



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle - November 2021

With the challenge of getting books from the USA currently, we covered 3 books at the November meeting. It was very interesting to share views of whichever book we had read

- Love Unveiled - Edward Sri
- Fratelli Tutti – Pope Francis
- The Case for Jesus – Brant Pitre

Book 1: Love Unveiled

This is a thought-provoking book which explains why God loves each of us and God's relationship with us is the reason for everything the Church does and teaches. Professor Edward Sri takes the reader through all the elements of the Catholic faith. They fit together neatly to make one 'beautiful mosaic' of God's love for us and our own participation in that all-encompassing love.

How did the book make us feel?

Readers of this book really enjoyed it and felt it was very engaging. Whilst there were a few topics that were a challenge to understand, such as the section on the Trinity, they agreed that it was worth reading the sections twice. The fact that the Catholic faith is based on God's love for all of us and his desire for us to be with him in heaven, is thought to be lost sometimes in all the pre-conceptions others have about the practical side of faith. This is put across well in the book.

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

The book covered all aspects of the Catholic faith and was very logical. It brings all aspects together in one book. The way it was written challenges some of the thinking we have about the Church, but in a positive way helping the reader think carefully about each topic. Having images within the text helped keep the reader's attention and was thought to be a 'nice' touch.

And what were the book's main weaknesses?

Perhaps the order of the topics within the book weren't in the order expected but this didn't detract from the key message that Jesus is there with us at all times and we can reach out to him at any point.

Would we read another book written by the same author?

Yes – Edward Sri is an author we would all read again.

Would we recommend this book to someone else?

Anyone wanting to learn more about the catholic faith, whether new or someone baptised at an early age, would benefit by reading this book. One member of the group described it as a mini catechism.

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Book 2: Fratelli Tutti – Pope Francis

Pope Francis's third encyclical is inspired by the life and example of St Francis of Assisi, his love for the poorest and his openness to all. The Pope wrote this during the global coronavirus pandemic and talks about the possibility of re-discovering a sense of common humanity. He covers new ways of engaging in politics, society, and religion.

How did the book make us feel?

This book made us feel a sense of hope coming out of something that has been quite startling and difficult for nations to deal with. The Pope shows a real understanding of society and has great compassion for the world we live in. He gives practical suggestions about how the World can respond to the Pandemic. Coming out of something that has been so challenging to Society is a hope that things can change for the better making the World a fairer place for the poor among us.

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

The book is so well written, every paragraph has something important to say. It is a book that needs time for reflection, not to be raced through. The parable of the Good Samaritan is used to highlight how important it is to help others, but that we cannot do this alone, we need to work as a team. This is a book/ encyclical – that has no weaknesses, it is full of gems and beautifully written.

Would we read another book written by the same author?

Yes, and this is a book that everyone could read and benefit from, whether a Catholic or not, it is for anyone who believes in a common humanity.

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Book 3: The Case for Jesus – Brant Pitre

Over the past hundred years, scholars have attacked the historical truth of the Gospels and argued that they were originally anonymous and filled with contradictions. In 'The Case for Jesus', Brant Pitre taps into the wells of Christian scripture, history, and tradition to ask and answer a number of different questions including: If we don't know who wrote the Gospels, how can we trust them? How can the four Gospels be historically true when there are differences between them? How much faith should be put into these writings?

How did the book make us feel?

This book was read by one of the Book+Circle members who thought it was very informative and a book that we would all find interesting. It was full of scholarly works about the Bible and the Gospels and enthused her to want to spend more time on 'Bible study'.

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

The book helped put the Bible into context and gave a clear explanation about how people would have understood much of what was written/said at the time because of the context it was written in. References back to Daniel and how he predicted that the Son of Man would come, would be killed and would rise again in order for us to enter the Kingdom of God, all made sense in the context.

Would we read another book written by the same author?

Yes, Brant Pitre is an author who is very engaging and has a great enthusiasm that is captured in his books.

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Next book: Interior Freedom Jacques Philippe

Next meeting : Friday 10 December 2021 @ 10.30 am - after mass at St Joseph's cafe

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