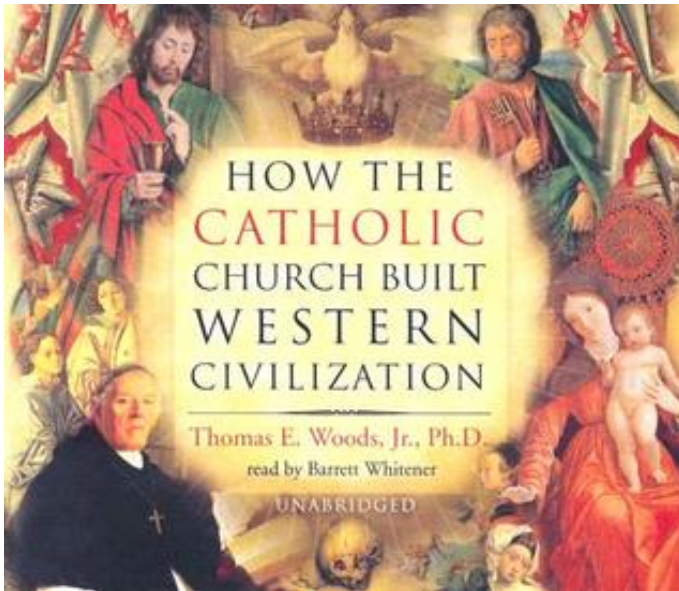

Thomas E. Woods Jr.

How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization



Title: How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization

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Description

Ask someone today where Western Civilization originated, and he or she might say Greece or Rome. But what is the ultimate source of Western Civilization? Bestselling author and professor Thomas E. Woods, Jr. provides the long neglected answer: the Catholic Church. In the new paperback edition of his critically-acclaimed book, *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*, Woods goes far beyond the familiar tale of monks copying manuscripts and preserving the wisdom of classical antiquity. Gifts such as modern science, free-market economics, art, music, and the idea of human rights come from the Catholic Church, explains Woods. In *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*, you'll learn:

Why modern science was born in the Catholic Church

How Catholic priests developed the idea of free-market economics five hundred years before Adam Smith

How the Catholic Church invented the university

Why what you know about the Galileo affair is wrong

How Western law grew out of Church canon law

How the Church humanized the West by insisting on the sacredness of all human life

No institution has done more to shape Western civilization than the two-thousand-year-old Catholic Church—and in ways that many of us have forgotten or never known. *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* is essential reading for recovering this lost truth.

Insightful reviews

Ebookwormy: In the interest of disclosure, I suppose I should start by saying that while I am a follower of Jesus Christ, I am not a Catholic. I have many disagreements with the Catholic Church, such as the elevation of tradition to the level of inspiration (placing the thoughts/writings of the Church fathers and papacy on the same level with Biblical revelation), veneration of icons, required celibacy of priests, etc. However, recently, I have noticed that Catholicism has gotten two things right about which I am passionate: 1) Life issues, particularly abortion and

euthanasia; and 2) Speaking out against persecution of Christians by Islamic and Communist nations. Because the Catholic Church is an international non-governmental organization, it has been able to consistently speak out about these issues without the political/ diplomatic constraints that impair our governments from promoting these ideas and maintaining an intractable focus on these concerns of life and liberty.

That said, when I heard of this book, I was interested in reading it for two reasons: 1) Seeing God's hand working in history is amazing to me; and 2) I am interested in exploration of the concept that saturation of a culture by Christianity inevitably creates benefits beyond the spiritual for both Christians and non-believers alike.

This book was informative. The main focus is the contribution of individual members of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages in both preserving the knowledge of antiquity and then building upon it pillars of thought that became the foundation of western civilization as we know it. While contributions of the papacy and the church as a centralized organization are mentioned, the focus is on individuals and monastic organizations. I found the discussions of universities, law (civil and international as well as the concept of innate human rights), economics, science and charity to be particularly strong. Manuscript preservation/ copying, architecture and morality were much as I expected, although the discussion of the arts was downright disappointing.

