

Naming and growing faith today

Kevin Treston has been writing books to assist Catholic adult faith formation for many years. In this, his latest work, he opens up ways of reflecting on the issues that face Australian Catholics. As we lead up to the Plenary Council it is a timely resource for individual and group reflection. *Opening Doors, A Seeker's Reflections on the Rooms of Christian Living*, Coventry, 2019. p142. Review by Peter Maher.

This is a book for those seeking to reflect on the issues the church faces today from a gospel perspective. Treston invites us into eleven rooms for reflection including the universe story, grace, God, church, ministry, women, ethics, spirituality and our place in the multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-faith and multi-faceted world.

In the introduction, Treston quotes a Chinese proverb – Teachers open the door; you enter by yourself. This in some ways describes the methodology of the book. Each room explored offers insights, information, reflection in today's context and some questions for personal and/or group reflection. The reader however can engage with the text in many ways to foster their own adult learning. Each room is presented as a place for wandering around as Treston opens the door on the topic to be explored. The learning however is to be adult learning – self-directed, based in one's own experience and directed by the learner to the creation of a better life and a better world.

This book is easy reading but each chapter asks hard questions and calls on the reader or group to discover ways ahead in service of the future church and world. It invites readers to address the critical questions of the incarnate God in everyday realities while reminding us of the cosmic dimension of the living God. We are invited to reflect on the meaning of human existence on a planet that is self-destructing, while taking us to the heart of the questions for our church in the 21st century. Clericalism, church governance, women, LGBTI, conscience, making ethical decisions, spirituality, ecumenism and secularism are all addressed in the course of the journey through the rooms.

It is a book that marries good information and good reflection in the service of the adult learner finding a path to wholeness and holiness in the current context of the Catholic church. Treston invites adult reflection into the complexities of the current church crisis. However, he is always positive leaving the reader hopeful that as a group of Catholic adult faith learners, we can together carve out a future based on gospel values.

It is this marvellous mix of balanced statement of belief and practical method that makes this book a useful support to journeying toward the Plenary Council 2020 individually or in groups.

Fr Peter Maher editor of 'The Swag' (Quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia).

