"Alleluia" is the key word that encapsulates the sense of gratitude with praise and thanksgiving to God which is explored in this book. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the leader of a Catholic Benedictine order both write in an informal and engaging style, offering their wisdom distilled from their own experience and from thinking theologically. There is no triteness at any point, and although I think the book is probably better read in a consecutive way initially, it is one to dip into when seeking another perspective on one's own experience or on events in other parts of the world. Joan Chittister writes in the Introduction, "...Alleluia is not a substitute for reality. It is simply the awareness of another kind of reality - beyond the immediate, beyond the delusional, beyond the instant perception of things....it says that God is Good - and we know it."

The three main sections are divided into 23 sub-chapter headings, some of which are: faith, doubt, differences, divisions, conflict, sinners, saints, life, unity, otherness, death, darkness, God. Significant world events of the last ten or so years are mentioned more than once, such as the destruction of the World Trade Center, the treatment by foreign armies of prisoners in Iraq, Afghanistan under Taliban rule, the tsunami of December 2004. Throughout, as one would expect from these authors, biblical themes are intertwined, expressing God's love through creation and in the covenants made with people, God's identification with humankind in Jesus Christ and the love that gave itself in the costly redemption of the world, and (not so well named) the Holy Spirit enabling people to begin again, to be thankful for what has been but not cling on to what might have been, to look at situations another way and continue to grow into the fullness of being for which we were created. The subtitle expresses it well: 'growing a sense of gratitude'.

Maureen CSF