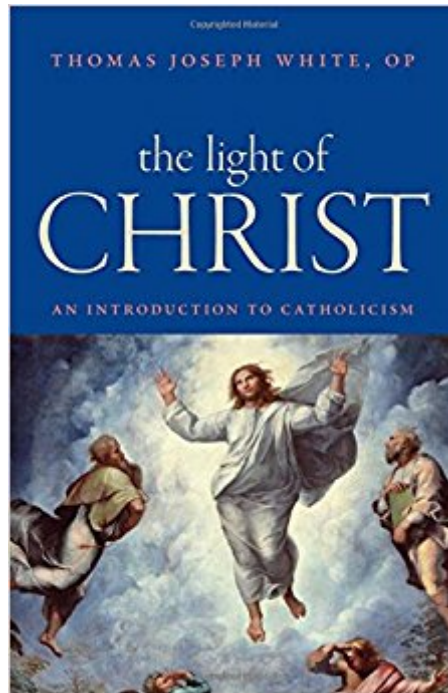




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The Light Of Christ: An Introduction To Catholicism



Synopsis

The Light of Christ provides an accessible presentation of Catholicism that is grounded in traditional theology, but engaged with a host of contemporary questions or objections. Inspired by the theologies of Irenaeus, Thomas Aquinas and John Henry Newman, and rooted in a post-Vatican II context, Fr. Thomas Joseph White presents major doctrines of the Christian religion in a way that is comprehensible for non-specialists: knowledge of God, the mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the atonement, the sacraments and the moral life, eschatology and prayer. At the same time, The Light of Christ also addresses topics such as evolution, the modern historical study of Jesus and the Bible, and objections to Catholic moral teaching. Touching on the concerns of contemporary readers, Fr. White examines questions such as whether Christianity is compatible with the findings of the modern sciences, do historical Jesus studies disrupt or confirm the teaching of the faith, and does history confirm the antiquity of Catholic claims. This book serves as an excellent introduction for young professionals with no specialized background in theology who are interested in learning more about Catholicism, or as an introduction to Catholic theology. It will also serve as a helpful text for theology courses in a university context. As Fr. White states in the book's introduction: "This is a book that offers itself as a companion. I do not presume to argue the reader into the truths of the Catholic faith, though I will make arguments. My goal is to make explicit in a few broad strokes the shape of Catholicism. I hope to outline its inherent intelligibility or form as a mystery that is at once visible and invisible, ancient and contemporary, mystical and reasonable."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thomas Joseph White, OP is associate professor of systematic theology, Dominican House of Studies and author of *The Incarnate Lord* (CUA Press)

As a professor of theology who teaches on a variety of levels from the parish hall to the undergraduate classroom to the graduate school seminar, I have found this introductory volume by Fr. White to be the single best introduction to the Catholic faith in print. It is perfectly designed for textbook use in a number of settings, and likewise can be read with great benefit by the ordinary individual Catholic who wants to learn more about his faith on his own. The author makes no novel theological arguments, but that is fitting given the nature of the volume. In the author's own words, "My goal is to make explicit in a few broad strokes the shape of Catholicism. I hope to outline its inherent intelligibility or form as a mystery that is at once visible and invisible, ancient and contemporary, mystical and reasonable. Throughout I do not seek primarily to present my own individual ideas, but to represent the wisdom of the Catholic Church." Both as a teacher and as a believer on the path to God, I believe that this volume is highly significant. Thorough, lucid, and readable by the ordinary lay faithful, it is the best contemporary introduction to Catholicism that I have come across in my search for a solid volume for use in introductory classes. Unlike some volumes, the author fairly represents the robust Catholic tradition in its entirety, not indulging in attacks or using it as an excuse to ride his hobby horse. I began my reading of the volume with a list of areas I knew that the author needed to cover, sure that I would catch him missing out on at least a few. I compared the book to Frank Sheed's books and a number of other more contemporary texts. This author managed to cover everything the other ones did and more. Fr. White's scholarship is sound, and his use of sources is outstanding. He draws widely from the Catholic tradition, especially from the Fathers but also from saints into the Middle Ages and beyond. His source documentation is sufficient given the nature of the volume--not too heavy on the footnotes, but there is definitely meat there for those who wish to pursue a given topic further. One of the reasons I really like this book is because Fr. White manages to nail that sweet spot between being overly simplistic/banal/cutesy and overly dry or too scholarly for his lay audience. Perhaps my favorite feature of the author's style is when he frequently pauses to acknowledge a series of questions or objections that his readers might have. He then tackles these items organically as part of his presentation without being overly apologetic or bombastic. I cannot recommend this volume highly enough.

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