



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle – April 2023

Gilead by Marilynne Robinson

About the Book

Told through the eyes of a Mid-Western minister nearing the end of his life, Gilead unfolds in the form of a letter. As Reverend Ames writes to his young son, we learn of the family's legacy, a heritage steeped in abolition, economic hardship, and conflicting views on religion and war as each generation comes of age.

How did the book make us feel?

Beautifully written which focusses on a 'father/son' relationship across the generations. We all enjoyed reading this story, although it took a few chapters to 'get into' it was very well written. We had mixed emotions reading this book from feeling sad about the challenges of life in Mid West in the last Century ...through to feeling quite peaceful at the 'calm' nature of Reverend Ames and his acceptance at what his life had been.

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

The characters within the story were really good. Whilst this was a novel the way it had been written it felt like a 'real' letter written by a 'real' father to his son. We were amazed at how this author had managed to 'get into the skin' of Reverend Ames.

The book was beautifully written, it was very poetic, talked about the plainness of the countryside versus the beauty of the Light.

Whilst it took a few chapter to 'get into' mostly because the setting was not familiar, once started, it became an easy read. Lovely snippets/statements that captured the imagination. Dom Christopher Jamison offered this author as an example in his book about the language of grace – and it is.

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

The book has no chapters! It is written as a letter, there are small breaks but really is more of a continuous read. When putting the book down, it's a little harder to get back to remembering where we were.

There is a lot of remembering back into the past and talking about fathers/grandfathers by the Rev. as part of the letter to his son – a family tree at the beginning would have been a useful reference guide.

Would we recommend that this book is read by others?

We all agreed that we would read other books by this author. We would recommend this book to others – it is a book that you need to allow time to 'digest' what is being said. We

were all glad to have read Gilead and agreed it was a book we wouldn't normally have picked up. (It was chosen after the recommendation in a previous book about the language of grace)

The June read: Reasons to Believe by Scott Hahn

Meeting Friday 2 June 2023 @ 10.30 am (after morning mass), St Joseph's Meeting room