

TEACHING MANUAL FOR

# GREAT CATHOLIC WRITINGS

THOUGHT, LITERATURE, SPIRITUALITY, SOCIAL ACTION

J. D. Childs  
with Robert Feduccia Jr.

Saint Mary's Press®



Genuine recycled paper with 10% post-consumer waste. 5107100

The publishing team included Robert Feduccia Jr., Christine Navarro, and Jerry Windley-Daoust, development editors; Lorraine Kilmartin, reviewer; Mary Koehler, permissions editor; prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the prepublication and production services department of Saint Mary's Press.

Copyright © 2006 by Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1318, [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org). All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

Printing: 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Year: 2014 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06

ISBN-13: 978-0-88489-888-7

ISBN-10: 0-88489-888-1

Introduction: Immersing Students in the Richness of Great Catholic Writings . . . . .	7
<b>Reading 1</b> “The Five Ways” . . . . .	11
<i>BY SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS</i>	
<b>Reading 2</b> <i>Pensées</i> (Pascal’s Wager) . . . . .	17
<i>BY BLAISE PASCAL</i>	
<b>Reading 3</b> “Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences: On Evolution” . . . . .	24
<i>BY POPE JOHN PAUL II</i>	
<b>Reading 4</b> “Leisure and Its Threefold Opposition” . . . . .	30
<i>BY JOSEF PIEPER</i>	
<b>Reading 5</b> “The Prayer of the Church”. . . . .	37
<i>BY SAINT EDITH STEIN</i>	
<b>Reading 6</b> “Is There Really Hope in the Young?” . . . . .	43
<i>BY POPE JOHN PAUL II</i>	
<b>Reading 7</b> “Things in Their Identity” . . . . .	49
<i>BY THOMAS MERTON</i>	
<b>Reading 1</b> “The Selfish Giant”. . . . .	55
<i>BY OSCAR WILDE</i>	
<b>Reading 2</b> “The Hint of An Explanation” . . . . .	60
<i>BY GRAHAM GREENE</i>	
<b>Reading 3</b> “God’s Breath”. . . . .	65
<i>BY JAMES A. COPPOT</i>	
<b>Reading 4</b> “Bad Friday” . . . . .	71
<i>BY SARA MAITLAND</i>	
<b>Reading 5</b> From <i>The Diary of a Country Priest</i> . . . . .	76
<i>BY GEORGES BERNAPOS</i>	
<b>Reading 6</b> “The Old Sailor” . . . . .	80
<i>BY BRUCE MARSHALL</i>	

<b>Reading 7</b>	
“The Beginnings of a Sin” . . . . .	86
BY BERNARD MACLAVERTY	
<b>Reading 1</b>	
Selections from <i>The Sayings of the Desert Fathers</i> . . . . .	92
BY THE DESERT FATHERS AND MOTHERS	
<b>Reading 2</b>	
Selections from <i>The Life of Brother Juniper</i> . . . . .	98
BY THE ΟΙΚΚΛΩΜΗ AUTHOR OF THE LIFE OF BROTHER JUNIPER	
<b>Reading 3</b>	
Selections from <i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> . . . . .	104
BY THE ΟΙΚΚΛΩΜΗ AUTHOR OF THE CLOUD OF ΟΙΚΚΛΩΜΗ	
<b>Reading 4</b>	
Selections from <i>The Story of a Soul</i> . . . . .	109
BY SAINT THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX	
<b>Reading 5</b>	
Selections from <i>Showings</i> . . . . .	115
BY JULIAN OF NORWICH	
<b>Reading 6</b>	
<i>Nican Mopohua</i> . . . . .	121
BY LUIS LASO DE LA VEGA	
<b>Reading 7</b>	
“Day of a Stranger” . . . . .	127
BY THOMAS MERTON	
<b>Reading 1</b>	
“A Hunger for God” . . . . .	135
BY MOTHER TERESA	
<b>Reading 2</b>	
From <i>A Consistent Ethic of Life: An American-Catholic Dialogue</i> . . . . .	140
BY JOSEPH CARDINAL BERNARDINI	
<b>Reading 3</b>	
“The Key to Union” . . . . .	146
BY CHIARA LUBICH	
<b>Reading 4</b>	
Selections from “The Political Dimension of the Faith from the Standpoint of the Option for the Poor” . . . . .	152
BY ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO	
<b>Reading 5</b>	
“Poverty and Precarity” . . . . .	158
BY DOROTHY DAY	
<b>Reading 6</b>	
“My People Resurrect at Tepeyac” . . . . .	165
BY VIRGILIO ELIZONDO	
<b>Reading 7</b>	
“Being a Black Catholic” . . . . .	171
BY SR. THEA BOWMAN	
<b>Acknowledgments</b> . . . . .	176

