



## Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

### Book+Circle – February 2023

#### **Finding the Language of grace** Rediscovering Transcendence

By Dom Christopher Jamison OSB

#### **About the Book**

This book focuses on the transcendent experiences of grace that we struggle to talk about in today's very business-like culture. Abbot Christopher shows how the ways we listen and speak, read and write can all be channels of grace. The power and pain of grace resonate throughout the book, offering a new perspective on healing the loneliness and mistrust experienced by many, as well as on the turbulence and political extremes of today's world. How do we restore trust? How can we listen well? What is the right way to read the signs of the times? And how can we revitalize the language of grace in our day?

#### **How did the book make us feel?**

This was a book that received mixed reactions from Circle members in terms of approaching the book and reading through.

- The title made some of us wonder what it might cover, 'the language of grace' and the sub-title 'Rediscovering Transcendence' left us curious.
- The imagery on the front also had confused messages of either a little ghostly, or eerie, who was the person in the image? but for others the light shining through the window was bright, hopeful, calm
- The content of the book also had mixed reviews from us all, some found it rather challenging, difficult to grasp and retain what the author was trying to get across, with some having to re-read sections to really understand but others found it very clear and triggered lots of thoughts about what we need to do to better understand the gift of grace
- Readers like the fact the Dom Christopher has identified that the Church has lost the language of grace.
- Some readers could easily identify 'golden nuggets' throughout the book

We all thought the suggested actions at the end of each chapter were really helpful and we 'aimed' to take up some of the actions.

#### **What did we think were the book's main strengths?**

There were some wonderful, thought provoking ideas in the book.

- Dom Christopher uses the main forms of language: listening, speaking, writing and reading to explore how language can be a medium for grace and even greater grace.
- The book helped us stop and think about how we have all seen language change over our own lifetime and being able to express thoughts and feelings about religious matters is challenging
- The chapter on storytelling was liked, explaining how Jesus used storytelling to teach the kingdom in such a way that it became real to the reader

- Dom Christopher has worked with the youth and noted how in pop culture singers like Stormzy have done an amazing job at putting across messages of grace in their music that is listened to by millions who might otherwise be hard to reach.

We agreed that the book reinforced our concerns that it is very challenging in today's environment to use the language of grace when it seems to fall on 'deaf ears'.

### **What did we think were the book's main weaknesses?**

Some readers found it hard to navigate through the book, having read a chapter and gone back to it later it was hard to find the continuity.

- Even having read the book it was still quite hard to define grace.
- Some of the 'stories' such as the one with Perceval the young knight, the 'moral of the tale' wasn't as obvious as it could have been.

### **Would we recommend that this book is read by others?**

Yes, we would recommend the book, particularly to those who want to explore the Catholic faith in more depth.

### **Would we read other books by this author?**

Yes, we have already read Finding Sanctuary by Dom Christopher and thought his book on Finding Happiness would also be an excellent read

### **Next book: Domestic Monastery by Ronald Rolheiser**

**Meeting:** Friday 10 March 2023 @ 10.30 am, St Joseph's Meeting Room

### **The April read: Gilead by Marilynne Robinson**

Meeting Wednesday 19 April 2023 @ 8.00pm, St Joseph's Meeting room