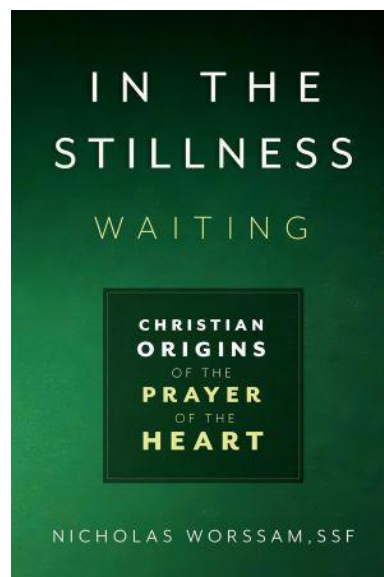


## Book Review

### In the Stillness, Waiting: Christian Origins of the Prayer of the Heart by Nicholas Worssam

Nicholas Worssam's *In the Stillness, Waiting* is a gentle yet substantial offering for spiritual directors seeking to deepen their grounding in the Christian contemplative tradition, especially as they accompany seekers from diverse spiritual backgrounds. Rooted in the ancient practice often referred to as the "Prayer of the Heart" this text serves as both a historical exploration and a contemplative invitation.

Worssam guides the reader through the origins of this prayer through early Christian monasticism, drawing particularly on the wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. He situates the Prayer of the Heart not simply as a technique, but as a way of focusing on the inner movement toward inner stillness, attentiveness, and loving presence before God. For spiritual directors, this distinction is crucial. The book resists the modern tendency to instrumentalise prayer and instead reclaims it as relational and transformative.



One of the book's strengths is in its accessibility. Worssam writes with clarity and pastoral sensitivity, making ancient sources approachable without diluting their depth. He honours the silence at the heart of the tradition, allowing the reader space to reflect rather than overwhelming them with theory. This makes the book particularly suitable for those engaged in accompaniment, where listening and presence are as important as knowledge.

For directors working in increasingly pluralistic contexts, this text offers a valuable grounding. Many contemporary seekers are drawn to practices such as mindfulness, mantra, or breath prayer, often without awareness of their Christian contemplative parallels. Worssam provides a bridge here. By articulating the theological and spiritual foundations of the Prayer of the Heart, he equips directors to recognise resonances across traditions while remaining anchored in the Christian lineage.

Importantly, the book does not claim exclusivity for the practice. Instead, it models a posture of humility and openness. This is especially relevant for those accompanying individuals influenced by Eastern spirituality, interfaith dialogue, or secular contemplative practices. Worssam implicitly invites directors to hold both fidelity and spaciousness, to be rooted without rigidity.

Overall, *In the Stillness: Waiting*, is a rich and timely resource for spiritual directors. It offers not only insight into a foundational Christian practice but also a contemplative stance that can deepen the art of accompaniment, especially across traditions. For those committed to holding space where silence, mystery, and grace can unfold, this book is both companion and guide.

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