



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle - Friday 21 February 10.30 am
The Seven Storey Mountain by Thomas Merton

About the book

The Seven Storey Mountain is one of the most influential religious works of the twentieth century. It tells of the growing restlessness of a brilliant and passionate young man whose search for peace and faith leads him, at the age of twenty-six, to take vows in one of the most demanding Catholic orders--the Trappist monks. At the Abbey of Gethsemane, "the four walls of my new freedom," Thomas Merton struggles to withdraw from the world, but only after he has fully immersed himself in it. Since its original publication this timeless spiritual tome has been published in over twenty languages and has touched millions of lives.

How did the book make us feel?

This was a long and very detailed book about Thomas Merton's life, it took the Book+Circle members dedication to read to the end in time for the meeting. Some enjoyed the book and felt they could relate to parts of the journey Thomas went through, others found it almost too detailed about his life as a child/young man compared with his adult life.

What did the group think were the book's main strengths?

- Throughout this book Thomas Merton referred to other books that had been influential in his life, these were very interesting
- There were lots of very beautifully written passages that helped the reader reflect on the God's love and we enjoyed the explanation of how Catholics ask Our Lady to intercede on our behalf
- He wrote about how people blame God for war but his explanation about why it is driven by humans was very clear
- The spiritual content was very good
- The descriptions about growing up in Europe during the 1920's/1930's was very interesting and helped put some of Merton's views in context

And what were the book's main weaknesses?

- For several members we felt the book was too long and too detailed and yet near the end we would like to have read more about his life once he had become a priest
- It was quite a hard read with long chapters and we felt it was not very well-structured for the reader to follow through
- It was published at the end of the second world war and the structure felt dated for today's reader

Would we read another book written by the same author?

We were all interested in Thomas Merton's spiritual views and would read other books written by him. And we were interested in reading some of the other books mentioned in Seven Storey Mountain

Would we recommend this book to someone else?

Yes, we thought this would be helpful for anyone who might be considering becoming a Catholic

Next book

- Wednesday 1 April 20.00 – **A Biblical Walk through the Mass” by Edward Sri**
At 10 Swan House, Yorke Road, Reigate

Other dates for 2020

- Friday 15 May 10.30 am café - Where Are You Now? by Mary Higgins Clark
(We decided to read a fiction book for May written by a catholic US author)
- Wednesday 24 June 20.00
- Friday 7 August 10.30 am café
- Wednesday 16 September 20.00
- Friday 30 October 10.30 am café
- Wednesday 9 December 20.00