A Partial Bibliography of Spiritual Practices
(by Joe Colletti, PhD)

1. **Cloud of Unknowing** was written by an unknown author born in the Fourteenth century. It is one of the most influential contemplative books ever written. The mystical tradition of The Cloud of Unknowing inspired generations of mystical searchers including St. John of the Cross. The practical prayer advice contained in the Cloud of Unknowing forms a primary basis for the contemporary practice of Centering Prayer developed by Trappist monks William Meninger, Basil Pennington and Thomas Keating in the 1970s.

2. **Dark Night of the Soul** has become a mystical phrase that the author, St. John of the Cross, has forever etched into the spiritual heart of our world. It is a sequel and continuation of his **Ascent of Mount Carmel** that describes the journey of the soul overcoming several imperfect prior to its heavenly union with God.

3. **Divine Eros: Hymns of Divine Love** was written by Symeon the New Theologian in the Tenth Century who was a Byzantine Christian monk and poet who wrote freely about his mystical experiences. He was heavily influenced by the writings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. The **Hymns of Divine Love** recount his mystical experiences and his love for Christ and served as the basis of several Christian hymns written centuries later.

4. **Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ** was written by Jeanne Guyon as a guide for someone wanting a deeper intimacy with Jesus Christ. She describes various stages of development that include abandonment, abundance, silence, revelation and others that cultivate a union with God through Christ.

5. **Imitation of Christ**, one of the most widely read devotional books, was written by Thomas à Kempis during the 15th century. It is divided into four sections which provide detailed spiritual instructions which are reflected in their titles: Useful Admonitions for the Spiritual Life, Considerations for Leading an Interior Life, On Interior Conversation, and On the Blessed Sacrament and Devout Exhortations for Holy Communion.

6. **Interior Castle** was written by Saint Teresa of Ávila during the 16th century as a spiritual journey through seven interior courts or mansions, which represent seven stages of faith, ending with union with God. The emphasis is upon developing an intimate journey which ends with a spiritual marriage with God in the seventh mansion.

7. **Ladder of Monastics** (also known as The Ladder of Four Rungs) was written by Guigo II who outlines four spiritual steps that have shaped the practice of Lectio Divina today. The steps are reading (lectio), meditation (meditatio), prayer (oratio), and contemplation (contemplatio) which are the four rungs that lift the individual from the earth and through the clouds baring the secrets of heaven.

8. **Ladder of Divine Ascent** (also known as Ladder of Paradise) was written by John Climacus by dividing it into thirty step ladder in remembrance of the approximate thirty years of the life of Christ. The book was used widely as a handbook of the ascetic life because each step outlined a virtue to be acquired or a vice to be surrendered.

9. **The Wounded Healer** was written by Henri J. M. Nouwen that describes wounded healers as individuals who must look after their own wounds but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others. He boldly states that "In our woundedness, we can become a source of life for others."

10. **Waiting for God** consists of several essays and letters by Simone Weil that helps us understand her spiritual journey that enabled her to become a mystic and social activist.