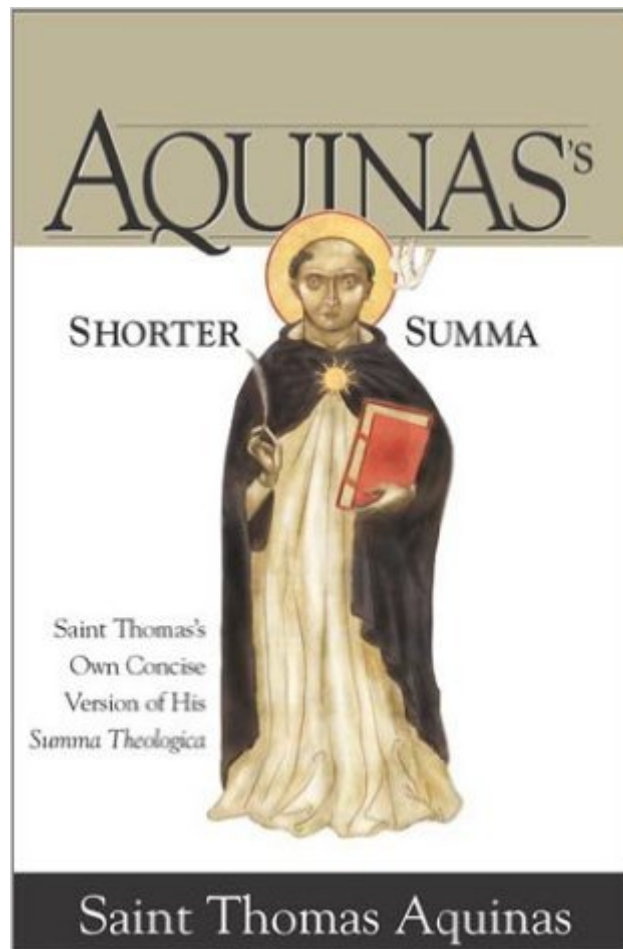


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Aquinas's Shorter Summa: Saint Thomas's Own Concise Version Of His Summa Theologica



Synopsis

Two years before he died, St. Thomas Aquinas probably the greatest teacher the Church has ever known was asked by his assistant, Brother Reginald, to write a simple summary of the Faith of the Catholic Church for those who lacked the time or the stamina to tackle his massive *Summa Theologica*. In response, the great saint quickly set down in language that non-scholars can understand his peerless insights into the major topics of theology: the Trinity, Divine Providence, the Incarnation of Christ, the Last Judgment, and much more. Here, then, is not only St. Thomas's concise statement of the key elements of his thought, but a handy reference source for the essential truths of the Catholic Faith. St. Thomas will show you: Why faith is reasonable, not blind Why evil can never be as powerful as good Solid arguments for Christ's Resurrection Powerful arguments for God's existence Why angels are necessary in creation How Adam's sin differed from Eve's Why Jesus descended into Hell Why we must suffer for Adam's sin Why the truths that you can know only through Revelation are nevertheless rational Startling details about God's forgiveness How a soul's damnation can be compatible with God's goodness What Christians should think about fate and chance What life after resurrection will be like Three ways in which God is in all things Eternal life: what it is; how to understand it How you can know God through reason Why God became man Why God allows evil How Jesus grew in wisdom How Christ can have existed for all eternity and yet be God's Son The Beatific Vision: what it really is Why God's knowledge of the future doesn't deny man's free will How the Holy Trinity is three distinct Persons, yet one God Much more that will help you know and love God with greater understanding!

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Customer Reviews

I am an admirer of Thomas Aquinas, even though I am not Roman Catholic. He is powerful enough to cross the denominational bridges, and that is quite a compliment! This book is the Angelic Doctor's last written work. In fact, he died in the midst of writing the book, so it is incomplete, which is our loss. A mind like his comes once in a Millennium, so we are all worse off to not have more of his writings. This book was intended to be a literal "hand book," a one-volume summation of Aquinas' rather bulky Summa Theologica. It follows a deceptively simple format of three parts: Faith, Hope, and Charity. At first blush, this seems to roughly correspond to II-II of the Summa. However, Aquinas restated his arguments for God's existence, and covers in a nutshell the main points of the entire I-I and I-II of the Summa. It is a rare thing to find someone who can sum up a complex idea, or a string of complex ideas and concepts, but "The Dumb Ox" characteristically pulls it off. I wish more public speakers and politicians could develop this talent, since we get off on so many intellectual rabbit trails, and miss the great Yellow Brick Road. He does have a point to what he says, and he does stick on topic. Hence, his enduring power. The translation is an easy read, and nothing really spectacular jumps out pro or con. As is stated in the introduction, this translation was to be a crutch, and the true student is encouraged to go to the original Latin for any hair-splitting nuances and so forth. The standard numeration is followed, so we can easily compare the translations. I hate translators/publishers who play God and reinvent the wheel in these matters. I feel that this book should be used in conjunction with Kreeft's "Summa of the Summa."

Summa Theologica is the masterwork of an indefatigable outstanding man of letters who, having what is reputed to be the most prodigious mind of his time, pursued the mind of God (*mens Dei*) as his philosophical goal. The seventh son of a wealthy family, he could have opted instead to follow (rather lamely it must be said) a military career as his brothers did, or to take hold of a bishopric in a rich countryside in northern Italy, supported by his family wealth and pedigree, being closely akin to the most important men of his time (he was nephew to Frederick II, privy to Saint Louis, king of France, and many others potentates of his epoch). But he decided instead to be a humble Dominican friar, sloughing off all the perquisites of wealth, to be totally devoted to settling down the most intricate points in the Catholic doctrine, to be equaled only by Saint Augustine in doctrinal preeminence, his rulings being adopted as authoritative enough to be perused by popes and religious scholars inside and outside the Church for the next centuries. His access to the 500 volume library of the University of Paris, where he silently studied for many years and where he got the nickname "the Dumb Ox", due both to his body constitution as to his enormous appetite for

intellectually heavy cargoes, was instrumental to his reading of ALL that had to be read at the time, being his mastering of the Greek language a plus he had against Saint Augustine, who never got familiar enough with that language, and got always a second hand view of the texts written by the founders of philosophy. The importance Plato had for Saint Augustine, Aristotle had for Thomas Aquinas, who respectfully called him "The Philosophus" (sic) or the "Commentator" (sic).

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