The Internet and the Madonna
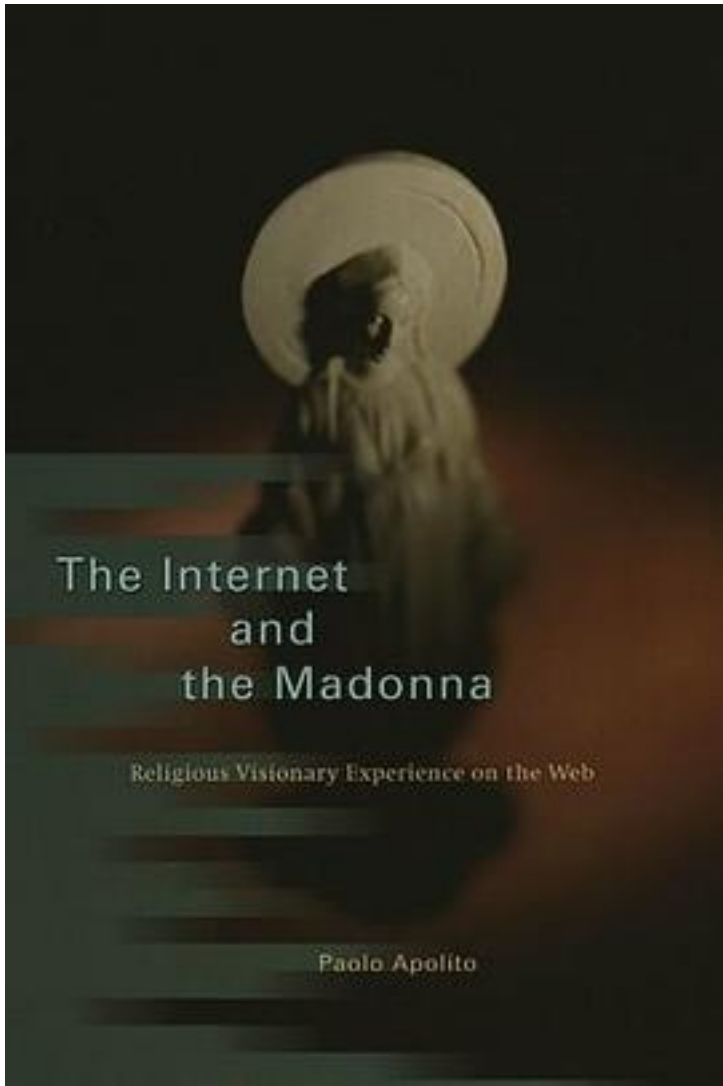
The Internet and the Madonna_下载链接1_

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In 1994, a devout Catholic woman from Vermont began having religious visions and hearing the voice of the Virgin Mary. To spread word about her mystical experiences, she turned to the Internet. As Paolo Apolito records here, she is only one of many people who use the Web as a tool of religious devotion. Every day, thousands of Catholics--from Italy and Latin America to the United States and Bosnia--use the Internet to describe and celebrate apparitions of Mary, to exchange relics and advice in chat rooms, to make pilgrimages to religious Web sites, and to practice the rites of their faith online.

But how has this potent new mix of technology and religiosity changed the way Catholics view their faith? And what challenges do the autonomous qualities of the Internet pose to the broader authority of Catholicism? Does the democratic nature of access to digital technologies constitute a return to a more archaic and mystical form of Catholicism that predates the modernizing reforms of the Second Vatican Council?

In working through these questions, Apolito considers visions of Mary on the Web over the past two decades, revealing a great deal about religion as it is now experienced through new information technologies. The Internet, he explains, has made possible a decentralized community of the devoted, even as it has absorbed God into the shifts and complexities of electronic circuitry. And this profound development in religious life will only accelerate as use of the Internet spreads around the world.

An indispensable guide to the future of Catholicism, The Internet and the Madonna offers a compelling glimpse into the spiritual life of the connected soul.

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