

Book Review: Tweeting with God

THE HAPPY CATHOLIC'S BOOKSHELF
APRIL 16, 2015 BY JEFF MILLER

I have often heard on Catholic radio that the size of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is intimidating for many people. I am not one of those people since a 802 page tome is like a good start for me. Still I can totally understand why this is so for many people. The Church understands this also which is why there is a **Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church**. Still having a range of other formats is a good idea such as the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (YOUCAT). In a Church of over a billion people it is a very good idea to explore multiple ways to deliver the teaching of the Church.

When I received a copy of **Tweeting with God #Big Bang, prayer, Bible, sex, Crusades, sin, career** I was wondering exactly what this book was. I figured it was filled with short pithy messages 140 characters or less. Besides before the Tweet was invented we had a long history of short prayers called ejaculations or aspirations.

That is not what this book is at all. What the author Fr. Michel Remery has done is taken the idea of Twitter and used it as a thematic format to present information about the faith. This book uses lots of formatting to present information. Graphics, use of colors, textual formatting, along with a Twitter thematic format.

There are lots of ways this thematic metaphor could go wrong, but I found for the most part that the format actually works. Each page presents a numbered Tweet about the topic. These are used like paragraph references throughout the book. Paragraphs are presented with subtitles implying a sort of hash tag. Photos, graphics, info graphics, are also used to present information or illustrate a point. Related information is presented in a orange panel with black text. At the end a summarizing *Tweet* is used in another panel. You can see an **example of the format here** <http://stamedia.org/Tweeting-evolution.pdf>

As a layout it works pretty well to present information and to divide up content. I found I had no problem reading through the content without being distracted by the format. Although I would not be surprised that some will not like the format at all. When ever you have heavily formatted content you will run into subjective tastes.

Reading through the book my main interest was exactly how accurately the faith was portrayed. Being that this is published by Ignatius Press it wasn't a major concern. Still I wondered if it would be heavy on formatting and light on actual content. Exactly how would so-called *hot button* topics be presented?

What I found was that the topics were handled very well and accurately. Having only one page with a facing page to present a topic is a difficult task. Especially considering the amount of nuance often required. So I was happy to find that the Church's teaching were presented quite accurately and not watered down at all. Over and over I was quite impressed with the presentation and that there was no effort to back down from *hard teachings*. This does not mean that I had absolutely no quibbles with information contained. Some things could have been phrased better. Plus when you try to condense so much history there is going to be information loss.

Another facet of this book is that it is not meant to be a Catechism, but more of a book exploring a range of topics and aspects of the faith. There is an apologetics aspect to this book, although I don't think that is its main thrust. Mostly I see this book as a tool to help Catholics learn more about their faith. From the theological, to prayer, to living the faith, to just building on knowledge of Church history along with all the various nomenclature we should know. There is a ton of basic knowledge in this book, but probably a lot of what should be basic is not well-known.

This book can be used as a resource in a couple of ways. Since it is divided into topics somebody could use it as a reference to read more about something. There is some repeating of information to be able to make each topic standalone without having necessarily read a related topic. So you could go through this book rather scatter-shot just reading what is of interesting or reading through the whole thing. Plus the numbered Tweet references point to related material.

At over 400 pages this book covers a great deal and easily covers all the topics you would expect. Still there is one topic I wish was addressed. That is the various *Rites* of the Church. The *Roman Rite* was mentioned once, but there was no explanation of what a rite was, much less the number of rites in the Church. This is a bit of a hobby horse for me, which is why I noticed it.

Now a book with a social media metaphor you would expect some social media connection with the book. Well there is a **Tweeting with God** which has links to a *iOS* or *Android* app. This app actually includes much of the text from the book, but not all. Each topic tweet has the introduction along with subtitles and their content. Missing are the info panels and graphics other than the header graphic. Still it is certainly a way to consume some of the content along with sharing information on social media. In the book under the header graphic is a scan icon.

You can use the app to scan the image in the book to bring up that section in the app. This is interesting integration, but questionable how useful it actually is.

They of course have a **Twitter feed**, a related hashtag #TwGOD, and **Facebook page**.

Julie D. at Happy Catholic also was impressed by this book and has **her review here** <http://happycatholic.blogspot.it/2015/04/well-done-basics-tweeting-with-god-by.html> which includes links to pages from the book.

Original article:

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/happycatholicbookshelf/2015/04/book-review-tweeting-with-god/>