



Parish of the Nativity of the Lord

Book+Circle – October 2024

Ways of Imperfection – Simon Tugwell

About the Book

Spirituality has to do with a whole Christian vision of life, not simply with methods of prayer or contemplation. Simon Tugwell approaches the subject through the idea of "imperfection," tracing this theme through a series of spiritual writers from different periods of Christian history. He ranges from the Apostolic and Desert Fathers through St. Francis of Assisi and Mother Julian of Norwich to St. Thérèse of Lisieux. These are penetrating and illuminating studies which show how from the start and throughout its history the Christian vision is not one for an elite but for everyone, sinners all.

How did the book make us feel?

- This book received mixed reactions from the group, there were a lot of gems throughout the chapters but for some it needed strong concentration or re-reading to absorb the text
- Some felt the depth of the book was beyond their level of understanding about spirituality.
- While others found it exciting, confirming and reinforcing thoughts about spirituality

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

- The content had a lot of very detailed thinking, but if worked through slowly was good to be able to tease out very helpful ideas that were reassuring to read.
- The structure of the book was good, short chapters and solid notes for each chapter.
- Although some of the 'expected' spiritual saints were not included in this book, but those that were helped to give clarity to the spiritual journey we are on – the Monk's Ladder was really good - it helped us to think about 'what does the Lord want me to get from this'
- The explanation about the importance of prayer and about grace was very interesting.
- The last line of the book .. "even in this very darkness Christ is there thirsting for our love." Was thought to be very poignant.

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

- We all agreed that this was a book that needed 'time' to read it, there was so much detailed content.
- There was a lot of depth to put context around points made, which was good but also took some concentration from the reader
- The title was thought to be a little off putting but was better understood once the book had been read
- There was a lot of jargon in the book – felt like it was written for someone who was perhaps studying for a PhD
- We thought it would have been useful to have a short summary at the start of each chapter so the reader knew what to expect
- The Chapter on the Dominicans was particularly liked by one reader as it has a personal resonance for them

Would we recommend that this book is read by others?

- This was not a book we would recommend to other people.

Next Books & Diary Dates to end 2024

- **Friday 13th December 10.30 am . Book: Where the Hell is God – Fr Leonard**
- **Thursday 1 February 8.00pm Book: Abandonment to Divine Providence by Jean Pierre de Caussade**

Small Meeting Room at St Joseph's