

A READING LIST OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

This is a list of weighty theological books and is intended for those who wish to study the Catholic Faith in detail. None of the books listed are intended for bedtime reading! The following books are not catechisms, and the list is not designed for newcomers to the Faith. Most of the books listed are, sadly, out of print (o/p) although some have recently been reprinted by publishers such as Arouca Press or Os Justi Press.

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 (with some obvious exceptions) were published in the first five or six decades of the twentieth century.

The works of St Thomas Aquinas are taken for granted and, as a result, are not listed. Anything by the Angelic Doctor is worth reading. His most notable works are, of course, the Summa Theologica and the Summa Contra Gentiles, but there are many others available in English. Perhaps the most useful for basic catechetical purposes are the Compendium of Theology (trans. Vollert, pub. Herder) and The Catechetical Instructions of St Thomas Aquinas (trans. Collins, pub. Herder). Two handy introductory volumes are An Aquinas Reader edited by Mary T. Clark and The Pocket Aquinas edited by Vernon Bourke. St Thomas also wrote commentaries on Scripture, and compiled a four-volume book called the Catena Aurea, which is a selection of commentaries from the Fathers of the Church on the four Gospels. The Catena Aurea and some of the commentaries have recently been made available in English.

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

Two key texts.

The Sources of Catholic Dogma by Denzinger. The definitive reference book of official dogmatic pronouncements of the Catholic Church. Often known simply as ‘Denzinger,’ it should be on the shelves of anyone seriously interested in what the Catholic Church actually teaches. Various editions, some still i/p.

Catechism of the Council of Trent. Also known simply as *The Roman Catechism.* Various editions, some still i/p.

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Listed alphabetically by author.

Tradition and the Church by George Agius. Originally published by The Stratford Company, Boston, in 1928. o/p. Re-published by Tan Books in 2005. (327pp). i/p. Without a doubt, the single best volume on the nature of Tradition.

Christian Denominations by Konrad Algermissen. Translated by Joseph W. Grundner. Published by Herder, St Louis & London, in 1945 (1051pp). o/p. An outstanding but lengthy and detailed look at the Catholic Church's own doctrine about Herself followed by a survey of what other denominations teach about themselves.

Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation by Francis Clark. Published by Blackwell in 1967 and Augustine Publishing in 1980. (582pp). o/p. An outstanding summary of Catholic and Protestant Eucharistic theology including what the Protestant Reformers rejected and why.

Laying the Foundation: A Handbook of Catholic Apologetics and Fundamental Theology by Joseph Clifford Fenton. Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing. 2016. pp501. i/p. Originally published in 1942 as *We Stand with Christ: an Essay in Catholic Apologetics*.

Fr Réginald Marie Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964) was a French Dominican theologian and arguably the greatest theologian of the twentieth century. He recognized the errors of, and the threat from, many other theologians of his day and was responsible for coining the phrase nouvelle theologie which, although originally used derogatively, came to be the name by which, collectively, the writings of theologians such as Congar, Chenu, de Lubac, and others, came to be known. He was a prolific writer, and many of his writings, although not all, have been translated into English. The following titles were all published by Herder in the 1930s – 1960s in hardback although many of these titles have since been re-published in paperback by Tan Books:

- *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*
- *The One God: A Commentary on the First Part of St Thomas' Theological Summa*
- *The Trinity & God the Creator: A Commentary on St Thomas' Theological Summa, Ia, q. 27-119*
- *Beatitude: A Commentary on St Thomas' Theological Summa, Ia, IIæ, qq. 1-54*
- *Grace: Commentary on the Summa Theologica of St Thomas, Ia, IIæ, q. 109-14*
- *The Theological Virtues: Vol. 1 – Faith: A Commentary on St Thomas' Theological Summa Ia, IIæ, qq. 62, 65, 68: IIa, IIæ, qq. 1-16. [N.B. Other volumes did not follow].*

- *Christ the Savior [sic]: A Commentary on the Third Part of St Thomas' Theological Summa*
- *Life Everlasting*
- *Our Savior [sic] and His Love for Us*
- *Predestination*
- *God: His Existence and His Nature – A Thomistic Solution of Certain Agnostic Antinomies (2 vols)*
- *Providence*
- *Christian Perfection and Contemplation: According to St Thomas Aquinas and St John of the Cross*
- *The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus (2 vols)*
- *The Three Ages of the Interior Life: Prelude of Eternal Life (2 vols)*
- *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*

