



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle – July 2023

How to Defend the Faith without raising your voice. Civil responses to Catholic hot-button issues. By Michael Kelly and Justin Ivereigh

About the Book

Some of the teachings of the Catholic Church remain little understood and Catholics can often find themselves on the receiving end of a barrage of criticism. This is a handbook for anyone wishing to know how to defend and explain some of the toughest and most challenging teachings of the Catholic Church.

How did the book make us feel?

We all found this book very positive and were encouraged.

- The topics covered, triggered a lot of reflection on personal experiences, evident in the enthusiastic discussion.
- More confident/better equipped with a method to promote our faith in a positive way, rather than defensively.
- Greater appreciation of the role of the Church in the world.

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

The tone of the book was non-threatening – the picture of two comfy chairs on the book front was encouraging, relaxing, non confrontational.

- The topics were relevant to personal experiences.
- The emphasis on the strengths of the Church as a global community which can (and should) influence our world – as “the largest global actor in civil society” was appreciated and revelatory.
- The structure of the book – introducing each topic with the challenging questions, faced from outside (and inside) the Church, created a clear focus for each chapter. The responses based on Church teaching/understanding were clear, thorough, and enlightening, sometimes challenging our own attitudes and how the Church has responded in the past.
- The way that the book modelled how to respond civilly was really helpful, especially the concept of “reframing”.
- Having the key points summarised after each topic was another strength in the structure of the book, reinforcing conviction.

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

- The issues being explored were complex and needed the statistics/material which was sometimes challenging to read. We agreed this was not a book to be rushed.
- The second edition, that some of the Book+Circle members had bought, was primarily speaking to the Church in Ireland which skewed some of the content.
- The print in the first version of this book was physically less easy to read due to size and greyscale

Would we recommend that this book is read by others?

- Yes - this is a book relevant to all Catholics, but would be particularly useful for Catholics involved in Catechesis, especially Confirmation and RCIA.

Next Book "Small Miracles" by Anne Booth - **Meeting Friday 25th August after 10am Mass.**

The book after that will be:

Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist by Brandt Pitre - **Meeting Thursday 19 October @ 8.00pm** (Note change of evening meeting date & gives a little longer between meetings to read this book)