Chavez

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This unusual book, Fray Angelico Chavez's personal meditation on his cultural heritage, is also a kind of spiritual autobiography of the Hispano people of New Mexico. The spirit of New Mexico, he feels, grows out of its dry mountain terrain whose hills and valleys resemble those of Spain and of ancient Palestine. Just as this kind of landscape helped the Hebrew shepherd Abraham to find his God, so in Fray Angelico's view, have New Mexico's mountains kept her people close to their God. In evoking this special closeness between the divine and the human, the author returns repeatedly to the Penitentes of New Mexico--the societies of men who scourge themselves and replay the Crucifixion each Holy Week to share the sufferings of their Savior. Some of his ideas will spark controversy over the meaning of New Mexico's past, but Fray Angelico Chavez's viewpoint, representing that of many native Spanish Americans, deserves the attention of every reader with an interest in the state's Hispanic heritage. No one can read this book without gaining a new understanding of the world of the New Mexican Hispano imbedded in the dry, hilly landscape of the majestic Sangre de Cristo mountains. All true aficionados of the American Southwest's history and culture will profit by collecting and reading the significant body of work left to us by the remarkable Fray Angelico Chavez. Sunstone Press has now brought back into print some of these rare titles.

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