

Feathered Quill Book Reviews
Reviewed by Pamela Victor

Madeleine and her husband Jack scour France on an anxious search for the doctor who may save Jack's life. Meanwhile that same doctor, Rachelle DuPres, treks throughout the country on her own quest for spiritual healing. In the second of Christine Sunderland's inspirational fiction trilogy, *Offerings* invites the reader to travel alongside these ailing souls as they search for healing, truth and salvation.

Sunderland weaves two compelling plot lines in *Offerings* as the action hops nimbly between Madeleine and Jack and Rachelle DuPres's complimentary yet contradictory quest. Jack needs to have a surgery to save his life, and he will only agree to have the surgery performed by Dr. Rachelle DuPres, who pioneered the procedure. Unbeknownst to Madeleine and Jack, Rachelle DuPres has given up her medical practice in the guilt-ridden aftermath of losing a patient. She returns to her roots in France to search of healing, and Madeleine and Jack impulsively follow her in hopes of convincing her to perform Jack's surgery . . . readers soon become enmeshed in the world Sunderland creates. Readers share Madeleine's anxiety as she prays, "*Lord, receive my offering for Jack. Penetrate his soul with mine, that he may know my joy, your joy, that he may offer his pain back to you.*"

Like *Pilgrimage*, the first of Sunderland's trilogy, this novel acts as a work of fiction that utilizes an engaging storyline to teach about religious history as well as raise philosophical points. Using the vehicle of Madeleine's manuscript and her research for her book *Holy Manifestations*, Sunderland provides interesting historical lessons that smoothly intertwine with the story as it unfolds. Sunderland raises provocative questions about suffering and why it exists as well as exploring the material vis-à-vis the spiritual. As for Sunderland's religious agenda, she has both Madeleine and Jack and Rachelle DuPres on related searches for healing, one physical and the other spiritual. As Rachelle's aunt advises her, "You cannot know yourself without knowing God. You knew him when you healed others. You must find him again. Do not let your heart empty into nothing. The Evil One will fill it up. Choose God instead. There is no middle way. No being lukewarm."

Like the first of the series, *Offerings* serves as a wonderful travelogue on religious highlights in France. Through the book, we travel to and learn about beautiful churches, like Notre Dame, as well as interesting sites of religious healing, like Lourdes. Sunderland writes poetically about the exploration of a multitude of religious destinations as well as the French countryside. In addition, readers get to vicariously partake in the delicious French cuisine. “Madeleine savored the delicate sauces laced with butter, inhaled rosemary and thyme, and tasted hints of lavender and lemon. The oxtail *au jus* swirled around opaque filets of turbot. Such flavors and textures astonished her, as though they fused the material with the spiritual.”

Offerings provides a great page-turner. Without a doubt, readers will be eagerly awaiting the third book in Christine Sunderland’s trilogy entitled *Inheritance*, which takes place in England.