The book suffers from three weaknesses. One is that it's limited scope undermines it's thesis. While the author addresses some concerns head on "Was the Catholic Church anti-science? What about Galileo?", his complete silence on more complex matters, such as the debauchery of the papacy in the same time frame, leaves the reader feeling that we are getting a high-gloss perspective on the Catholic Church. Secondly, the author makes several (admittedly scattered) pejorative references about Protestantism and the Reformation which detract from his message. Most readers will be cognizant that we are not getting the entire story. Mr. Woods' affirmation of his Catholic faith and his touching dedication to passing it on to his children unfortunately serves to highlight a reader's concerns about Woods' ability to provide an objective look at the contributions of the Catholic Church he loves. Finally, non-fiction writing is going through an evolution of which Mr. Woods is either unaware or incapable of emulating. The exceptional writing of Adam Hochschild's "King Leopold's Ghost" or Erik Larson's "Devil in the White City" as well as captivating journalistic works like Melissa Fay Greene's "There is no me without you" and Martin Meredith's "The Fate of Africa", are changing the way we read about history. Woods' dry, text book approach, while acceptable for an academic, is not going to propel either his work or his thesis into mainstream discussion. And I think that is too bad, because his ideas warrant discussion.

These weaknesses are unfortunate, as the information the book does present is well researched and well thought through. Mr. Woods' efforts contributed significantly to my thoughts about those unexpected/ unintentional benefits of the saturation of Christianity to believers and unbelievers. I would be interested in reading more on this topic.

Christopher: Perhaps a more appropriate title would be "How the Catholic Church Has Been of Benefit to Western Civilization" The other title, a bit too grand for a 280 page book.

It was interesting. I never realized how important monks were with their scientific mind set, their zeal to preserve and copy classic manuscripts, and their community oriented service. Most of the latin manuscripts from ancient Rome and Greece we have today were because of those early monks.

The church also established the university system. And the author showed evidence that the church also established the modern hospital as we know it.

He did not go into the church's oppression, nor manner of political influence that today we deem to be ruthless, godless, and corrupt. For instance there was no mention of the the church's infamous debacle with Galileo. Instead, he focused on things parts of the church did to counter it.

He cited how many priests were vocally critical of the Spanish's treatment of the natives in the new world. Most interesting he cited sources of early scholastic priests arguing for inalienable rights two centuries before John Locke did. In addition, to my taste, he cited 16th century priests treating economic theory 200 years before Adam Smith and getting things right that Smith got wrong.

So, overall a fantastic read, but the subject matter is far too vast to be contained in such a short read. But I do recommend it. It helped keep in mind that for a millennium after the fall of the Roman empire the Catholic church was the only voice for civilization and good in the western world.

Sheryl Tribble: Some idiot had underlined, circled, and written the occasional comment in the margins of the library book I read, but I still managed to enjoy it.

I don't know if he says as much, but it seemed clear to me that Woods' goal is not so much a balanced presentation of the Catholic church, but rather a counterbalance to the standard version presented in many a college text or popular history. So I was not bothered by the fact that he focuses on the Church's positive contributions and ignored the negatives, which, as he often recognizes, are well covered elsewhere.

The unwanted commentator was confused when Woods talks about "ritual sacrifice -- namely, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass...", but I don't remember many question marks in the margins regarding theology, probably because there isn't much theology in the book that isn't clearly explained (i.e., the changing attitudes of the Church toward heliocentrism).

I most enjoyed the chapters with a lot of new-to-me stuff, like the chapters on science and economics. I'm not Catholic, but I enjoy enthusiastic people, so for the most part I didn't mind

Woods' gung-ho attitude.