# Immersing Students in the Richness of Great Catholic Writings

## THE VISION

### The Catholic Worldview

Catholics possess a unique way of looking at and living in the world. Catholics do not run away from art, literature, film, and food. They embrace these things. They explore them and linger with them. Catholics do so with the particular optimism that in this exploring and lingering, they will find God and ways of living in relationship with him and others. This is the aim of *Great Catholic Writings: Thought, Literature, Spirituality, Social Action*.

Twenty-eight writing selections have been assembled to introduce students to some of the seminal writings from the Catholic Tradition: Thomas Aquinas's "The Five Ways," *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and *Pensées (Pascal's Wager)*. Others are not as well known, but they were chosen because they demonstrate the uniqueness of the Catholic sensibility. Short stories such as "God's Breath," "The Old Sailor," and "The Beginnings of a Sin" may not be as familiar, but they are laced with the unique Catholic way of living in the world.

The writings were chosen from four different genres – thought, literature, spirituality, and social action. The book is intended for use throughout the four years of high school. It provides different ways of teaching subjects the students may be all too familiar with. The writings can be used to teach about the Eucharist in a different way or in a more in-depth manner. Freshmen may find fresh insights into the nature of the Church. Seniors may find a depth of thought about the nature of God. Throughout the four years and across the religion curriculum and into other curriculums, these writings can illuminate the meaning of learning in a Catholic environment and living as a Catholic in the world.

### Thought

Saint Irenaus of Lyon has traditionally been called the first Catholic theologian. When he began writing in the early second century AD, he began a method of theological reflection and depth of thought that has sustained the Catholic Church throughout the past millennia. He grappled with many questions: Who is God? Who and what are humans? How can humans live in relationship with God and one another? Other thinkers grapple with these questions. The seven writings of thought in *Great Catholic Writings* explore these questions. In many cases, they emerge in the high school years. Introducing these writings to high school students will help them as they question. Someone said that the opposite of faith is not doubt but rather

certainty. These writings provide the Church's exploration of ultimate questions and help shape the students' questioning as they seek to be in relationship with God.

### **Literature**

Humans convey their history through stories and myths. The power of story contains the power of culture. In the seven pieces of fictional literature contained in *Great Catholic Writings*, students find stories and myths that contain the wonder of life. Although the writings in the section on thought face questions head on, the stories in the literature section take a different approach. They provide ways of accessing the mystery of life that some students would not access through more straightforward approaches. God is a God of surprise. These stories are sometimes comforting, sometimes disturbing, and sometimes humorous, but they all contain the mystery of life.

### **Spirituality**

God is here and with us now. He is immanent. God is also completely other and unlike us. God is transcendent. Spirituality seeks to recognize and live in God's presence here and now. It also seeks the face of the one who is completely other. Spirituality is earthy and practical. It is also heavenly and mystical. The writings in this section seek, without hesitation, to introduce students to mysticism. God desires to touch the human heart and lift it to heights of intimacy that the pen feebly tries to describe. Frankly, students need to know about mystical experiences. Nonetheless, an authentic spirituality is not about a change in prayer. It is about a change of life, a change in relationships. Living with an annoying person, living in a hurt-filled world, living in the midst of pain: these are areas the spiritual writings address.

### **Social Action**

The Kingdom of God is here, but it is not yet here. Christians have seen the eschatological vision of God's Reign and cannot contain their enthusiasm for it. In their enthusiasm, they seek to bring all people into that Reign. Sometimes their proclamation about the Reign goes against the grain of the establishment, manifesting itself in social action. Catholic social activists see oppression, poverty, and inequality as affronts to, and even mockeries of, God's Reign. Frankly, these mockeries cannot be tolerated. The writings of social action provide both a vision of God's Reign and a confrontation of structures opposed to that vision. Many of the ideas in the writings strongly challenge middle-class America. That is their purpose. These writings provide a catholic – that is, a universal – view of unity, peace, and justice that is vital for Catholic education.