- *The Priest in Union with Christ* (published by The Mercier Press in 1951)
- *The Last Writings* (published by New City Press in 1969)

Newly translated and published by Emmaus Academic:

- *On Divine Revelation (2 vols). i/p.*
- *The Sense of Mystery: Clarity and Obscurity in the Intellectual Life. i/p.*
- *The Order of Things: The Realism of the Principle of Finality. i/p.*
- *Thomistic Common Sense: The Philosophy of Being and the Development of Doctrine. i/p.*

And by Saint Joseph Communications:

- *Knowing the Love of God: Lessons from a Spiritual Master. i/p.*

The Canon of the Mass: Its History, Theology, and Art by Jerome Gassner. Published by Herder, St Louis & London, in 1949. (404pp). o/p. One of the best single in-depth studies of the Canon of the Mass.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by Nicholas Gühr. Translated from the German. Published by Herder, St Louis & London, in 1942. (778pp). o/p. The best single in-depth study of the theology of the Mass. A heavy read.

A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction by Monsignor John Hagan, 4 volumes (approx. pp 500 each vol), published by Browne & Nolan Ltd, Dublin, in 1928-32. o/p. An outstanding commentary on the Catechism of Pope St Pius X which was 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.)

The Sacramentals of the Holy Catholic Church by A.A. Lambing. Published by Benziger Brothers, New York, in 1892. (356pp). o/p. A useful study of what a sacramental is as well as a look at several examples.

Fr Serafino Lanzetta (1977-) is one of the remarkably few contemporary theologians to whom we can turn with confidence. A Marian Franciscan based in Portsmouth, UK, he is a lecturer at St Mary's College in Twickenham and at the Theological Faculty of Lugano. He has published several books including:

- *God's Abode with Man: The Mystery of Divine Grace*. Os Justi Press, 2023. pp137. i/p.
 - *Super Hanc Petram: The Pope and the Church at a Dramatic Moment in History*. Os Justi Press, 2023. pp224. i/p.
 - *The Door of Faith: When Reason and Love Meet*. Arouca Press, 2022. pp274. i/p.
 - *The Symphony of Truth: Theological Essay*. Arouca Press, 2021. pp150. i/p.
 - *Vatican II: A Pastoral Council, Hermeneutics of Council Teaching*. Gracewing, 2016. pp494. i/p.
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The Communion of the Saints by Charles McGinnis. Published by Herder, St Louis & London, in 1912. (309pp). o/p. An excellent summary of the doctrine of the Communion of the Saints.

The Whole Christ by E. Mersch. Translated by John R. Kelly. Published by Dennis Dobson, London, in 1938 (623pp). o/p. Subtitled, *The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, this volume is broken down into three sections: the doctrine (i) in Sacred Scripture, (ii) in the Greek Fathers, and (iii) in Western Tradition down to the encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (1928) of Pope Pius XI.

The Theology of the Mystical Body by E. Mersch. Translated by Cyril Vollert. Published by Herder, St Louis & London, in 1952 (663pp). o/p. The author states that this 'is the sequel of a previous work [*The Whole Christ*], which is a sort of preface to the present volume.' Whereas *The Whole Christ* looks at the development of the doctrine, this volume looks at the doctrine itself.

Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma by Ludwig Ott. Translated by Patrick Lynch. Published by the Mercier Press, Cork, in 1955. o/p. Re-published by Baronius Press in 2018. i/p. Simply cannot be beaten as a summary of Catholic dogma.

Manual of the History of Dogmas by Bernard J. Otten. Vol 1 (1917, 523pp): *The Development of Dogmas During the Patristic Age, AD 100 – AD 869*. Vol 2 (1918, 551pp): *The Development of Dogmas During the Middle Ages and*

After, AD 869 – 1907. Published by Herder, St Louis & London. o/p.

Theology of the Sacraments by P. Pourrat. Translated from the French. Published by Herder, St Louis & London, in 1930. (417pp). o/p. A study of the nature of the sacraments rather than a look at the individual sacraments.

