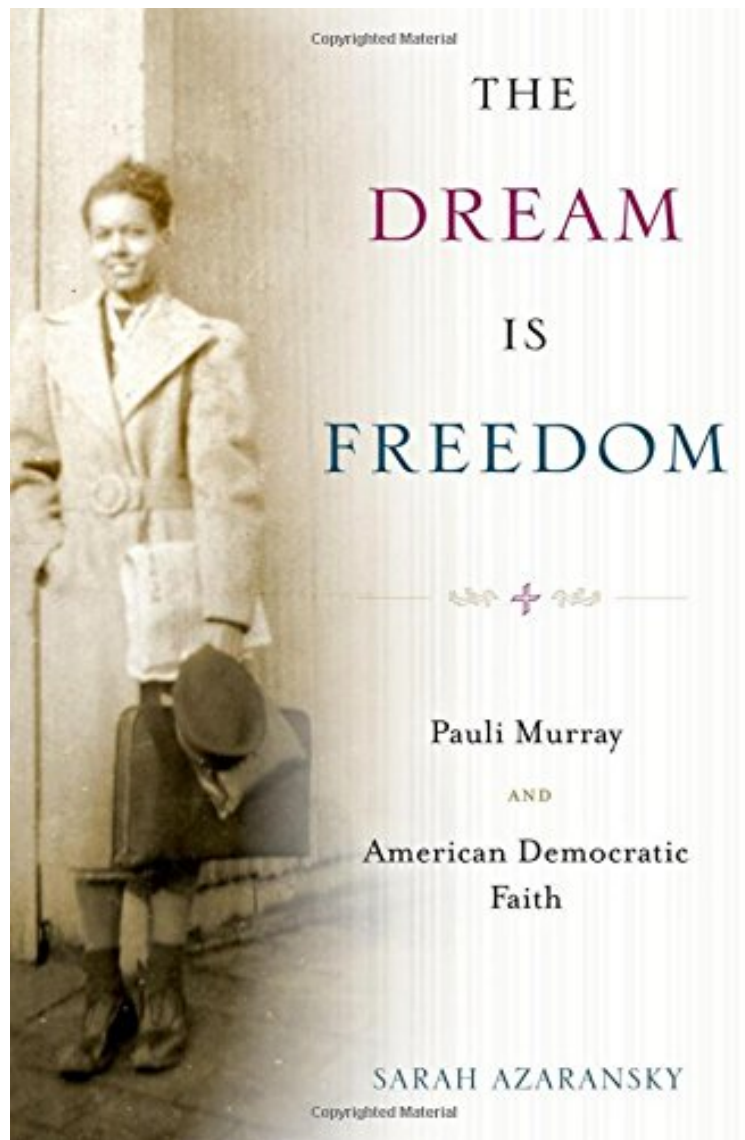


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# The Dream Is Freedom: Pauli Murray and American Democratic Faith

*Sarah Azaransky*

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**Sarah Azaransky : The Dream Is Freedom: Pauli Murray and American Democratic Faith** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dream Is Freedom: Pauli Murray and American Democratic Faith:

Pauli Murray (1910-1985) was a poet, lawyer, activist, and priest, as well as a significant figure in the civil rights and women's movements. Throughout her careers and activism, Murray espoused faith in an American democracy that is partially present and yet to come. In the 1940s Murray was in the vanguard of black activists to use nonviolent direct action. A decade before the Montgomery bus boycott, Murray organized sit-ins of segregated restaurants in Washington DC and was arrested for sitting in the front section of a bus in Virginia. Murray pioneered the category Jane Crow to describe discrimination she experienced as a result of racism and sexism. She used Jane Crow in the 1960s to expand equal protection provisions for African American women. A co-founder of the National Organization of Women, Murray insisted on the interrelation of all human rights. Her professional and personal relationships included major figures in the ongoing struggle for civil rights for all Americans, including Thurgood Marshall and Eleanor Roosevelt. In seminary in the 1970s, Murray developed a black feminist critique of emerging black male and white feminist theologies. After becoming the first African American woman Episcopal priest in 1977, Murray emphasized the particularity of African American women's experiences, while proclaiming a universal message of salvation. *The Dream Is Freedom* examines Murray's substantial body of published writings as well personal letters, journals, and unpublished manuscripts. Azaransky traces the development of Murray's thought over fifty years, ranging from Murray's theologically rich democratic criticism of the 1930s to her democratically inflected sermons of the 1980s. Pauli Murray was an innovative democratic thinker, who addressed how Americans can recognize differences, signaled the role of history and memory in shaping democratic character, and called for strategic coalition building to make more justice available for more Americans.

"Azaransky has produced a valuable... work...It is a well-researched overview of an incredible person." --The North Carolina Historical "The Dream is Freedom may be read not only as an astute scholarly consideration of Murray's religious and political commitments, but also as an informative and inspiring exegesis of the courage, reconciliation, and freedom named in the church's prayer."--Lauren F. Winner, "Sojourners Magazine" "The Dream Is Freedom brings much needed attention to the remarkable life of Pauli Murray--activist, author, advocate, legal scholar, theological critic, poet, and organizer for freedom, justice and democracy. Across discrimination by race, gender, sex, and class, Pauli called us to be our better selves, join the struggle for change, and fulfill the promise of what America and we could be. This is a terrific book about an extraordinary and too little recognized fighter for a better world."--Heather Booth, President, Midwest Academy "This careful and thoughtful study offers readers important insights into the nature and meaning of Pauli Murray's contributions to our theological self-understanding and our democratic desires." --Anthony B. Pinn, Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities, Rice University "The Dream is Freedom may be not only as an astute scholarly consideration of Murry's religious and political commitments, but also as an informative and inspiring exegesis of the courage, reconciliation, and freedom names in the church's prayer."--Lauren F. Winner, SOJOURNERSmagazine "Azaransky's book is a helpful contribution to a growing literature on Pauli Murray, which helps to situate her in the context of both American civil rights struggles and the development of a "womanist" or Black woman's perspective on theology and the Christian Church in the United States."--Church History "Azaransky's study is one of those books that makes me wish I could re-write my previous works - not just because Murray is such a fascinating subject, but also because Azaransky does such a nice and succinct job of interrogating her life, writings, ideas, and perspectives."--Religion in American History "This book is a must read not only for those who need to be introduced to this foremother to whom we all owe so much but also for anyone interested in the roots and development of civil rights and feminist movements, as well as black, feminist, womanist, and black feminist liberation theologies."--Anglican and Episcopal History About the Author Sarah Azaransky teaches in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Diego. She is a graduate of Swarthmore College, Harvard Divinity School, and the University of Virginia.