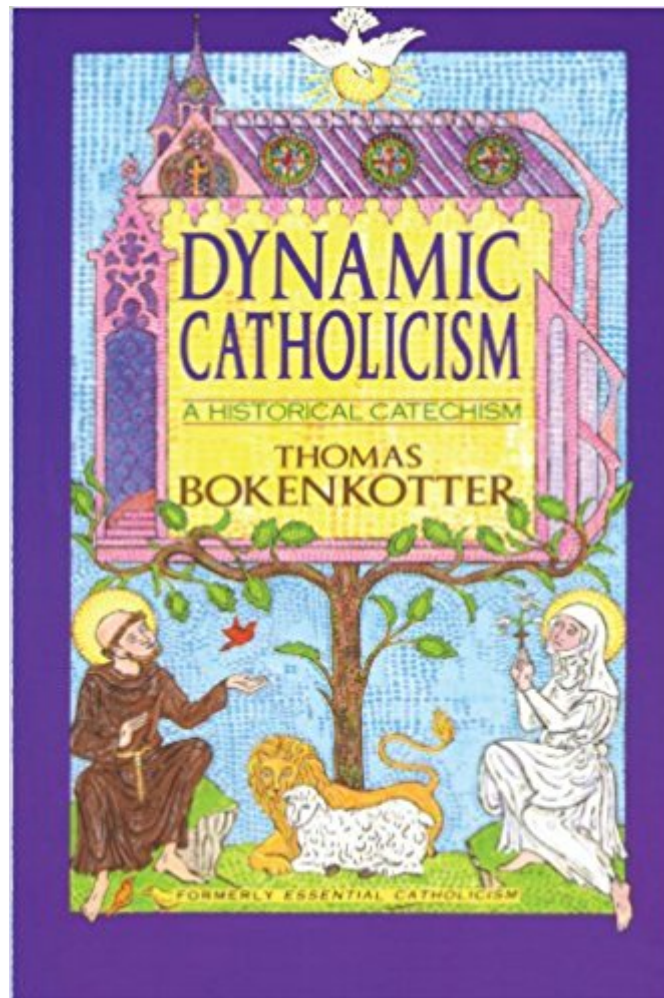




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# Dynamic Catholicism: A Historical Catechism



## Synopsis

Formerly *Essential Catholicism*, this book has been retitled to reflect how, through the centuries, the Roman Catholic Church has evolved in many aspects of its teaching. The new title also reflects how theologians today grapple with ever new ways of understanding many facets of Catholic belief and practice. Who is Jesus? Or Mary? Who are the saints? How are theologians trying to understand such topics as marriage, divorce, homosexuality? What of social justice? The relationship of conscience to papal authority? Thomas Bokenkotter masterfully shows how these questions and many others have been answered in different ways through the centuries. He also translates the latest theological writings on these topics into plain language. "My aim," he says, "has been to sift through and select what seems most helpful and enlightening for those who seek an understanding of the essentials of Catholicism today." Here, then, is a book for all Catholics -- those assured in their belief and those questioning it.

## Book Information

Paperback: 438 pages

Publisher: Image; Reissue edition (September 5, 1986)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385232438

ISBN-13: 978-0385232432

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 1 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #413,521 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #152 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Catechisms](#) #188 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Catholicism > Roman Catholicism](#) #2616 in [Books > History > World > Religious > Christianity](#)

## Customer Reviews

A basic introduction to the Catholic faith and the historical evolution of the Church's teachings--a superb, plain-language guide for Catholics or anyone seeking the essence of Catholicism.

A basic introduction to the Catholic faith and the historical evolution of the Church's teachings--a superb, plain-language guide for Catholics or anyone seeking the essence of Catholicism.

There are some in the Roman Church that consider this outstanding scholar a "heretic," but his theological explorations are eminently sensible, often brilliant, and exhibit exactly the kind of visionary lucidity that may save the increasingly untenable warehouse of dusty old Roman dogma from irrelevance as wider humanity comes face-to-face with the truths about human origins and behavior, and the almost insurmountable problems these evident truths pose for Catholic doctrine as it is currently "defined" for the watching, deservedly wondering world. Catholics who have even a shred of open-mindedness will read Bokenkotter's insights and realize that he is not out to undermine Roman Catholic magisterial truth, but rather to rescue it from certain doom in the face of reasonable modernity -- without sacrificing the unwavering truths at the core of Christian belief. This man, obscure as he may be in theological circles, is far more helpful, wise, and incisive than Hans Kung has ever been.

