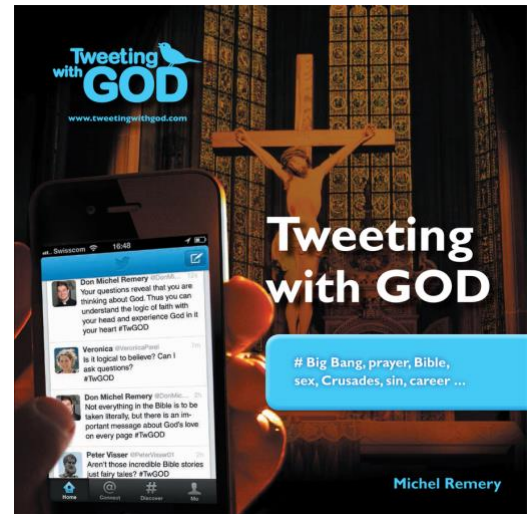


TWEETING WITH GOD: DON'T JUDGE THIS BOOK BY ITS COVER

Fr Matthew P. Schneider, LC
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With the title “Tweeting with God” and a picture of a twitter screen on an iPhone on the cover, I expected a book full of hundreds of tweets. Instead, I got a summary of the faith with a tweetable summary for each chapter. Father Michel Remery evidently knows a bit about everything in the Church and manages to write a comprehensible and readable guide.

I give it 4/5 stars; I'll explain why at the end. Let's do the good, the bad, and the ugly.



This book seems to be written as a basic summary of the Church primarily directed at younger people, although I doubt at middle-schoolers (based on his language and conceptual framework). Most introductions tend to follow the four parts in the catechism. This book follows a different order which I think may be more helpful for young people today. The four parts are:

1. God, creation, heaven and hell.
2. The Church, – 2/3 of it is a history of the Church which is often skipped over in books of this type, but can be important.
3. Prayer and the sacraments – his title that these are “about you & God” is very helpful, as these things are often seen abstractly rather than as a relationship.
4. Christian life: faith & ethics.

Father Michel is Dutch and shows it by a very thorough 4-level division in the book. This helps ensure that every detail is covered; which I can tell from reading the titles in the parts of the book I just skimmed. His writing is clear and relatively concise.

I see it as a good one book summary of the faith along the lines of YOUCAT and Catholicism for Dummies, but a little more complete and following a different

structure. Comparing it to those two, I see his biggest strength being his ability to integrate history, culture, and science organically into the work. A second strength is that he tends to start from the questions that are most likely to be asked rather than from the first dogmas we need to teach. Save what is mentioned in the bad and the ugly, this book would've gotten 5 out of 5 stars.

Even though it is very complete, the bad part of this book is a few things which are explained inadequately. He has only one question on the Trinity and doesn't really address the objections, such as those who deny Christ's divinity. The discussion of Church history remains a little Eurocentric (that's fine for Europe, but an Ignatius Press edition is meant for Canada and the USA). I admit there is less Church history in the Americas, but please mention it. For example, there is no mention of the United States or Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the discussion on evangelizing the Americas deals more with European guilt over Conquistadores ill-treatment of natives than the actual evangelization. In his discussion on morals, he focuses on the law and barely mentions virtue: he has one paragraph on virtue (and lists the seven main virtues in a side box) in about 100 pages on faith and ethics. Law only comes as an effect of a grave break of virtue: the core of Christian morality is virtue, not law. Also in this faith and ethics section, I think he dedicates a little too much – 48 pages – to bioethics. I admit it is true that a huge number of modern questions are in this area, but making it the focus of our morals falls into the secularist trap of making Christianity into moralism.

He integrates Twitter into the book, but my final judgment is that how it's done is a little ugly. The first tweet on the cover is 155 characters (real tweets are 140 or less) and although most of his tweets summarizing each chapter fit into 140 characters, not all of them do. Along the same lines, some of the titles in the book begin with hashtags, but the hashtags are separated from the word(s) as if they were normal bullets (i.e. #TheyDontLookLikeRealHastags).



Ultimately, what I say is bad and ugly doesn't take that much away from the book: I took half a star away for what I mentioned is bad and half a star for what I mentioned as ugly from an otherwise five-star book. I would recommend Tweeting with God for young people from high school up as a summary of the faith. (If you give it to someone heavily into Twitter, I'd probably just give them a slight warning that the book does not follow tweeting strictly.) Great job, Father Remery!

Buy it on Amazon here (remember to do Amazon Smile for your favorite Catholic charity; I do Mission Network Programs USA Inc. which produces materials for Catholic youth ministry).



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Teens need to experience Christ. I am a Catholic religious priest with the Legion of Christ who tries to help them do that. Part of doing that is running this blog. Currently I'm stationed in the DC Metro area preparing material for RCSpirituality.org (Regnum Christi Spirituality Center), studying an advanced Theology degree, and helping youth ministry freelance. If you need help with your youth ministry, such as retreats, talks, programs, volunteer training or consultation, contact me via Twitter or Facebook. You can buy my book Spiritually Mentoring Teenage Boys in paperback or on Kindle.

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