



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle – July 2026 – **Into the Silent Land** by Martin Laird

About this document

Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation by Martin Laird is a highly regarded book that explores the ancient Christian tradition of contemplative prayer and meditation. It serves as a practical guide for using breath, posture, and prayer words to cultivate inner stillness and overcome the mind's constant distractions

How did we rate this book?

- Before discussing the book we individually rated it – the average score was 7/10

How did this document make us feel?

- We had mixed reactions about this book with some finding it hard to 'get into', and others enjoying the first chapter and wanting to find out more
- But all agreed that once we got into the practical ideas to get into 'The silent land' in our minds the ideas were very helpful
- We felt on the one hand a sense of 'guilt' at not yet having reached the state of Contemplation suggested by Martin but on the other hand a sense of relief that most people struggle to 'quieten' the noise in their head as they try to pray

What did we think were the main strengths?

- The structure of the book was good, Martin Laird takes the reader through step by step how to arrive at inner stillness
- The book felt relatively up to date (written in 2006) and certainly when referenced against the Cloud of Unknowing written in the late 1300's.
- The quotes used at the beginning of each chapter, and in the body copy were very appropriate and helped the reader stop and think before getting into the practical elements of the book
- The chapters flowed nicely moving the reader through each stage to get to a sense of stillness from how to breath, the posture, and focussing on one or a few prayer words
- The reminder that 'God is always there' was a strong point and very well made
- The book covered how to pray when going through difficulties/personal pain, this was felt to be very helpful

What did we think were the main weaknesses?

- To get the best from this book it needs time to read through – not a skip through read.
- For some readers the first chapter was quite challenging and this could put off readers

Would we recommend that this book is read by others?

- We thought this was a useful book for anyone who wants to improve their prayer life.

Book+Circle meetings to the year end – Small Meeting Room at St Joseph's

Friday 4 September 10.30 am - My Father's House – Joseph O'Connor

Thursday 22 October 8.00pm - Pope Leo's new encyclical Magnifica Humanitas. (available on CTSbooks.org)

Friday 4 December 10.30 Am -book to be agreed