

A READING LIST
FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE CATHOLIC FAITH

There are many introductions to the Catholic Faith: some are intended for children, others for converts, and yet others for practising Catholics who simply want to know more.

Of those given here, some are straightforward catechisms, whilst others are weighty theological tomes for the more serious reader. All are chiefly focused on Catholic dogmas and doctrines so that readers may acquaint themselves with what the Church actually teaches. They are unashamedly traditional in character, and most of them were published in the first five or six decades of the twentieth century.

Some are out of print (o/p) whilst others are, once more, in-print (i/p), having been reprinted or re-published in recent years. All are excellent in the view of the compiler, and a couple are outstanding. Read the notes and, if you wish, speak to Fr Joseph before buying. For out-of-print books, try <https://www.usedbooksearch.co.uk/>

Key to abbreviations **i/p** in-print **o/p** out-of-print **pp** number of pages

A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction by Monsignor John Hagan, 4 volumes (approx. pp 500 each vol), 1928-32. o/p. An outstanding commentary on the Catechism of Pope St Pius X published in 1908. For the serious reader, lengthy and detailed yet accessible. (Vol. I The Creed; Vol. II The Sacraments; Vol. III The Commandments; Vol. IV On Prayer, Virtue & Vice, Index.)

I Believe by J.P.M. van der Ploeg, OP, 1986. o/p. pp 282. A theological introduction to the dogmas and doctrines of the Catholic Church. Easy to read.

My Catholic Faith by Louis LaRavoire Morrow, 1949, revised in 1960. Republished by Sarto House in 2000. i/p. pp 429. A slightly old fashioned but nevertheless excellent catechism divided into 195 questions with answers further subdivided. Very accessible.

Our Birthright, 1929 (for primary school children), and *Our Inheritance* 1927 (for secondary pupils), by Mary Eaton. Very good introductions to the Faith designed to nurture not just learning but a love of the Faith. Both o/p, and both now feel dated in their tone and language, but still worth having on your bookshelves. Nowadays, more suited to children older than the original target readership.

Our Faith by John C. Heenan (former Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster), 1956. o/p. pp 277. The author adopts a conversational tone in this excellent summary of our Catholic Faith.

Roman Catholicism by Sebastian Bullough. Pelican Books, 1963. o/p. pp 330. A chatty and readable introduction to the Faith, aimed at the reader who wants to know about the Church as an institution as well as what She teaches.

The Catechism Simply Explained by Canon Cafferata, 1897, new edition 1954. o/p. pp 174. The simplest and best short commentary on *The Catechism of Christian Doctrine* (the old Penny Catechism) with short paragraphs to explain the answer to each question. A must!

The Faith Explained by Leo Trese, 1959, pp 564, reprinted by Scepter Publishers, 2011, pp 479. i/p. A really readable encyclopedia of the Catholic Faith.

The Faith of Millions: The Credentials of the Catholic Religion by John A. O'Brien, 1952. Reprinted by Our Sunday Visitor, 2005. i/p. pp 438. A thorough but gentle commentary on the Catholic Faith written as if a kindly uncle were speaking to the reader.

The Mysteries of Christianity by Matthias Scheeben, translated by Cyril Vollert, 1946. o/p. pp 834. A heavy theological volume for the serious reader, but a rewarding read.

The Student's Catholic Doctrine by Charles Hart, 1916. o/p. pp 382. An outstanding summary of Catholic doctrine. The single best small book on the Catholic Faith.

The Teaching of the Catholic Church by George D. Smith. Originally published as 35 essays, bound into two volumes in 1947, into a single volume in 1951, and now reprinted (again in two volumes) by Arouca Press in 2021. An outstanding summary of Catholic doctrine, at once learned and easy to read. The single best read for a detailed understanding of the Faith.

This is the Faith by Francis J. Ripley, 1951. Reprinted by Tan Books in 1999. i/p. pp 414. A solid and popular explanation of the Catholic Faith.

We Believe by Monsignor A.N. Gilby, 1982. Reprinted by Tan Books, 2013. i/p. pp 358. An excellent commentary on what Catholics believe based on the 300 questions in *The Catechism of Christian Doctrine* (the old Penny Catechism).

What Catholics Believe by Josef Pieper, 1951. New edition edited by Heinz Raskop, Cluny Media, 2019. i/p. pp 131. An excellent little summary of the Catholic Faith, easy to read and understand.