Dogmatic Theology by Joseph Pohle and Arthur Preuss (sometimes known simply as Pohle-Preuss). 12 vols. Published by Herder, St Louis and London. o/p. Vols: 1. God, His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes; 2. The Divine Trinity; 3. God The Author of Nature and the Supernatural; 4. Christology; 5. Soteriology; 6. Mariology; 7. Grace Actual and Habitual; 8. The Sacraments (I); 9. The Sacraments (II); 10. The Sacraments (III); 11. The Sacraments (IV); 12. Eschatology.

* Now re-published in a six-volume set by Loreto Publications in 2014. i/p.

Dogmatic Theology for the Laity by Matthias Premm. Translated by David Heimann. Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books. 1977. pp456. o/p.

Fr Matthias Scheeben (1835-1888) was arguably the greatest theologian of the nineteenth century. He was also a mystic whose mind revelled in speculating on divine grace and the all-pervading presence of God. In his own words, the aim of his theology was 'to make the Christian feel happy about his faith because the beauty and eminence of our faith consist in this: that through the mysteries of grace it raises our nature to an immeasurably high plane and presents to us an inexpressibly intimate union with God.'

- *Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics* by Matthias Scheeben. 8 vols. Originally published 1873-1887. Now translated into English for the first time by Michael J. Miller and published by Emmaus Academic. i/p. Expensive and weighty but one of the most complete books of Catholic theology there is. Vols: 1.1 Theological Epistemology: The Objective Principles of Theological Knowledge; 1.2 Theological Epistemology; theological Knowledge Considered in Itself; 2. The Doctrine about God: Or Theology in the Narrower Sense; 3. God in His Fundamental Original Relation to the World; 4. Sin and the Kingdom of Sin as a Contradiction and a Combat against the Supernatural Order of the World; 5.1 Soteriology, The Person of Christ the Redeemer; 5.2 Soteriology, The Work of Christ and the Role of His Virgin Mother; 6. The Realization of the Salvation Merited by Christ in Individual Human Beings through the Justifying Grace of Christ.

- *Manual of Catholic Theology Based on Scheeben's Dogmatik* by Joseph Wilhelm & Thomas Scannell. 2 vols. A reduced version of Scheeben's multi-volume work, first published in 1890. o/p. Various paperback editions by on-line print companies are now available.

- *Mariology*. Translated by T.L.M.J. Geukers. Published by Herder, St Louis & London, 1946 (vol 1; 252pp) and 1947 (vol 2; 287pp). o/p. Published before the solemn dogmatic definition of the Assumption by Pope Pius XII in 1950, it nevertheless includes a look at the dogma. An outstanding summary of Marian theology.
 - *Nature and Grace*. Translated by Cyril Vollert, 1954. o/p pp 361. A heavy theological tome exploring the relationship and distinctions between nature and grace, between the natural and the supernatural orders. Perhaps the best volume on this topic.
 - *The Glories of Divine Grace*. Translated by Patrick Shaughnessy. Originally published by St Meinrad's Abbey, Indiana. o/p. Re-published by Tan Books in 2000. (420pp). i/p.
 - *The Mysteries of Christianity*. Translated by Cyril Vollert, 1946. o/p. pp 834. A heavy theological volume for the serious reader, but a rewarding read. Probably the single best one-volume work of dogmatic theology.
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The Church by A.D. Sertillanges. Translated by A.G. McDougall. Published by Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd, London, in 1922. (391pp). o/p. Covers: The Nature & Purpose of the Church; The General Characters of the Church; The Sacramental Life of the Church; The Church's Attitude in Regard to This World; and The Organisation of the Church. A worthwhile read.

Mary's Part in Our Redemption by George Smith. Published by Burns & Oats, London, in 1938 and 1954. (191pp). Outstanding summary of Marian theology. o/p.

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 and in-depth understanding of the Faith.

Doctrine and Devotion by A. Tanquerey (414pp). Translated by Louis A. Arand. Published by Desclée in 1933. An excellent handbook of the spiritual life based on sound doctrine.

Manual of Dogmatic Theology by A. Tanquerey (2 vols; approx. 450pp each vol). Translated by Msgr. J. Byrnes. Published by Desclée in 1959. A handbook of traditional Catholic theology and an excellent reference book.