Excellent discussion of the evolution of theology in the Roman Catholic Church, and its impact on Vatican II and changes in liturgy.

While the core truths of the Catholic Church do not change, Dynamic Catholicism outlines one thinker's view on how the interpretation and emphasis of various teachings evolve with historical context. I would not characterize Dynamic Catholicism a "catechism" per se, but a "perspective," and should be taken as an opinion on, not a definition of Catholicism. I find its value is enhanced when juxtaposed with its criticism, pro and con. Even the most conservative of Catholics must accept that the human element in the Church is capable of error by act or omission, even blunder, when viewed through the lense of historical hind sight. Pope John-Paul II himself has issued regrets for some of these human errors in recent years, which is in itself an implicit example of the dynamic nature of Catholicism. I found Dynamic Catholicism refreshing as a perspective. Yes, buy and read this book, and a dozen others as well to get differing perspectives. Catholicism is the richest religious tradition ever, in my estimation, where even its faults are instructive as reflections of human nature in the historical context. Its dynamic evolution of understanding and expression is a reflection of the human's capacity to grow over time. Its teachings, intellectual debates and struggles are most valuable and challenging -- a fantastic Way to meld faith, intellect and human purpose.

An apology in five parts: Fr. Bokenkotter advances his catechetical apology in five main parts starting with basic fundamentals of process theology; religion, theism, revelation, faith. He advances

the second part to deal with Christology; of person and message, resurrection, and incarnation. part III defends the Church and its authority, infallibility, icons of Mary and saints. He then discusses worship, sacraments, baptism, eucharist, penance, Marriage and divorce, priesthood. Concluding with part V on Christian daily life, morality, sin, sex, social justice, bioethics, and destiny, which are of most practical concern in daily life of the faithful. The knowledgeable and affluent author of the History of the Roman Catholic Church masterfully exposes the historical evolution of the Church's teachings of pre to post Vatican II Catholicism as seen in their theological-historical development. He tries to be impartial, having in his mind that he addresses those issues in an audience brought up in a mostly Protestant America. Bokenkotter summarizes scholastic thought of Anselm and Aquinas, inviting some of the most influential contemporary thinkers to debate them including; Kung, Rahner, and Schillebeeckx. Meanwhile he could not ignore Calvin, Luther, and Barth since he has to defend the main issues that the reformers criticized, to Catholics living amongst a Protestant majority.

**Reviewers Reactions:** In theology you can be rational, but hardly impartial, and that is why practicing Catholics have expressed different opinions, reflected in .com, reviewers conceived the book controversially. As an Orthodox, brought up to find both Catholics and Orthodox pray same liturgy, I here intend to present American Catholics views:-

"Dynamic Catholicism by Thomas Bokenkotter is a breath of fresh air. .... I don't have to be worried about all the other rules and regulations created by a group of people whose opinions change with time (albeit centuries)." Tom Blasi-

"While the core truths of the Catholic Church do not change, Dynamic Catholicism outlines one thinker's view on how the interpretation and emphasis of various teachings evolve with historical context. ... Even the most conservative of Catholics must accept that the human element in the Church is capable of error by act or omission, even blunder, when viewed through the lens of historical hindsight." "gbortnyk"-

"I enjoy reading Bokenkotter, his writing style is quite enjoyable. Nonetheless, his content is predictable: quite liberal, too much so in fact. Dynamic Catholicism is deficient as a clear presentation of the Catholic Faith. There are also, I believe, seriously insulting remarks made about Catholics of previous generations." AKKTER3-

"Dynamic Catholicism is an example of poor Church historical scholarship. It contains just enough facts mixed with great personal interpretation written in an engaging style to make it a highly misleading book. For the person who wants to understand what Catholics believe and how these beliefs were articulated through time--this is not the book to read." "tnotare"

**In Conclusion:** A concise but comprehensive compendium of Roman Catholicism, doctrine and tradition presented by an established ecclesiastical historian and a Vatican II doctrinal peritus who provided a well researched, thorough examination of the issues of integral Catholic thought and progressive belief

in transition through the last century and its historical roots. Fr Thomas Bokenkotter served as a parish priest, and instructed at Xavier University, Cincinnati.

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