



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book + Circle – December 2025

God is not angry. The truth that sets us free by Fr Ian Petit

About the Book

God is not angry. The truth that sets us free by Fr Ian Petit attempts to show God as a loving and accepting God, rather than a God of darkness who is angry with us all.

Ian demonstrates how we can find this loving God through Scripture and the teachings of the Church and offers questions for reflection at the end of the chapters to enable us to take hold of the “truth that will make you free” (John 8:32).

Ian Petit (1922-1996) was a monk of Ampleforth Abbey who later became a teacher in the charismatic renewal. During Ian’s time as Headmaster at St Louis Benedictine Monastery, one colleague described him as an “outstanding saint-in-the-making,” and a true apostle to pupils whom the Church had historically regarded as spiritually inadequate. This experience appeared to have formed the basis for the book, in a way which comes across as both deeply personal, and to illuminate God’s light of love to others in that search

How did the book make us feel?

The book was thought provoking, in particular, it sparked debate in the group as to the impact of Vatican II (1962-1965) and its calling for broader use of liturgical texts and whether we felt the Church shifted from a negative message of condemnation, hell-fire sermons, to a positive message of a loving God of mercy.

Did Vatican II challenge the way we think about God? with its more enlightened preaching on the Bible explaining “the love affair between God and humankind”? We felt Ian very clearly presented the case from the shift in Catholic ‘narrative’ that showed the anger of God to a God of love and mercy. However, the group had very few memories of such hell-fire sermons and never thought God was angry either pre or post Vatican II.

Most found the book a relatively easy read, with one reader enjoying it so much that the book was treated as an Advent retreat. Most of us agreed that Fr Ian was very clear in the points he wanted to make to the reader. For example, God created us so why would God want us to fail?

However, one reader found the book difficult to read and felt Ian over complicated our own personal images of God, questioning *‘Do I have to get into Ian’s mindset to understand what he is saying?’*

The group were also interested in Ian’s discussion over the lack of ‘training’ in reading the scriptures. ‘Catholics do not read the bible’. Ian clearly felt that the “Bible is not just a liturgical book only to be used in Church; it is God’s love letter to us and should be treasured

by all of us in the quiet of our homes". It was agreed that we were not taught to read the Bible - But as Ian writes '*Jesus did not come to search out the virtuous...*'

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

Ian spoke gently about the Love God has for us all rather than any notions of God ever being angry with us. Ian's painful personal journey to this point was documented in such a way that the book left us with the belief that God is a merciful God.

Fr Ian's clarity of thought combined with an easy to read format were rounded off with questions at the end of each chapter which were succinct albeit at times challenging, such as " *Do you see the difference between believing in God's existence and believing in God?*

The layout of the book was nicely 'chunked' and there was so much in the book most of the Book+Circle intend reading it again.

What did we think were the Book's main weaknesses?

Whilst the majority did not feel the book had any major weakness, one reader felt the book was over complicated and frustratingly not straight forward.

Would we read another book by the same author?

Most would read another book by Fr Ian Petit as '**God is not angry**' sparked debate and challenged our own perceptions of God.

One book in particular 'How can I pray' (1991) and the God Who Speaks (1989) were mentioned.

Would we recommend the book to someone else?

Generally we would not recommend the book to anyone else. One reader, however, has already lent the book to someone who they felt would benefit greatly in their spiritual journey

Any other observations

Ian Petit teaching archive on Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/7x3f62q7bBTY1J3GLHuF99>

Next Book+Circle – Meeting Room at St Joseph's

The first meeting in 2026 (Friday 6 February @ 10.30 AM) we will read: **What are we waiting for – Fr Richard Leonard** (finding meaning in Advent and Christmas)

Followed in March (26 March @ 8.00pm) by Pope Leo's first Apostolic Exhortation – *Dilexi te* (I have loved you)

https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html (read online)

<https://www.ctsbooks.org/product/dilexi-te/> (you can buy it on CTSbooks £4.95)

