



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle – March 2023

Domestic Monastery by Ronald Rolheiser

About the Book

A monastery is a place set apart, to learn that powerlessness brings blessings and that time is not ours, but God's. Monastics do this by physically withdrawing from the world. But in this book, Ronald Rolheiser shows how our domestic life at home and at work can, like life in a monastery, teach us these things.

How did the book make us feel?

This was a small book, an easy read. It was very affirming, for anyone who was/had been a parent with young children, forever busy, putting the family first, Ronald Rolheiser reassured the reader that this vocation at home is offered up to God – the domestic monastery.

It made us all feel that 'where ever we are in life' we are ok. We liked the concept of being faithful to our own vocations and living out life for God.

Whilst you couldn't disagree with what Ronald Rolheiser was saying, there was a little part that felt he might be looking at the perception of family life as not quite the reality it is.

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

A very positive book. Lots of little nuggets, suggestions around prayer (eg page 46 the simple concept of *'there is only one non-negotiable rule for prayer: 'Show up!' Show up regularly!'*)

The layout with text, a prayer or quote and pictures was helpful to 'slow' the reader and assimilate the words of wisdom ... although some pictures didn't seem to relate to the topic!

What did we think were the book's main weaknesses?

The chapter on friendship was difficult to quite understand what was being said – but we assumed it had been written from a monk's viewpoint rather than our own perceptions of what friends mean to us.

Although the book was called Domestic Monastery, we assumed it would cover 'all walks of life' but found it concentrated on family life with children. We felt more could have been said about other types of households and about different life stages and how God is found in all situations.

Would we recommend that this book is read by others?

Yes, this was a book you could share with others, and particularly to those with a young and growing family. We would also read other books by this author.

The April read: Gilead by Marilynne Robinson

Meeting Wednesday 19 April 2023 @ 8.00pm, St Joseph's Meeting room