Carol Apple: "How the Catholic Church equipped Western Civilization" is a wonderful survey of what happened in Europe among nearly two hundred advent and the Renaissance, which for lots of people is a huge clean spot in our ancient consciousness. even though the e-book covers the subject of Catholic impression on proposal and tradition correct as much as the present, the majority of the fabric makes a speciality of the center ages. the good rules approximately ordinary rights, overseas law, humane justice, charity to the bad and sick, and experimental technology are frequently linked to thinkers of seventeenth and 18th centuries, however it seems those rules didn't simply pop into historical past from nowhere. the place did the ideas and frameworks that at present outline civilization come from? Thomas E. Woods strongly indicates a few very convincing solutions to that question. I listened to the audio booklet and located it informative and enjoyable, an exceptional door-opener to additional research. I plan to exploit it as among the texts for my homeschooling son's western civ direction subsequent year.

Teremarie: i could not end it. I learn up till bankruptcy 5. till that second it was once not anything that i did not know. Besides, his vocabulary is a piece over the top, when it comes to being biased. In bankruptcy 5, devoted to science, he writes a sentence during which he states that whereas many folks think that the economic revolution worsened operating conditions, it really superior them; after which he is going to place his different ebook as a reference, in regards to the Catholic Church and loose market. he is thoroughly forgetting the encyclica Rerum Novarum, which Pope Leo XIII wrote on the finish of the nineteenth century accurately to handle operating conditions. If he is trying to shield the Church, and is forgetting that terrific piece of writing, i will not learn any further. and i am catholic.

Jacob Aitken: analyzing Prof Woods' ebook is usually like hearing a grandfather discuss his grandkids. Nonetheless, this booklet is necessary and rankings significant issues on a few key issues. i discovered the subsequent bits of knowledge necessary and that i will finish on a critique of Woods' methodology. His part on how the Catholic church preserved the traditional studying is regular fare today. purely the main obstinate could deny it. The part at the priests parallels Thomas Cahill's account of the Irish. I particularly loved his account of the way the clergymen cleared the land and made it hospitable for living. They took land that was once the identical of the world round the mouth of the Mississippi and made it mirrors of paradise. They experimented with expertise and have been capable of make many medical breakthroughs. Woods speculates they might have preceded the economic Revolution through a few centuries and spared the operating category the various horrors of it. Woods scored significant issues on Science. He confirmed how the Christian worldview destroyed the pantheistic worldviews of the traditional world, worldviews that make real technological know-how impossible. He does an outstanding activity at the Galileo incident. Galileo had just a short region right and with a lot arrogance, he proceeded to insult those that have been really attempting to aid him. Galileo's version used to be mathematically strained and it was once the church, irony of ironies, that demanded clinical facts of Galileo. Woods scored large issues in his part on art. And as a Protestant, I admit that my church has performed a poor activity on aesthetics and the Incarnation. I particularly enjoyed the part at the Cathedrals. In his bankruptcy on overseas legislation Woods notes that there has to be a transcendent legislations above nations, yet this

additionally poses a problem. If we posit a legislations above countries to which international locations can appeal, then who's the Umpire that arbitrates among the nations? Woods' element is that government, even if nationwide or international, does not resolve this problem, it basically shifts it. His part out there used to be either an outstanding primer in unfastened marketplace and economics and an tense instance of Sherlock Holmes' "dog that did not bark." Yes, I consider Prof Woods that Spanish scholastics expected the loose marketplace and the gold standard. I additionally agree that Protestants have expected the Marxist fascination with the salary labor. yet why didn't Woods point out how Papal encyclicals this century positioned a pressure of unfastened industry libertarianism? What Woods didn't point out was once simply as major as what he did. Evaluation:All Christians, Protestants and Catholics, have to learn this book. Woods, like many, equates the notice "catholic" with the be aware "Catholic." Protestantism did eternally separate the Christendom ideal, yet you can actually additionally make the declare that past due medieval scholastics, Occam and Scotus, have been doing a very good activity as well. Scotus brought different types that may pressure the nice components of Anselm and Aquinas. lengthy prior to Luther conciliar events have been wondering the hegemony of the Pope. those are examples of the way the "throne and altar" have been starting to crack. the matter begun lengthy prior to Protestantism.

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