

Catholicism: Further Resources

Exploring the Jesuit and Catholic dimensions of the university's mission

- For a wealth of basic information about Catholicism see the online version of the [New Catholic Encyclopedia](#) (1909). Obviously untouched by developments in 20th century historiography, the encyclopedia's authority has to be put in context, but it is a detailed, and available, introduction to a number of topics in the history of the Catholic Church.
- For a historical overview of American Catholicism, several books can be recommended:
 - Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience : A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Image Books, 1987).
 - James J. Hennessey, S.J., *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (Oxford, 1981).
 - Charles R. Morris, *American Catholic: The Saints and Sinners Who Built America's Most Powerful Church* (Vintage, 1998).
 - James M. O'Toole, *The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America* (Harvard University Press, 2008), told from the point of view of the changing life experience of communities and individuals.
 - An entertaining exploration of various icons of popular Catholicism as it moved from a ghetto subculture into mainstream American life can be found in Mark S. Massa, S.J., *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day, and the Notre Dame Football Team* (Crossroad, 1999).
- For an understanding of Catholic doctrine, one might consult catechisms. These manuals of religious instruction for pastoral use, especially for the young or for converts, go back to the early centuries of the Church's life, but the term "catechism" was first used for a printed book that presented religious doctrine, usually in a question-and-answer format, during the Catholic-Protestant controversies of the 16th century. Luther wrote one (1529), as did Calvin (1537). The Jesuit St. Peter Canisius wrote a catechism (1555) that went through 400 editions in 150 years. The Roman Catechism, authorized by the Council of Trent, appeared in 1566. Older American Catholics will remember the Baltimore Catechism, which first appeared in 1885, with 1400 questions and answers. In the aftermath of Vatican II Pope John Paul II initiated the compilation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which abandoned the question-and-answer format for a lengthy expository description of Catholic doctrine. It was published in 1997.

- The Catholic Periodical and Literature Index 1981—1999 is available to BC users via the [BC Library Resources index](#).
- The web page of the [U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) contains a variety of information about current topics of interest; all major statements by the bishops; current and archived news releases from [Catholic News Service](#); daily readings from the [Lectionary of the Mass](#); and an extensive [glossary of terms](#) associated with Catholic worship and life.
- The complete text of the [New American Bible](#) is available online and indexed by book.
- For young adults, an accessible [glossary](#) of catholic terminology is maintained by [DisciplesNow.com](#).