



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle – May 2025

The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything – James Martin SJ

About the Book

The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life by James Martin, SJ is a practical and accessible introduction to Ignatian spirituality, which is rooted in the teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order. The book aims to help readers—religious or not—find God in everyday life. It's structured to be friendly and non-preachy, blending humour, personal stories, and spiritual insight. Martin writes for believers, seekers, and skeptics alike, making the Jesuit approach to spirituality accessible to people from all walks of life.

How did the book make us feel?

- We all enjoyed this book, despite it being a longer read, each chapter was very interesting
- Lovely humour throughout the book, which helped us get through the detailed content
- Some felt it was 'heavy going' and therefore was important to take time to read rather than racing through it
- We felt we learnt a lot both about the Catholic faith and about the Jesuits way of thinking
- We thought the author showed great humility in this book and taking the reader through the steps to find God in everything we do

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

- A very practical book that anyone could relate to – the summary on page 97 – The Examen in Five Steps – is an excellent way of reflecting in daily prayer. It is based on St Ignatius's Exercises.
- The emphasis on 'being thankful' for things jumped out from this book.
- We enjoyed learning about the author's own life and how he weaved it within the chapters to help the reader relate to the subject matter - it was very interesting to learn why Fr James Martin had joined the Jesuit order.
- We all agreed the prayer at the end of the book – pg 396, based on the Suscipe, Ignation prayer was a beautiful reflection for daily prayer.
- The discussion in the book around friendship and the importance of being a good listener was appreciated
- And the section on contemplative prayer in action was very well written and could be followed by anyone, whether a Catholic or not.
- Also one reader thought the prayer on pg 164 asking for Grace to age well was really touching and thought provoking

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

- As with some of the other books we have read it needs to be read slowly and allow time to digest each of the chapters. There is so much that is good in this book but with 397 pages the reader needs time to reflect.

- And we did wonder if the book cover might put off some 'non religious' readers who actually we felt would enjoy the content of the book.

Would we recommend this book to others?

Yes – we think this is a book written for a variety of readers:

- Those who are curious about spirituality or religion.
- People who are seeking a deeper connection with God.
- Those who want a practical approach to life that is grounded in faith.
- And those who want to know more about Catholic traditions and interested in the Jesuits way of thinking.

Next Book+Circle - Small Meeting Room at St Joseph's

Friday 11 July @ 10.30 am (after morning mass) **No Truth No Justice, by Audrey Edwards**

Subtitle: *A David and Goliath Story of a Mother's Successful Struggle for Justice Against Public Authorities to Secure Justice for Her Son Murdered While in Their Care.*

<https://www.watersidepress.co.uk/audrey-edwards-1934-2025/>

Paul has kindly lent us 3 copies, which we have circulated among Book+Circle members

Prayer by Ignatius Loyola
*Take Lord, and receive all my liberty,
 my memory, my understanding, and all my will,
 all that I have and possess.
 You, Lord, have given all that to me.
 I now give it back to you. All of it is yours.
 Dispose of it according to your will.
 Give me love of yourself along with grace, for that is
 enough for me.*