



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book + Circle, April 2020

A Biblical Walk through the Mass, by Edward Sri

Note: Unable to meet face-to-face because of the current health crisis, Book+Circle members put fingers to keyboards to share their thoughts on this book.

Book description

For Catholics, the Catholic Mass is the centre of our faith. We celebrate it every day. We know all the responses. We know all the gestures. But do we know what it all means? In *A Biblical Walk through the Mass*, Edward Sri takes us on a unique tour of the liturgy. Based on the revised English translation of the Mass, this book explores the biblical roots of the words and gestures we experience in the liturgy and explains their profound significance.

How did the book make us feel?

Though the book was short, readers the book and felt it both refreshed and added a lot to what they knew about the Mass. It was great to go through the Mass with someone who clearly loves, respects and knows a lot about it, step by step. Although one of the joys of the Mass is that we can go to it anywhere in the world and join in the same ritual, the book certainly helps to appreciate much more what each element of that ritual is about, whatever the language being used.

What were the book's strengths?

The book was easy to read and very informative. It is well set out, broken up into chapters and subsections that are short and concise; the typeface and text spacing are also well chosen.

Many details discussed in the book inspire a new way to participate in the Mass: for example, the discussion of the sign of the cross as a 'brand' (we show ourselves to be followers of Christ) and a form of 'protection' from evil; the importance of the revised rite of the Mass in English being more Bible-based (and more in line with other language versions), because the Bible is God talking to us; the reminder that, when we say "you alone are the Lord" in the Gloria, we are rejecting everything to follow Christ; the proposition that "The Word of the Lord" said after the readings is not meant to be a 'swallowed addendum' but a cry of wonder and awe; and the statement that our giving thanks in the Eucharistic prayer is



crucially important because it “is the one thing we can offer the Creator that he does not possess already.”

Edward Sri draws considerable attention to the links between the Old Testament and the actions in the Mass. For example, he points out, in his discussion of the Mass as sacrifice, how the Catholic concept of ‘memorial’ as ‘re-presenting’ (i.e. presenting again, or continuing to present) is in line with the Jewish precedent of ‘memorial’ in the Passover as re-living, an actual participation in the Passover with the ancestors. Also instructive is the detailed comparison between Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac and God’s sacrifice of Jesus.

What were the book’s weaknesses?

There is a slight danger that the book would be too easy to skim read, and so its great depth might be missed.

Would we recommend this book to anyone else?

Readers would recommend this book to practically anyone, especially catechists, parents of First Communion candidates, Confirmation and RCIA candidates.

Would we read another book by the same author?

Definitely.

Next books:

Where Are You Now? A novel by Mary Higgins Clark

Suggestions to follow:

Autobiography by G K Chesterton (quote from Goodreads.com: “an irresistible opportunity to see who this remarkable man really was. Chesterton was one of the most stimulating and well-loved writers of the 20th century.”)

And/or another novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* by Thornton Wilder (quote from Amazon.co.uk: “As a craftsman he is second to none, and there are few who have looked deeper into the human heart.”)

Next meeting dates:

Friday 15th May 2020, 10.30 am, at The Retreat Café, PNL at St Joseph’s, to be confirmed.

Wednesday 24th June 2020, 8.00 pm, to be confirmed.