

Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book + Circle – September 2025

Crooked Lines by Holly Michael

About the Book

A debut novel which threads the lives of two souls from different continents and cultures (United States and India) struggling with spirituality through despair and deceptions in search of truth. The author is American and married to a Church of England Bishop.

How did the book make us feel?

The majority enjoyed this easy to read page turner. The portrayal of the woman's difficult childhood (and beyond) was especially moving as her mother's ongoing and unfounded blame of her for the death of her sibling were described.

The main characters were better developed than others in the book but overall there was a feeling of empathy as they faced their life challenges.

Some parts of the story line were both sad and provoked disappointment and anger.

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

The story reflected the truth that faith is not a linear experience.

The book layout with clear print and spacing made it physically easy to read and the language was 'easy'.

The story details were gripping and most felt empathy towards the main characters. There were scenes which were uplifting eg the doctor who cared for a patient with compassion.

It was a good, light holiday read. Several people commented on the attractiveness of the book cover.

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

One reader disliked the style of the book. Another disliked a particular Americanism used throughout the book that others had not registered.

The influence of the caste system and the inaccuracies of priestly training (albeit in a religious order) and the switching between the continents jarred at times.

Some of the characters could have been developed more – one character seemed to appear in the book when a difficult transitional moment occurred.

The book did not have a tidy “happy ever after” ending (that some of our previously read novels had) and some of the incidents in the book were unsettling, reinforcing the crooked lines of our faith journeys.

Would we recommend this book to others?

Whilst not a ‘classic’, it is an easy inoffensive holiday read.

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

Friday 24th October after the 10am Mass

Chosen book – The Full Catastrophe by Tracey Leonard

(and for the following meeting “God is not Angry by Ian Pettit