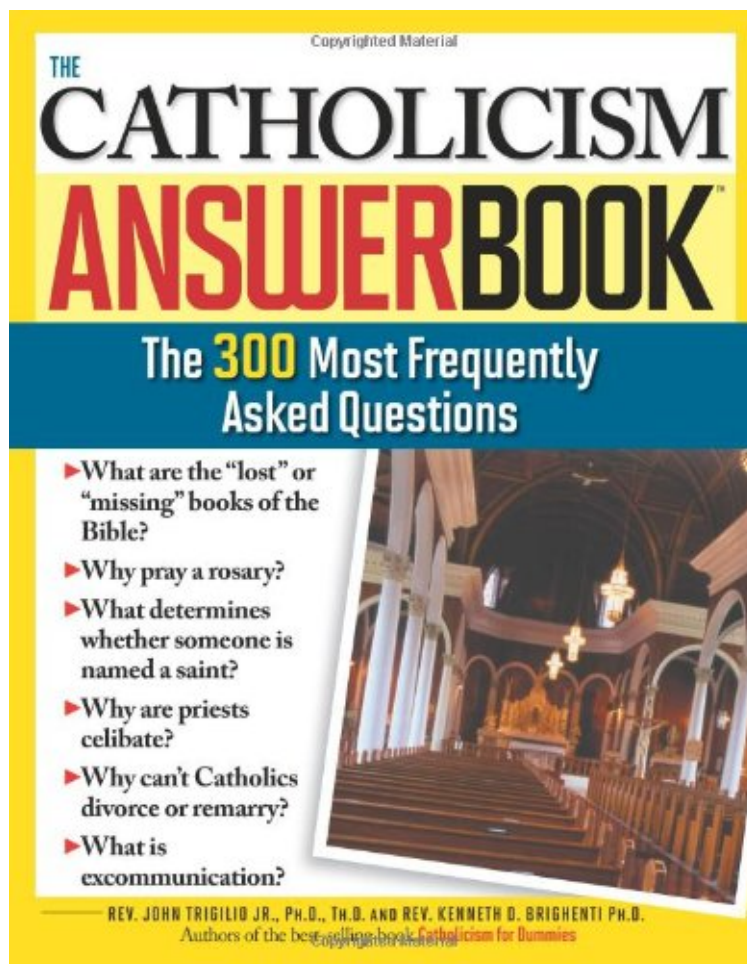


## The Catholicism Answer Book: The 300 Most Frequently Asked Questions

*Kenneth Brighenti Ph.D. Rev., John Trigilio Jr. Ph.D. Rev.*  
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As religion continues to dominate the news, politics and society in general, more and more laypeople are looking for a reliable guide to understanding the beliefs and practices of each faith.The Roman Catholic Church-the largest branch of Christianity-claims a total of 1.086 billion baptized members around the globe and has been revered by millions of followers for thousands of years. Why? The Catholicism Answer Book answers 300 pivotal questions about one of the world's oldest religions. From the basic tenets of Christianity to the differences between a Catholic Bible and a Protestant Bible, readers can round out their knowledge on such inquiries as:--What are the "lost" or "missing" books of the Bible?--Why does it seem like Catholics worship Mary?--What are the Last Things?--Why confess to a priest when I can go directly to God?

This book provides answers to 288 commonly asked questions about the Catholic faith, grouped under the headings of doctrine, worship, the Ten Commandments, prayer, church history, and "this and that." Written by the authors of John Paul II for Dummies and 101 Things Everyone Should Know About the Bible, it is aimed at a popular rather than a scholarly audience. While it does provide some helpful information on the basics of Catholicism, answers sometimes consist of roundabout explanations that could be expressed more succinctly, and some sections are confusing in their inclusion of concepts not directly related to the subject under discussion. Some of the questions seem rather odd, such as whether God created alien life on other planets and whether "daily bread" comes from bakeries, and some of the explanations are somewhat flippant. Sources include the 1997 Catechism of the Catholic Church as well as papal encyclicals and church staples like the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, which underline the traditional/conservative orientation of this work. Of some interest to public libraries.-Denise J. Stankovics, Rockville P.L., Vernon, CT -- Library Journal, April 1About the AuthorRev. Fr. John Trigilio, Jr., PhD, ThD, a native of Erie, Pennsylvania, is pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel (Marysville, Pennsylvania) and St. Bernadette Catholic Churches (Duncannon, Pennsylvania). He is the current president of the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy, and also cohosts two weekly television and radio series on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN).Rev. Fr. Kenneth D. Brighenti, PhD, a native of New Britain, Connecticut, is pastor of Saint Ann Catholic Church (Raritan, New Jersey).He is the managing editor of Sapientia magazine and cohosts the weekly TV and radio series on EWTN, Crash Course in Catholicism, with Father Trigilio.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Chapter 1Who is God?Question 1. How do we know there is a God?The most obvious question anyone asks a believer is "How do you know God exists?" It's a simple question that has both a simple and a complicated answer. First, the easy part: faith is believing in something or someone you cannot see or believing in what cannot be proven. In other words, faith depends on not having any evidence; otherwise, it would not be faith. So those who believe in God or in a supreme being are taking the word of others or just trusting their own instincts that such an almighty divinity does exist. Many people, whether they are Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, whether Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestant, believe in God because they believe in the revealed Word of God, called Sacred Scripture or the Bible.A more complicated answer is that Catholic Christianity does believe you can prove the existence of God. Reason can conclude that a supreme being exists and is necessary, but only faith (believing what cannot or is not known) tells us that there is but one God (monotheism). Judaism, Christianity, and Islam believe in only one God, and Christianity is the only of the three to believe that there are three Divine Persons in that one God. Human reason could never figure out the mystery of how there can be three persons but not three gods. Faith is needed to believe that doctrine, and some people never embrace that faith.The fact that God exists can be known by reason alone, or it can be believed by faith. The ancient Greeks and Romans used philosophy (logic and reason) centuries before Christ to prove the existence of God or a supreme being. Saint Thomas Aquinas was a Catholic philosopher and theologian in the thirteenth century AD who used that same ancient reasoning to demonstrate the reasonableness of anyone "knowing" that God exists, regardless of whether or not they have faith. He showed that the existence of God can be proved by reason, but after that, one needed supernatural faith to believe the supernatural revelation about the nature of God (for example, the Trinity).