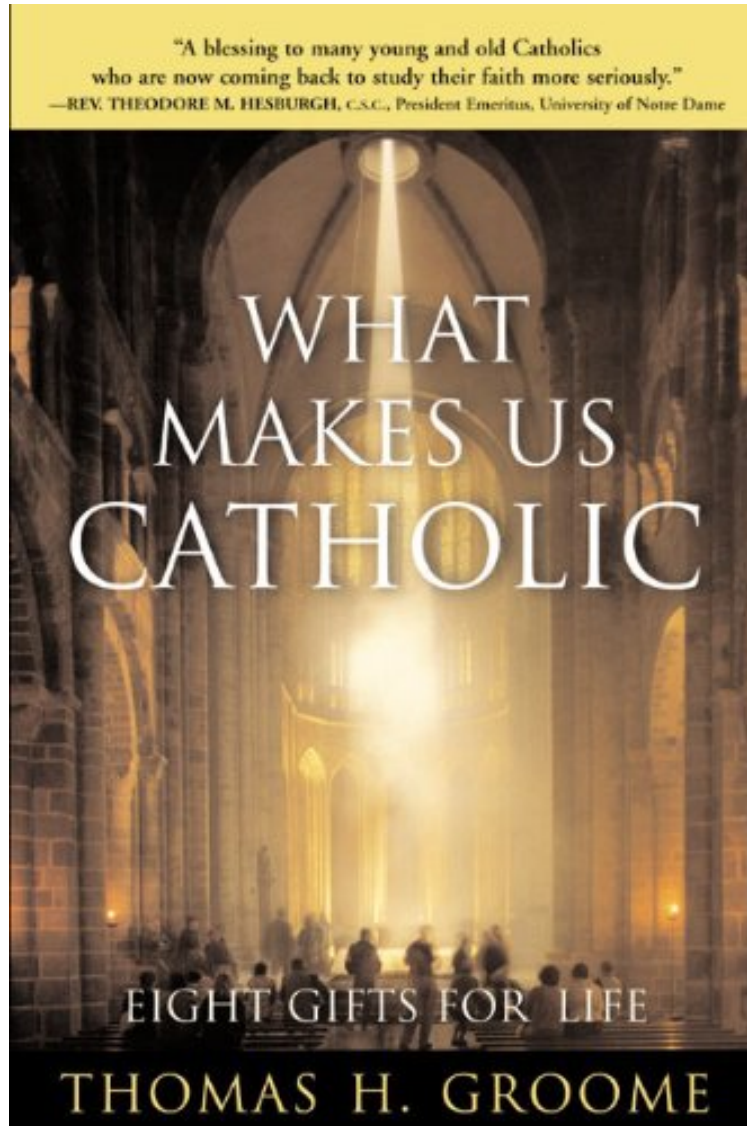


(Read free) What Makes Us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life

What Makes Us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life

Thomas H. Groome

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What makes a Catholic a Catholic? According to Thomas Groome, an expert on the essential ingredients of Catholic Christianity, Catholics share certain vital features of life and identity. *What Makes Us Catholic* explains and illuminates that character, and invites Catholics of all kinds to connect more deeply and imaginatively with their own culture and spirituality.

.com Lawrence Welk, Babe Ruth, and Madonna have at least one thing in common. They're Catholic. But what does it mean to be Catholic? Thomas Groome, in *What Makes Us Catholic*, offers some answers. An expert on Catholic religious education, Groome says that all Catholics, regardless of their religious involvement in the Church, share a common sense of spirituality. Inviting readers "to critically consider and deliberately choose what could be life-giving from their faith tradition," Groome describes eight spiritual qualities that he believes are distinctively Catholic. These include sacramentality ("finding the infinite in the finite"), a sense of community, a commitment to work for justice, a reverence for tradition, and a disposition toward faith and not despair. Short essays--blending personal reflection, stories from Scripture and Church history, and exercises for prayer and reflection--define each ingredient of Catholic spiritual identity. The book's tone is accessible and nonjudgmental, and will likely help many readers eager to find a way of believing that "religion and spirituality are two sides of the same coin, and they badly need each other." -- Michael Joseph Gross
From Publishers Weekly
Groome, a theology professor at Boston College, has written this book at a time when his church is reasserting its beliefs through publication of the catechism and pronouncements on such polarizing issues as the ordination of women. He appears to be trying to assure Catholics who are disappointed with the state of their church in the wake of the reforming Second Vatican Council of the 1960s that it's still okay to be Catholic, even if they don't like the present pope and his vision for Catholic Christianity. What really makes people Catholic, he argues, are such thematic elements as sacramentality and the Catholic view of "society's function as serving the common good." Groome's vision of Catholicism seeks to reveal a more palatable side of the church as an advocate of such social values as inclusiveness and concern for the poor. He also downplays the hierarchy's teaching role by saying this function requires the participation of everyone, "not a small group doing all the teaching." Groome's reputation as an author of several Catholic school texts could make his latest book a popular resource for adult educational programs, since each chapter includes questions suitable for group discussion. However, despite the author's claim that he writes for Catholics "who span the spectrum," his views may alienate more conservative members. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
In his latest work, noted Christian educator Groome (Boston Coll.; *Christian Religious Education*) eloquently contends that all Catholics be they faithful adherents or lapsed members share eight distinctive qualities, e.g., sacramentality, community, social justice, and reverence for tradition. To each Groome dedicates a skillfully written chapter, which opens with an anecdote from his own experience that concretizes its theological subject. Readers will find themselves pausing and engaging in the text with questions for reflection and conversation (in fact, ample room is left for making notes). This format makes the book adaptable to small faith-sharing groups for private inquiry but might compromise it in a circulating collection. To increase its usefulness, Groome kept complex religious jargon to a minimum, allowing his simple stories to resonate in the heart. For the scholar or pastoral leader, five pages of notes complete the text. Recommended for public libraries. John-Leonard Berg, Univ. of Wisconsin, Platteville
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