



# **The Cost of Community: Jesus, St. Francis and Life in the Kingdom**

*Jamie Arpin-Ricci , Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (Foreword)*

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Blessed are the poor in spirit . . .

So begins the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' great message to everyone with ears to hear. St. Francis of Assisi heard its message and challenged the church and empire of his day by ordering his life around it--giving up his power, wealth and privileges; claiming the poor and powerful alike as his brothers and sisters; and loving Islamic neighbors even as his church and state waged war on them.

Centuries later, Jamie Arpin-Ricci and his friends and neighbors in the new monastic community of Little Flowers in urban Winnipeg likewise heard Jesus' message and ordered their lives around it. This book is Jamie's field report, offering surprising insights about what life together in the spirit of Jesus' teachings offers us, and what it demands of us.

The sermon still rings out today, offering perplexing encouragement and at times daunting challenges to us and our neighbors. Will you hear what Jesus has to say?

## The Cost of Community: Jesus, St. Francis and Life in the Kingdom Details

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## **From Reader Review The Cost of Community: Jesus, St. Francis and Life in the Kingdom for online ebook**

### **Dean P. says**

Br. Jamie Arpin-Ricci strikes a good balance here between exegesis, historical narrative and personal reflection. On the exegetical side, Arpin-Ricci examines the three chapters of Matthew's Gospel that make up the Sermon on the Mount. He takes some interesting stances to draw the contemporary reader into the Gospel narrative, for example, he calls the Lord's Prayer the Disciple's Prayer because of how Jesus teaches his followers through it. He also provides an honest but brief examination of St. Francis interspersed throughout the text, admitting the very human failures of the man while emphasizing the lasting, Godly example his life and teachings provide us.

The author's considerations of these things within the context of his own community leave the most lasting impact on this reader, especially the stories of love and community with some very broken people. I'm very pleased to have read the book and found it to be of a greater depth than I expected when it arrived from Amazon. I look forward to going back to it again and again for reflection.

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### **Barton says**

I didn't finish the whole book. I was using it for an article I was writing but the article took another slant as I was writing it so I ended up not having to finish the book. Not sure if I will, as I just don't have the time. If you are interested in the Sermon on the Mount, it is a very good book.

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### **Hannah Foulger says**

Challenging but real. Doesn't pull punches. If you want to embrace radical and real christianity through Christ, start here, not at church.

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### **Gene says**

Move over, Bonhoeffer...this is the best book about The Sermon on the Mount that I have ever read!

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### **Sam Lonberg says**

Interpreting the Sermon on the Mount through St. Francis and Jamie's Christian community. Quite good.

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## **Katie Vanbeek says**

This book challenged me more than I was anticipating. And it was a gift to be so challenged. Jamie Arpin-Ricci brings to life what it would look like if we take seriously the call of Christ in the sermon on the mount and acted like it makes a difference. With wonderful story-telling, humility, and personal reflection, *The Cost of Community* offers an invitation to follow Jesus through the lens of St. Francis—loving all the earth holds, choosing humility and poverty, and ultimately taking a daring step into the freedom of life in the kingdom.

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## **Ryan Wojton says**

Great book on intentional urban community, living like Jesus in that community, and learning from your neighbors while doing it!

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## **Clint Walker says**

Many of my long-time readers may know that I have a long-time fascination with St. Francis and his organic mix of deep Christ-centered spirituality and a true commitment to ministries of compassion and mercy. As many of my friends I have served in ministry know, in the last 5-10 years I have also developed a little bit of a fascination with the Sermon on the Mount, and how it so succinctly and wisely shares about the power of the kingdom of God. So, when a book came along that tried to communicate how an intentional community of Christian disciples integrated these two streams of teaching into their daily life, I knew I had to have it.

*The Cost of Community* is written by Jamie Arpin-Ricci. Ricci is the leader of a Winnipeg community named "The Little Flowers Community". The community tries to reach out with mercy and grace in a neighborhood that desperately needs the presence of an invested Christian witness. This book, though, is not primarily about the work of this group of disciples in the difficult environment in which they live. Instead, it is about the kind of community God is calling them and us to be as followers of Jesus and St. Francis, combined with some clues on how the people of "Little Flowers" are forming this unique kind of community within their context.

The structure of the book follows the content of the Sermon on the Mount. Ricci takes the sermon section by section. He explores what kind of community Jesus is attempting to form through his words in the sermon. He then talks a little bit about how the values of St. Francis of Assisi modeled the truth of the gospel as taught by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Throughout this analysis, Ricci shares stories about how these concepts are lived out in the community he leads. Nearly every chapter ends with a chapter or two challenging readers to bring certain values, attitudes, and behaviors into the Christian communities of which they are a part.

