



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle - April 2021

First meeting back face to face, held outdoors by the Church

Let Us Dream – Pope Francis

About the book

Pope Francis, the leader of over 1 billion Catholics globally, has written this book with his thoughts about the impact of the pandemic; he talks about the cruelty and inequity of our society more vividly exposed than ever before but counterbalanced with the resilience, generosity and creativity of so many people across the world. He urges us through this book not to let the pain be in vain. The book culminates with a reminder that a Christian's first duty is to serve others, especially the poor and marginalised, just as Jesus did.

How did the book make us feel?

This book left a very positive impression on all of us. It was encouraging, hopeful and reinforced that we, as a church, are in very good hands. The Pope was challenging throughout but also left the reader with a lot of hope for the future.

We felt that although there is only so much that we can all do, and that the church can do, nothing stands still and the church itself is on a constant journey.

The pandemic has brought about unplanned change, it has left many of us worried and uncertain, and yet this book suggests that uncertainty can be seen as an opportunity to grow and move forward in faith.

The book gave good insight into how the Pope views the Church and the role of women; we agreed with much of his thinking

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

The book is really well structured. It is in 3 digestible sections, each leading onto the next. The prologue opens with the Pope's words – *I see this time as a reckoning.and the end of the prologue he continues.... I see an overflow of mercy spilling out in our midst... hearts have been tested...we might come out of this crisis better.. but we have to see clearly, choose well and act right. Let's talk about how... let us dare to dream.*

This is the context for the 3 sections, and the thoughts and suggestions from this Pope made us feel like he is there, talking to each one of us, in a practical way that understands us and the challenges we all have. He is there with us, on the journey out of the pandemic, not living in an Ivory Tower.

The book was very timely as we start to come out of the pandemic to stop and take stock of what we have learnt and how we can use the last year to move forward positively.

It includes very helpful insight into the concept of Synod and how we can read headlines in the Press and not understand the context – how we need to learn not to be so black and white.

Pope Francis also discusses the importance of discernment, and the idea of the ‘isolated conscience’, when discernment is blocked by a temptation that leads individuals to alienate themselves from society or the Church because they believe they have superior knowledge of what is right and wrong. He describes such individuals as being turned into intransigent individuals who complain constantly and disdain others, believing they alone know the truth.

And what were the book’s main weaknesses?

It was difficult to find any weaknesses, the book is so well written.

Would we read another book written by the same author?

Definitely.

Would we recommend this book to someone else?

We would recommend this book to anyone as it gives a real sense of hope after such a challenging year. And guidance to how we can come out of the crisis better.

Next book

Praying the Rosary Like Never Before by Edward Sri

Date of next meeting

May 26th meeting – 8.00pm - location TBA

Book for Friday 9 July 2021 - The mystery of the incarnation – Cardinal Basil Hume