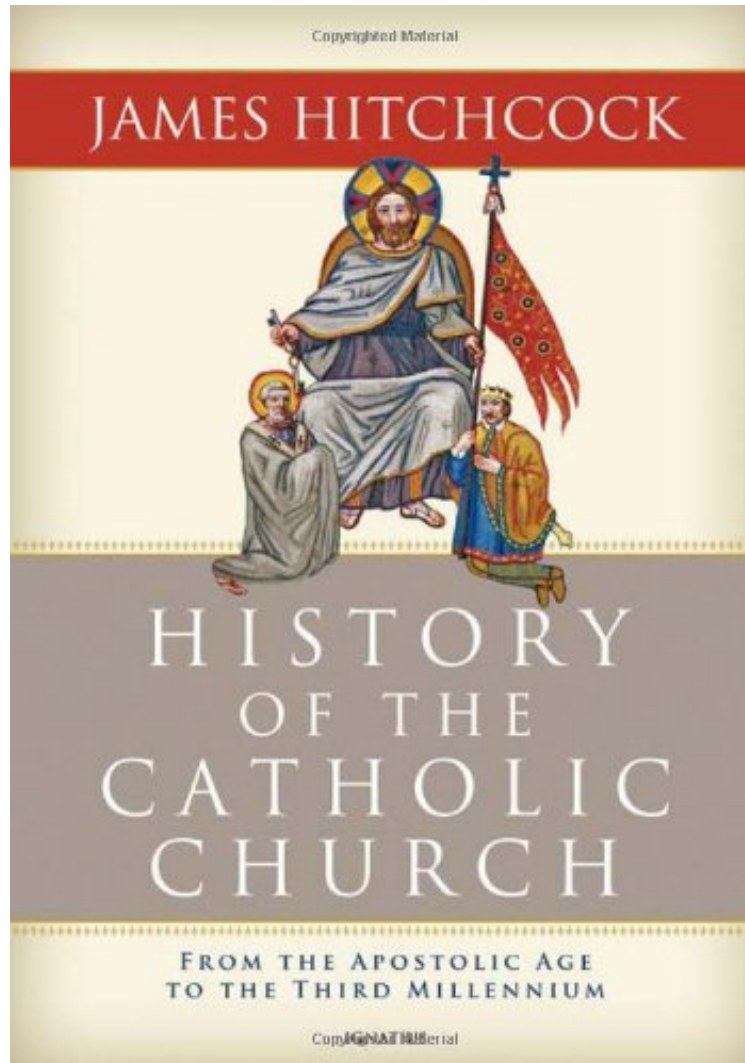


[Library ebook] History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium

History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium

James Hitchcock

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James Hitchcock : History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium:

130 of 134 people found the following review helpful. A great one volume history of the Catholic Church. By Jeffrey Miller A one volume history of the Catholic Church is quite an undertaking and to do it in a bit over 530 pages is not a simple task. Writing only 500 pages on any century of the Church would be a difficult task. Creating a one volume history imposes many expected limitations, but if done well can provide a very valuable service. There are several one

