



Book+Circle - July 2021 meeting

Title of the book & author	The Mystery of the Incarnation by Cardinal Basil Hume
About the Book	At the heart of the Christian faith is the mystery of the Incarnation – God showing the depth of his love for us by becoming human. In this book, which he was working on in the weeks before his death in 1999, Cardinal Basil Hume reflects on the Incarnation and its meaning for our lives and for the world (at that time anticipating the 3 rd millennium).
How did the book make us feel?	Contrasting it to “The Mystery of Love” by the same author, this book created mixed reactions – it was less uplifting for some (somewhat depressing), whilst reassuring in its simplicity and humility for others. The frequent use of the word “should” and reference to rules “never changing” in one of the chapters was challenging. The tone within the book was deemed to have changed from the earlier book, maybe linked to the Cardinal’s approaching death.
The Book’s main strengths	The language used was simple and easy to read. The structure of the book – short chapters with a lot to reflect upon – was helpful: eg. the chapter on the Mass, hope and reconciliation offered a powerful new perspective on the connection between the Eucharist and Calvary; as did some of the examples of the Cardinal’s humility eg when he writes “I rarely understand the purpose of pain,” and of his insights eg that we can allow our worries, rather than overwhelming us, to be “blessed and sanctified by the love” of God. The little stories used to illustrate his points were enjoyed.
The Book’s main weaknesses	Not really a weakness but the references to the Millennium gave the book a dated feel although the messages could be interpreted for the post COVID times. The title might suggest a deeper theological treatise on the Incarnation which it is not.

Would we read another Book written by the same author?	The Book Club has read Cardinal Hume's The Mystery of Love, which we all enjoyed
Would we recommend this Book to someone else?	Would probably recommend The Mystery of Love before this title.
Next Book/next meeting date/Venue	Next meeting Wednesday 18th August 8pm venue TBC. Book "The Abbey" by Fr James Martin The book after that "Eager to love: the alternative way of St Francis of Assisi" by Richard Rohr