*The Cost of Community* is a neat book. It will be inspiring for many avid Christian readers. I do think, however, that this book can be best used in the following ways.

Read a chapter of this book a week. Ponder it. Think on how to integrate the truths of this book into your everyday life.

Read a chapter a week as an intentional study group. Talk about how you can embody what you learned in each chapter within how your small group does discipleship and life together.  
Form an intentional community of disciples that share a common life. Use this to guide you as you create a "rule of life" for your community.

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### **George Martzen says**

This was a joy to read. The author is part of an Anglican lay order based on Francis of Assisi. While the book is structured as a light commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, he interweaves his biblical reflections with both heart-warming and painful stories from Little Flowers Community, intentional Christian community in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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### **Bek Baxter says**

I have now read this gem of a book 3 times, and each time I find something new to challenge me. This book has seen me in tears as I know that God has spoken to me through the pages of it. Its brought fresh revelation and challenges. Some of which have been uncomfortable. And for that I'm thankful. Its pages are scattered with underlines and notes on what I was thinking as I read what can only be described as seeing in print what my heart was already saying. This family and community are the real deal. I would be so bold as to say every follower of Christ should read this book.

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### **Raborn says**

Excellent book on community and a great exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. Thank you Jamie for this gift to the church!

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### **Phil says**

This is another e-book I picked up on my phone. I largely picked it up because the author belongs to a community in Winnipeg, my wife's hometown. The book is written in the new Monastic tradition- a movement which is re-claiming a near-monastic experience in the urban 'deserts' of North American/Europe. On the whole, I'm sympathetic with the movement, especially with the social justice aspect which is superb. I do find the occasionally all-or-nothing tone a little off-putting. There are different calls in the Christian life and I'm not sure that we are to judge which call is purer than another. That seems God's job.

This book, as the title indicates, has a rather Franciscan feel to it, which is good. Arpin-Ricci combines the gentleness and zeal of Francis in his writing which is also to the good. Much of his discussion centres on unpacking the Beatitudes which he argues are needlessly spiritualized. He notes that they are much harder hitting than the way that many Christians assumes. He's right, of course. If one spiritualizes the call to help the poor, orphaned and oppressed out of the Beatitudes, not much is left. Yet, I'm left with wondering if both interpretations can be held in tension; whether we take the Beatitudes as ways to develop our spiritual lives and as a guide to how we behave in regard to money and the poor. I think Arpin-Ricci isn't adverse to that,

but that doesn't necessarily come out strongly.

This book is worth the read, if only for the exegesis of the Beatitudes which is bracing. The interwoven stories from north end Winnipeg are grim, but put flesh to the discussion. Well worth reading.

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### **Bob says**

Is it really possible to live the Sermon on the Mount? Figures as significant as Leo Tolstoy have debated this throughout history. Jamie Arpin-Ricci, who has formed an urban, Christian Community, the Little Flowers Community in Winnipeg, thinks we can. The book is a report structured around the text of Jesus sermon, tracing how this community has practiced the beatitudes, learned the blessings of poverty, practicing peace-making, seeking justice and living in humility rather than judgment with each other.

One quote to give a flavor of this book:

For each one of us and the communities we are members of, we must realize and accept that humble obedience to Christ always costs us something, usually dearly. The way of Jesus, without exception, calls us to live apart from and against the ways of the world--a way of life that will invariably be costly, dangerous, and even the cause of societal (or even familial) alienation and rejection. If our lives fail to reflect this costly obedience, it must serve as a red flag of warning that we are living outside of the will of God. After all, the way of Christ must by necessity lead to the cross, and it does so daily.

This is not a book for the faint of heart. The author believes we have focused far too much attention defining our doctrinal and behavioral boundaries, and far too little in seeking to practice the way of trustful obedience to which Jesus calls us in the sermon. And as he repeats so often throughout the book, "Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy."

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### **April Yamasaki says**

Any book that seeks to combine the Sermon on the Mount, the life of St. Francis, and living in community is an ambitious undertaking. Overly ambitious maybe, as whole books have been written just on the Sermon on the Mount, or just on St. Francis, or just on living in community, yet these three streams come together very well in this book.

For a more complete review, please see <http://apriyamasaki.com/2012/10/04/t...>

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### **J.R. Woodward says**

If you want to go beyond theological speculation to living out the Sermon on the Mount then you need to get this book. Read it. Live it. Jamie Arpin-Ricci weaves together the life of St. Francis, the Little Flowers Community and his own life to help us honestly wrestle through what it means to follow Jesus in our world today. His vulnerability is refreshing. If you read this book carefully, and reflect on how Jamie and his faith community are following Jesus, you will soon realize that while the cost of discipleship is great, the cost of

non-discipleship is even greater.

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