volume histories of this type, although I have mainly read either the multi-volume sets such as *The History of Christendom* by the late Warren H. Carroll or histories covering specific areas. What James Hitchcock has pulled off is quite exceptional. This is a summary history that sweeps through the ages of the Church. While it leaves you wanting to know many more details of the history described, still you are given the best overview possible for this format. For the most part this is a sequential sweep through the history of the Church from its birth to the present. While mostly the history is sequential some of the chapters are focused on specific areas and can contain large sweeps of history regarding that topic. I was hooked from the introduction on. The information is presented in topic focused paragraphs with a topic title displayed to the right or left of the text. The topics are usually only a couple paragraphs in length. I really liked the format of the book because I will be using it in the future as a reference. Besides the lengthy index the topic headings next to the text make it very easy to scan and find specific information you might want to go back to. I have heard complaints about Harry Crocker's one volume history "*Triumph: The Power and the Glory of the Catholic Church*" for being triumphalistic (doesn't that go with the title). So you might wonder how James Hitchcock presents the history of the Church. Well to sum it up the history of the Church can be described using Charles Dickens' start of "*A Tale of Two Cities*". It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way. The Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* starts off "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age." This history displays that tension and does not whitewash the history of the Church. He does not gloss over serious evils that occurred. This history is nicely balanced as a presentation and this is certainly the way I prefer it. Really the history of the Church is sort of a proof for the Catholic Church. If it was just up to us Catholics the Church would be a historical footnote by now. If she were not a divinely given institution she would have passed like all man-made institutions. It does the Church no good to minimize what has happened and it is always a temptation to do this. For example some apologists will minimize witch-hunting as something that mainly occurred among Protestants. As he states witchcraft persecutions were an "activity carried out by Catholics and Protestants with equal zeal." So while the low points are not left out, neither are the glories of Christendom reduced. This is simply a great history of the Church that gives a topological summary giving you the birds-eye view. I really like how he crafted the topic summaries to pack in the information. This succinctness I am sure took some serious work to pull off. I also like that there is little editorializing of history while still delivering some fine insights. Plus peppered throughout were little details at times that added to the enjoyment. At times I thought that perhaps he might have left something out only to find it a couple of paragraphs later or separated into one of the more topic focused chapters. To sum it up I think this is a quite a major work and just a great one volume look at Church history. There was only one time in the whole book where I scratched my head a little where a footnote regarding Joan of Arc read "She was canonized in 1920. Her sanctity is problematical insofar as she acted merely as a French patriot, but her canonization was based on her heroic virtue.". Although if you can go through 500 plus pages of a book of Catholic history and only have one quibble, that is a pretty amazing accomplishment. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A fascinating and informative history of the Catholic church By David Pitchford Hitchcock's "*History of the Catholic Church*" is the best book I could have gotten to help expand my perspective on the history of the church beyond the (Protestant) curriculum of the course I'm currently taking. Though not written in a strongly narrative fashion (it's organized by topic, almost like a chronological encyclopedia), Hitchcock succeeds at weaving the diverse topics on which he touches into a gripping two-thousand year tale. He somewhat emphasizes breadth over depth, touching on an impressive number of people, teachings, and movements and expounding more on some of the more important ones from multiple angles. I especially love the random asides he throws in (like the religious origins of words) which lead to lots of "aha" moments. As would be expected for a Catholic history book, it does tend to focus less on Orthodoxy and Protestantism, but apart from this the tone of the book is impressively neutral, more informative than polemic, largely letting the historical facts speak for themselves and tell their own story. I highly recommend this book for anyone curious about the history of Catholicism and Christianity in general. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An eye opener if you're Catholic By billc Enjoyable as long as you don't read it like studying for a philosophy exam. If Catholic the reader will be surprised and possibly appalled.

The Catholic Church is the longest-enduring institution in the world. Beginning with the first Christians and continuing in our present day, the Church has been planted in every nation on earth. The Catholic Church claims Jesus Christ himself as her founder, and in spite of heresy from within and hostility from without, she remains in the twenty-first century the steadfast guardian of belief in his life, death, and resurrection. The teachings and redemptive works of Jesus as told in the Gospels are expressed by the Church in a coherent and consistent body of doctrine, the likes of which cannot be found in any other Christian body. The history of the Catholic Church is long, complicated, and fascinating, and in this book it is expertly and ably told by historian James Hitchcock. As in the parable of Christ about the weeds that were sown in a field of wheat, evil and good have grown together in the Church from the start, as

