

The Most Influential Catholic Saints: The Lives and Legacies of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Ignatius of Loyola

Charles River Editors



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*Includes historic artwork depicting the saints and important people, places, and events in their lives. *Comprehensively covers the Orders founded by Francis and Ignatius, as well as the theology and philosophy espoused by Thomas.

*Includes a bibliography on each saint for further reading.

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' Catholic Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of the Church's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

Alongside St. Ignatius, who founded the Jesuits, St. Francis of Assisi is widely regarded as one of the most venerated saints in the Catholic Church due to his work establishing religious Orders that have done an incalculable amount of good and service for societies. Like St. Ignatius, St. Francis also got his start as a soldier who experienced a vision that put him on a more divine path.

St. Francis eventually became a pillar of the Church, both living in poverty to assist those in greatest need and in establishing the Franciscan Order, the Order of Poor Clares, an enclosed order for women, and the Third Order of Brothers and Sisters of Penance. Near the end of his life, he became the first person recorded in history to bear the stigmata, the Passion wounds that Christ suffered in crucifixion, which only added to his ultimate aura and legacy.

It would be hard to overstate the influence that St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) has had on both the Catholic world and the West as a whole over the last 750 years. Even in secular circles, Aquinas is known as one of the most important medieval philosophers, and in many respects a harbinger of the Renaissance that began to flourish across Europe in the centuries that followed his life. His groundbreaking work, Summa Theologica, remains one of the most influential philosophical texts in history, earning him a place in the pantheon alongside Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates.

Aquinas had just as great an influence on Christianity as well. His philosophical works forged and established natural theology, squaring Catholicism with reason and logic, the ideals and aspects of modern thought that really took hold during the Renaissance. With his work on logic, theology, and metaphysics, as one of the Church's Doctors, Thomas Aquinas remains the Catholic Church's greatest theologian and philosopher, and he is still held out by the Church as the role model for those studying to become a Catholic priest.

A Spanish knight who hailed from a noble Basque family, Ignatius seemed destined for military glory until he was badly wounded in 1521 during the Battle of Pamplona. While convalescing, Ignatius began reading De Vita Christi by Ludolph of Saxony, after which he began a tireless career in service of the Catholic Church. After spending several years studying the faith, Ignatius formed the Society of Jesus in 1539, and as its Superior General, he sent followers as missionaries across Europe to create schools, colleges, and seminaries. The Jesuits remain active across the world nearly 500 years later. By 1548, he had published his famous Spiritual Exercises, which help the faithful commit themselves to Christ by conducting different mental exercises. The Spiritual Exercises continue to be wildly popular across the world today, even among non-Catholics.

The Most Influential Catholic Saints details the remarkable lives and legacies of each saint, and it includes

pictures, bibliographies, and more. Learn about Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, and Ignatius like you never have before, in no time at all.

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