## THE TEACHING MANUAL'S STRUCTURE

### Introduction

The first part of each chapter of this *Teaching Manual for Great Catholic Writings* contains an introduction with suggestions for grade levels, related courses, and particular themes. Also suggested are ways to introduce the texts from *Great Catholic Writings* to the students and help them get the most out of their reading. You also will find the review questions from the student book and their corresponding answers.

This teaching manual is by no means an exhaustive aid in teaching the writings in the student book. As a teacher, you may wish to explore a different avenue. The writings in the student book can be thought of as a river delta with a main channel and many tributaries or avenues. This manual names some of these avenues. Please feel free to create your own discussion guides and activities that explore one of the tributaries or avenues.

### Activities

Each chapter of this manual contains activities designed to encourage students to interact with one another as they explore the lessons contained in the writings.

### Angles

The angles in this teaching manual are designed to let the class meander or linger in each writing. The angles are guides for discussing and exploring a particular theme or element in the writing. Although the activities serve as a launching point *from* the writings, the angles are an entry point *into* them. In lingering with and exploring the writing, students are encouraged to make connections to the Scriptures and other parts of the Catholic Tradition. These angles serve as paths of discovery for the students rather than as maps to a particular destination.

### Trajectories: Further Lines of Study

Themes contained in these writings permeate other works of art. Some of the trajectories in this teaching manual take you to films to further explore ideas contained in the writings. Other trajectories provide resources for further study in poetry, thought, and writing. The wisdom of these writings is eternal truths, and truth shows up everywhere. These trajectories provide several ways of demonstrating the presence of these truths elsewhere and places to learn further about these truths.

### Come and See

Some of these writings are challenging in both language and content. High school students are worth it. Shakespeare is challenging in both language

and content. High school students are worth it. Living as a disciple of Jesus is challenging in both language and content. High school students are worth it.

In John's Gospel, when a rabbi questioned Jesus about where he was staying, Jesus simply responded, "Come and see" (John 1:39). Take your students by the hand. Come and see. Come and explore these great Catholic writings.



# “The Five Ways”

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

## Introduction

### How to Use This Selection

- appropriate for seniors and advanced students equipped to deal with higher-level concepts and language
- related courses: philosophy, apologetics, or natural sciences
- themes: humanity’s origin, humanity’s destiny, intelligent design, and the nature of God

### Introducing the Text

Students need to know about the personal holiness of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Stress that Aquinas was both a theologian and a mystic. He believed the human intellect can and should be used to experience the presence of God. Aquinas believed that by reflecting and reasoning in a prayerful spirit about divine things, the human mind could grasp and be “drawn up” into the Divine Mind. Human reason, elevated by grace, could see and understand truths revealed by God in a way that a mind unaided by grace could not.

Accordingly, Aquinas referred to these rational approaches to God’s existence not as proofs, but as paths or ways to God. In a proper spirit, and when employed creatively and clearly, human rationality could experience the profound mystery that is the Triune God.

Certainly, students should be aware of the difficulty inherent in reading any selection from Scholastic theology. This reading contains many technical philosophical terms that handout 1, “The Language of Scholastic Theology,” helps explain. Yet more important than a prepared vocabulary, students should encounter the text prayerfully and open to such logical reflection about God.

### Review Questions

1. How does Saint Thomas Aquinas define *motion*?

*Answer:* “For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality.” (See p. 14 of the *Great Catholic Writings* student book.)

2. What does Saint Thomas Aquinas have to say about the possibility of a thing bringing itself into existence?

*Answer:* “There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible.” (See p. 15 of the *Great Catholic Writings* student book.)

3. What does Saint Thomas Aquinas have to say about the possibility that nothing necessary exists?

*Answer:* “Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary.” (See p. 15 of the *Great Catholic Writings* student book.)

4. What is meant by “the gradation to be found in things”?

*Answer:* “Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble and the like.” (See p. 16 of the *Great Catholic Writings* student book.)

5. How does Saint Thomas Aquinas think things without intelligence are moved?

*Answer:* “Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer.” (See p. 16 of the *Great Catholic Writings* student book.)

