

ROMTE

Nijkleaster-blog
New Monastic Notes



Nijkleaster



SPACE

In the book *Kloostertuinen in Nederland en Vlaanderen* (Adveniat, 2025), Tini Brugge writes the following about the meaning of the concept of 'space' (Romte in Frisian) for the new monastic movement Nijkleaster:

The gardens at this monastery offer plenty of space. The word 'space' is a recurring theme in the monastery's mission. Within this monastic community, there is a need for generosity and boldness: 'There is a certain aversion to imposed patterns and confined spaces. 'Space for God' emphasizes for us that we do not simply know God and, above all, that we do not have God in our pocket. We hope that this will open us up to renewal, to wonder, and to the unexpected. Just as in a classic monastery the buildings are grouped around an empty center, so we circle around the mystery that is called God. Space for God has to do with respect, awe, and keeping your distance. The core sentence of the community is: Space for God to become human.'

These words really hit the nail on the head. Klooster Westerhûs is located in the middle of the open space of the Frisian countryside and is surrounded by meadows and wide views with lots of sky and clouds. The gardens are located on the grounds: the orchard, the herb garden, the vegetable garden, and the food garden. And in the middle, you will indeed find the courtyard garden surrounded by the buildings. This open outdoor space is healing and makes you happy. At the same time, these open spaces also symbolize the inner longing of the community: a spiritual path that offers inner space, that allows you to breathe. The new monastic community does not try to restrict and define the space. No, it tries to create a safe space in which God can work, in which God can touch people. The community therefore practices openness, inner openness for itself and for guests: "Hospitality does not mean that we want to change people, it means that we offer them a space in which something can change." (Henri Nouwen). That is why we begin each day's morning celebration with a chanted prayer asking for inner openness and spiritual receptivity:

'Iepenje my foar jo goedens en reitsje my oan.'
(Open me to your goodness and touch me)

rev. Hinne Wagenaar
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