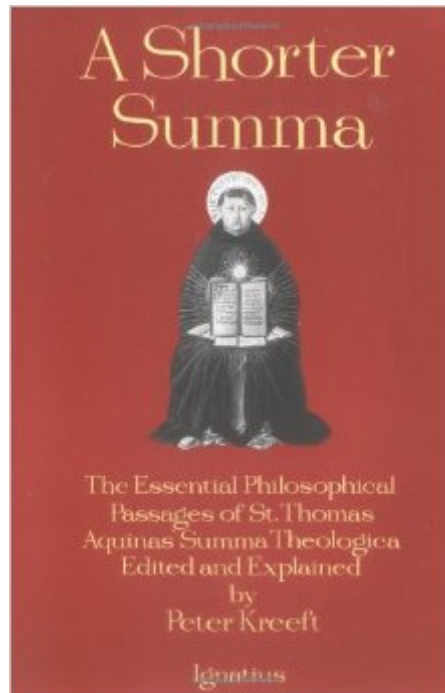


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A Shorter Summa: The Essential Philosophical Passages Of Saint Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica



Synopsis

A shortened version of Kreeft's much larger Summa of the Summa, which in turn was a shortened version of the Summa Theologica. The reason for the double shortening is pretty obvious: the original runs some 4000 pages! (The Summa of the Summa was just over 500.) The Summa is certainly the greatest, most ambitious, most rational book of theology ever written. In it, there is also much philosophy, which is selected, excerpted, arranged, introduced, and explained in footnotes here by Kreeft, a popular Thomist teacher and writer. St. Thomas Aquinas is universally recognized as one of the greatest philosophers who ever lived. His writings combine the two fundamental ideals of philosophical writing: clarity and profundity. He is a master of metaphysics and technical terminology, yet so full of both theoretical and practical wisdom. He is the master of common sense. The Summa Theologica is timeless, but particularly important today because of his synthesis of faith and reason, revelation and philosophy, and the Biblical and the classical Greco-Roman heritages. This little book is designed for beginners, either for classroom use or individually. It contains the most famous and influential passages of St. Thomas' philosophy with copious aids to understanding them.

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Customer Reviews

While in graduate school I encountered, providentially I think, while exploring the University of Oklahoma's library and reading things which appealed to me, scholars such as Jacques Maritain, Joseph Pieper, and Etienne Gilson, through whom I came to appreciate St. Thomas Aquinas and the Thomistic approach to philosophy. The longer I live and teach, the more sound I find Aquinas'

"moderate realism" and his common sense Christian approach to philosophy. I'm secured in my admiration of Aquinas and his Summa Theologica by this declaration of Flannery O'Connor, one of the greatest post-WWII writers: "So I couldn't make any judgment on the Summa, except to say this: I read it every night before I go to bed. If my mother were to come in during the process and say, 'Turn off that light. It's late,' I with lifted finger and broad bland beatific expression, would reply, 'On the contrary, I answer that the light, being eternal and limitless, cannot be turned off. Shut your eyes,' or some such thing. In any case, I feel I can personally guarantee that St. Thomas loved God because for the life of me I cannot help loving St. Thomas" ("Letter to A.," 9 August 1955, Collected Works, p. 945). Without question Thomas Aquinas is one of the handful of theologians who've most shaped theological developments in the Christian Church. Yet anyone who's tried to read St. Thomas' Summa Theologica (written to prepare students to properly study Scripture!) will testify to some difficulty in plowing through it. Mainly this stems, I suspect, from its imposing length--several thousand pages in some editions--which easily intimidates any neophyte!

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