### Avenues of Exploration

The following avenues can be explored through this reading:

- the order of the universe
- the nature of God
- philosophical names for God
- evidence or signs of God’s existence
- intelligent design
- philosophical approaches to theological questions
- Scholasticism as a school of theological thought

## ACTIVITY AND ANGLES

### Activity: Mapping the Arguments

#### Preparation

- Gather the following item:
  - handout 1, “The Language of Scholastic Theology,” one copy for each student

In this angle, students become familiar with and understand “The Five Ways,” on page 14–16 of *Great Catholic Writings*, by working together to decipher the main lines of each of the five arguments.

1. Divide the students into five groups. Assign one of the five ways to each group. Instruct each group to read its argument, using handout 1, "The Language of Scholastic Theology," to help in understanding.

2. After allowing time for questions, ask the groups to identify the conclusion of their argument. During this step, the students seek the philosophical name for God (for example, "first mover" or "first efficient cause"). Instruct them that their answer cannot be "God exists." Rather, each argument uses a strategy to name a particular origin of the world, which we then name or call God. If the students can identify the philosophical name for God, they are more likely to understand the argument.

3. After the students have discovered the conclusion of the argument, instruct them to identify and number the steps Aquinas used to reach the conclusion. Most simply, ask "What are the step-by-step points he makes?" The students should understand the way Aquinas dismissed the possibility of an infinite sequence in the first three arguments.

4. After the groups have outlined their arguments, invite them to present the outlines to the rest of the class.

## Angles of Exploration

In this angle, the students work through the argument from design and are introduced to several related ideas, including the spiritual effect of natural beauty, as well as the scientific implications for studying the question of design.

1. Reflect with the students on the order and logic in creation. Ask them to identify numerous examples of order on both the micro scale (spider webs, DNA, and so forth) and the macro scale (weather systems, ecosystems, and so on). Write their responses on the chalkboard.

2. After several examples, ask if the students think such order is just random or if it is intentional. Ask them to raise their hands in support of one belief or another. Using the following or similar words, explain that frequency of order makes intentionality more likely:

- If I scattered 100 colored toothpicks across the floor, and the toothpicks formed the phrase "Surrender Dorothy," most people's immediate reaction would be that I had somehow rigged the experiment. The other reasonable conclusion would be that a random occurrence had taken place. But if I again scattered the toothpicks, and they again spelled "Surrender Dorothy," then everyone might rule out the possibility that this was a random or chance event and assume it was some kind of intentional trick. The more frequently the experiment renders the same results, the more we are assured of its intentionality.

3. Ask the students to take out a piece of paper and write a paragraph about an experience of wonder and awe they have had in a natural setting. Ask them to provide answers in their paragraph to the following questions:

- What is a mystery of nature that seems too fantastic to be a random event?
- Why do you find this so fascinating?
- What do you think this says about God?

4. After allowing time for the students to write, ask them to submit the paragraphs for review.

In this angle, the students reflect on and compare various approaches to God's existence to determine which approach best suits them. The students are then led into a consideration of the validity of rational approaches for God's existence.

### Preparation

- Several days before the activity, assign the following readings from *Great Catholic Writings*: "The Five Ways" (pages 14–16), *Pensées* (Pascal's Wager) (pages 20–22), "The Hint of an Explanation" (pages 72–81), and *The Cloud of Unknowing* (pages 144–149). Consider the selections to be a reading cycle as the students enter into dialogue with each other.

1. As the students read the selections, instruct them to identify one argument or approach for God's existence that they encounter within each of the readings. The students should include the following in their lists:

- the argument or type of approach
- a summary of its conclusion in a sentence or two
- a rating on a scale of 1 to 10 as to how compelling it is to them, both intellectually and emotionally
- a descriptive sentence about how they react to the argument or what effect it has on them

2. On the day the assignments are due, lead the students in a discussion of their experience of the readings and the assignment. After the discussion, divide the students into four groups based on their preference for arguments or approaches to God: Saint Thomas Aquinas, Pascal, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, or Graham Greene. Once the students are in their groups, ask them to answer the following questions:

- Why did you find this approach or argument attractive?
- Why do you think some people have rejected this argument or approach?
- How does this argument or approach call people to greater holiness?

