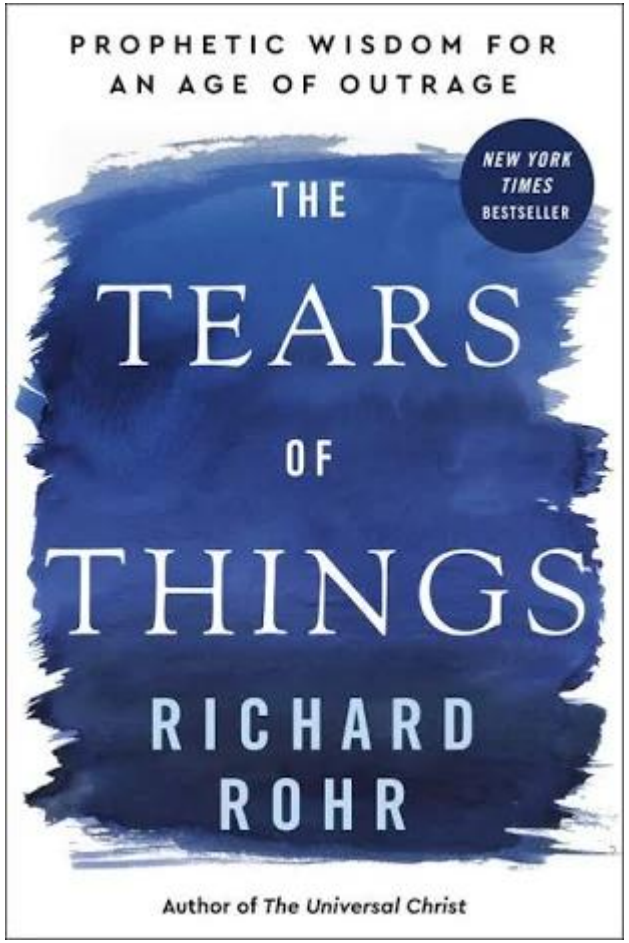
Prophetic Witness



Fall 2026

Week 2

Richard Rohr

author of ***The Tears Of Things: Prophetic Witness for an Age of Outrage***

For When People Ask

I want a word that means
okay and not *okay*,
more than that: a word that means
devastated and *stunned with joy*.
I want the word that says
I feel it all all at once.
The heart is not like a songbird
singing only one note at a time,
more like a Tuvan throat singer
able to sing both a drone
and simultaneously
two or three harmonics high above it
—
a sound, the Tuvans say,
that gives the impression
of wind swirling among rocks.
The heart understands swirl,
how the churning of opposite feelings
weaves through us like an insistent
breeze
leads us wordlessly deeper into ourselves,
blesses us with paradox
so we might walk more openly
into this world so rife with devastation,
this world so ripe with joy.

—Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer[1]

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer, “For When People Ask,” in All the Honey: Poems (n.p.: Samara Press, 2023), 39.

Rohr, Richard. The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage (p. vii). Harmony/Rodale/Convergent. Kindle Edition.

“We must be eternally conscious of this fact:

For the untransformed self, religion is the most dangerous temptation of all. Our egos, when they are validated by religion, are given full permission to enslave, segregate, demean, defraud, and inflate—because all bases are covered with pre-ascribed virtue and a supposed hatred of evil.

This is what the prophets expose in their wholesale assault on temple worship, priestly classes, self- serving commandments, and intergenerational wealth. “Be very careful here!” they keep shouting.

The prophets know that religion is the best and that religion also risks being the worst.

We love to choose sides and declare ourselves sinless and pure and orthodox (“right”), with little evidence that it is true. This is always a surprise to everyone except the prophets.”

Rohr, Richard. The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage (p. xviii). Harmony/Rodale/Convergent. Kindle Edition.

“When we lack self-knowledge, we will unconsciously project our disliked and unknown self onto others, condemning them for the very faults we share. It is no wonder, then, that most of the prophets were murdered, as Jesus notes accusingly in Matthew 23:31.”

Rohr, Richard. The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage (p. xx). Harmony/Rodale/Convergent. Kindle Edition.

The prophets' acts of defeating ego and naming scapegoats are, I believe, why they are never going to be popular or much read, despite taking up such a large part of the Bible. Yet their message also demands that we "die before we die," and learn to see things through the eyes of an infinite love.

Rohr, Richard. The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage (p. xxiv). Harmony/Rodale/Convergent. Kindle Edition.

Prophetic Witness

Seeing through the eyes of the Prophets

The Bible for Normal People Podcast

Episode 296

Guest: Richard Rohr

The Bible for Normal People

https://thebiblefornormalpeople.com/episodes/episode-296-richard-rohr-seeing-through-the-eyes-of-the prophets?rq=prophetic%20witness