



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle - August 2020

“The Name of God is Mercy” Pope Francis - A conversation with Andrea Tornielli

About the book

Pope Francis simply and directly addresses all humanity in an intimate and personal dialogue on the central teaching of his papacy – **mercy**. The book was written to give his reasons for proclaiming of a Year of Mercy, celebrated in 2015 - 2016.

Pope Francis reiterates that the Church cannot close its door on anyone - *“on the contrary, its duty is to find a way into the consciousness of people so that they can assume responsibility for, and move away from, bad things they have done....even the Pope is a man who needs the mercy of God”*.

How did the book make us feel?

- Positive, encouraging, interesting, illumining. It was thought-provoking, challenging whilst supportive rather than uncomfortable.
- Hopeful and gave a sense of God’s love.

What the group thought were the book’s main strengths?

- The conversational style made it easy to read. The question and answer format offered structure for simple and direct answers which revealed the Pope’s view.
- In discussing the Sacrament of Reconciliation Pope Francis’ profound humility and awareness and human frailties includes his own need for mercy and forgiveness
- His patience and tolerance and use of real life situations made the subject accessible
- Discussing the role of priests in the Sacrament of Reconciliation was interesting and enlightening – how priests too are supported in bringing God’s mercy to penitents.
- “The apostolate of the ear” resonated – as did the internal challenges between Pope Francis and those in the Church who are considered more conservative
 - *“when it comes to bestowing grace, Christ is present; when it comes to exercising rigor, only the ministers of the church are present, but Christ is absent”*.
- The discussion between sin and corruption was illuminating.

Any questions email Anne or Teresa

astjohnhall@gmail.com OR teresaroux@bdifferent.co.uk

And what did the group think were the Book's main weaknesses?

- A suggestion that "A name of God is mercy" would have been more accurate in conveying mercy as one of the attributes of God's love.
- The chapter addressing "too much mercy"? might lead to an erroneous misunderstanding that it's OK to carry on with sinful behaviours
- The questions did not include one about the fate of those who refuse to accept God's mercy it would have been interesting to hear the Pope's view

Would we read another Book written by the same author? And would we recommend this to anyone else?

Yes...Pope Francis is an inspirational leader and we found the depth of the answers very thought provoking; Andrea Tornielli has extensive experience in the Vatican

Yes – to anyone interested in the nature of the God in whom we believe – and maybe anyone with an exaggerated sense of guilt.

Next book

"Under the Mantle" by Fr Calloway

Date of next meeting & to the year end

- Wednesday 16 September 20.00 - location to be agreed nearer the time
- Friday 30 October 10.30 am - St Joseph's cafe
- Wednesday 9 December 20.00