3. After the groups discuss these questions, invite them to share their reflections with the rest of the class.

## TRAJECTORIES: FURTHER LINES OF STUDY

Use these "trajectory" ideas to take the students further into one or more aspects of the text:

- A highly readable resource for looking at arguments for God's existence throughout the philosophical-theological tradition is chapter 3 of *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions*, by Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).
- Regarding the argument from design, students who are interested in the relationship between science and religion might benefit from a consideration of the implications drawn from *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, by Michael Behe (New York: Touchstone, 1996). Of particular note is the feature of intelligent design known as irreducible complexity.
- Have your students read John Updike's short story "Pigeon Feathers," in *Pigeon Feathers and Other Short Stories* (New York: Knopf, 1998), for a compelling literary approach to the issue of the existence of God.
- An engaging approach that links an argument for an objective moral structure in the universe to the existence of God, who is its source, is found in Book I from C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).

# THE LANGUAGE OF SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY

- design: intelligible order plus frequency of occurrence indicates intentionality
- efficient cause: one of Aristotle's four explanations for how things come to be; that which acts upon another and causes it to become (for example, a sculptor chisels the marble, a tennis player hits a ball with a racket, or the Creator molds the man from the mud or speaks the world into existence)
- end: goal, direction, or purpose
- gradation: a degree (for example, something is round to the extent that it conforms to the ideal of roundness)
- genus: a category of things with common traits
- infinity: an endless series, backward and forward, that is logically impossible because one can never step into the series; there can never be a "now"
- mover: that which acts on another thing, thereby setting it in motion
- possibility: things that are created and die come into being and pass away; they are capable of both being and not being
- possibility and potentiality: possessing the possibility to become (for example, an acorn possesses the potentiality to become an oak tree but not a cat)

The scriptural quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

The prayers, devotions, beliefs, and practices contained herein have been verified against authoritative sources.

The material labeled *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for use in the United States of America. Copyright © 1994 by the United States Catholic Conference, Inc. — Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission.

The quotations on pages 32 and 33 are from “Leisure and Its Threefold Opposition” in *Josef Pieper: An Anthology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), pages 142 and 140–141. Copyright © 1989 by Ignatius Press.

The article on handout 6 is by the Reverend Greg Alms and originally appeared in the Charlotte, NC, *Observer* on August 8, 2005.

The Eucharistic Prayer III on page 37 is from the *Sacramentary*, English translation prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1985), page 554. English translation copyright © 1973 by the ICEL, Inc. All rights reserved. Illustrations and arrangement copyright © 1985–1974 by Catholic Book Publishing Company, New York.

The quotation by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger on page 40 is from *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, translated by Michael Waldstein (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), page 238. Copyright © 1988 by the Catholic University of America Press.

The quotation on page 78 is from *The Rule of St. Benedict*, translated by Anthony Meisel and M. L. del Mastro (New York: Doubleday, 1975), page 53. Copyright © 1975 by Anthony Meisel and M. L. del Mastro.

The quotation from Saint Augustine on page 108 is from *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, at [catholicfirst.com/thefaith/catholicclassics/staugustine/confessions01.cfm](http://catholicfirst.com/thefaith/catholicclassics/staugustine/confessions01.cfm), accessed January 3, 2006.

The quotation from Jean Pierre de Caussade on page 109 is from *Abandonment to Divine Providence* (Garden City, NY: Image, 1975).

The material on handout 17 is from “Just War Tradition,” found at the Pew Forum on Religions and Public Life Web site, [pewforum.org/just-war](http://pewforum.org/just-war), accessed January 2, 2006. Used with permission of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, a project of the Pew Research Center.

The prayer on page 152 is from *Manual of Prayers*, compiled by James D. Watkins (Chicago: Midwest Theological Forum, 1996), page 304. Copyright © 1996 by the American College of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States.

The “Poem of the Phoenix,” on handout 19, is found at the Phoenix Learning Center Web site at [buffalo.k12.mn.us/phoenix](http://buffalo.k12.mn.us/phoenix), accessed January 3, 2006.

To view copyright terms and conditions for Internet materials cited here, log on to the home pages for the referenced Web sites.

During this book’s preparation, all citations, facts, figures, names, addresses, telephone numbers, Internet URLs, and other pieces of information cited within were verified for accuracy. The authors and Saint Mary’s Press staff have made every attempt to reference current and valid sources, but we cannot guarantee the content of any source, and we are not responsible for any changes that may have occurred since our verification. If you find an error in, or have a question or concern about, any of the information or sources listed within, please contact Saint Mary’s Press.

#### **Endnote Cited in a Quotation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church***

1. Council of Trent (1551): Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (1965) 1676.