Hitchcock honestly records. He brings before us the many characters--some noble, some notorious--who have left an indelible mark on the Church, while never losing sight of the saints, who have given living testimony to the salvific power of Christ in every age. This ambitious work is comprehensive in its scope and incisive in its understanding, a valuable addition to any school or home library. "The gap in knowledge of history and current events sadly extends to us Catholics in our grasp of the Faith and the rich history of the Church. In his ambitious new work, *History of the Catholic Church from the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium*, James Hitchcock has given us an accessible tool to better our understanding...and love for the history of the Church. To love the Church, we must understand her history. As Blessed Pope John XXIII remarked, 'History is our best teacher.' Thank you, Dr. Hitchcock, for this timeless gift to the Church for the Year of Faith." - Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York "James Hitchcock is one of the few historians alive today with the background and ability to present the two-millennium history of the Catholic Church. In this remarkable volume Hitchcock brings a lifetime of insights and research to this important subject. It is a work of erudition in which the reader will discover not only the importance of the Catholic Church in past centuries, but in our own time." - Thomas F. Madden, Ph.D. Director of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Saint Louis University "This book, by one of the premier American Catholic historians, is clearly addressed to a broad audience. It is apologetic in the best sense, written from the point of view of a practicing Catholic, and addresses the various questions that would occur to a lay reader inevitably influenced by views found in the larger culture. The book is well written. It is not burdened down with details or many footnotes, but is attached to a strong narrative line centering on meaning. It would therefore be appropriate to study groups." - Glenn W. Olsen, emeritus Professor of History, University of Utah

"For years, James Hitchcock has been our premier historian - a dissident from conventional wisdom, well-armed and solid. Here he pioneers a new method for presenting a long sweep of history: an orderly and altogether fascinating series of vignettes - of arguments, movements, distinctive persons, and concrete events. There is just enough narrative in these sequences to carry the reader along, but without involving her in excessive interpretation. This book provides both a great resource for easy reference, and a stimulating definition of a Christian humanism that holds in tension the transcendent and the down to earth, the holy and the sinful. This is a tension which Hitchcock maintains throughout." -- Michael Novak "A remarkable achievement that synthesizes a lifetime of learning, James Hitchcock's *History of the Catholic Church* is also a signal service to twenty-first century Catholicism, a religious community in which controversy and contention are often the by-products of severe amnesia. The Church of the New Evangelization has to know its own story, and that story is told here in full." --George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow, Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D.C. "James Hitchcock has a well-earned reputation as an outstanding scholar, insightful commentator and lucid, accessible writer. All of these skills come together and shine in his *History of the Catholic Church*. It's a masterwork: exhilarating in scope and a joy to read. If you want an unforgettable account of the fullness and drama of the Christian story, read this book." --+Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Philadelphia

From the Inside Flap
The Catholic Church is the longest-enduring institution in the world. Beginning with the first Christians and continuing in our present day, the Church has been planted in every nation on earth. The Catholic Church claims Jesus Christ himself as her founder, and in spite of heresy from within and hostility from without, she remains in the twenty-first century the steadfast guardian of belief in his life, death, and resurrection. The teachings and redemptive works of Jesus as told in the Gospels are expressed by the Church in a coherent and consistent body of doctrine, the likes of which cannot be found in any other Christian body. The history of the Catholic Church is long, complicated, and fascinating, and in this book it is expertly and ably told by historian James Hitchcock. As in the parable of Christ about the weeds that were sown in a field of wheat, evil and good have grown together in the Church from the start, as Hitchcock honestly records. He brings before us the many characters--some noble, some notorious--who have left an indelible mark on the Church, while never losing sight of the saints, who have given living testimony to the salvific power of Christ in every age. This ambitious work is comprehensive in its scope and incisive in its understanding, a valuable addition to any school or home library.

About the Author
James Hitchcock, Ph.D., is a longtime professor of history at St. Louis University, which he attended as an undergraduate. He received his masters and doctorate degrees from Princeton University and has authored several books, including *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life*; *The Recovery of the Sacred*; *What Is Secular Humanism*; and *Catholicism and Modernity: Confrontation or Capitulation?*