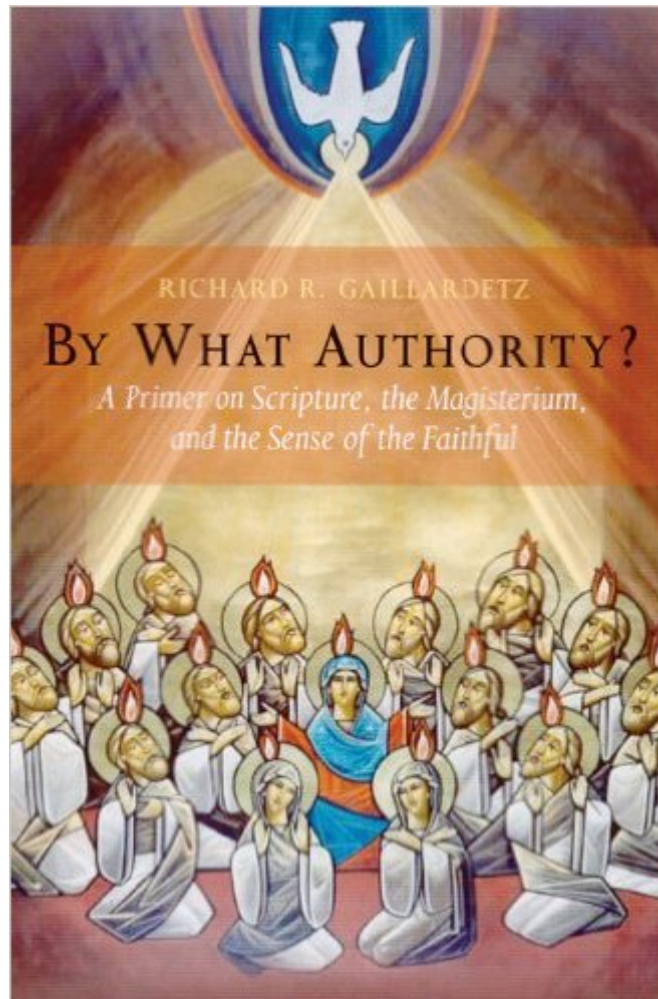


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# By What Authority?: Primer On Scripture, The Magisterium, And The Sense Of The Faithful



## Synopsis

Authority is exercised in many ways and forms in the Catholic Church today. *By What Authority?* offers a helpful introduction to the forms of Church authority that are concerned with authentic Christian belief. Gaillardetz (GÄf lÄfr dÄ"Ä") explains what it means to say that the Bible is inspired, how Scripture and tradition are related to one another, the role of the Pope and bishops in preserving the Christian faith, the levels of Church teaching authority, how to deal with disagreements with Church teaching, the distinctive role of the theologians, and the contribution of all the baptized in the formation of Church teaching. This book introduces readers to a basic understanding of the nature and exercise of authority in the Catholic Church as understood within the Vision of the Church offered by the Second Vatican Council. The chapters conclude by outlining disputed issues regarding the topic of that chapter and a select list of opportunities for further reading.

Chapters in Part One: The Authority of Scripture and Tradition are "What Does It Mean to Say the Bible is Inspired?" "What Is the Canon of the Bible?" - and "What Is the Relationship Between Scripture and Tradition?" - Chapters in Part Two: The Authority of Church Teaching and the Church's Teaching Office are "How Do We Understand the Magisterium Today?" - "How Do the Pope and Bishops Exercise Their Teaching Authority?" - and "What Is Dogma and Doctrine?" - Chapters in Part Three: The Authority of the Believer and the Believing Community are "What Is the Sense of the Faithful?" - "Is There a Place for Disagreement in the Catholic Church?" - and "What Is the Proper Relationship Between the Magisterium and Theologians?" - Richard R. Gaillardetz, PhD, is the Margaret and Thomas Murray and James J. Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo. Among his other publications is *Teaching with Authority*, published by Liturgical Press. He is an official delegate on the U.S. Catholic - Methodist Ecumenical Dialogue. In 2000 he received the Sophia Award from the faculty of the Washington Theological Union in recognition of "theological excellence in service to ministry." - "

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a much needed book on the subject. It clearly explains the interrelationship between Scripture, the Magisterium (i.e., the Church's teaching office), and Tradition. The author methodically and painlessly guides the reader through a somewhat complicated subject, leaving him/her with a distinct sense of increased understanding. Simplified, but never simplistic. A must read for every Catholic, and interested Protestant alike.

This is a fabulous book that presents challenging topics in easily digestible chapters. Each chapter concludes with a list of ideas related to the chapters that are currently being debated, with perspectives from both sides of the debate, and a list of further reading sources. Thank you Richard Gaillardetz for fleshing out principles and entities, which to me always seemed nebulous. It is easier to respect and feel that I belong to a community of the faithful, when I possess a better definition of the the government of the faithful and my obligations as a member of such a community. Gaillardetz traces the history of authority as it has been articulated by the Church. He looks at the origin of Scripture as a source, and the bodies that have always claimed to protect Scripture. He presents a concrete skeleton of the magisterium, and differentiates between the many different sources of teachings presented from the Church's offices, and which are more binding than others, and in what terms. I thought the chapter on the role of an individual's conscience in accepting the church's ruling on issues which were not given as infallible teachings was most valuable. Gaillardetz outlines the importance of distinguishing the reasons for disagreement and how to discern whether they are motivated from issues with authority in general, weaknesses on the behalf of the individual, or a pure difference in moral interpretation. In concordance with the Catholic Catechism he advises that we are ultimately the ones who suffer the most if we commit immoral acts, and we must follow our conscience when it is speaking to us on morality. This is solid Catholic teaching, contrary to what a reviewer noted below, and something that more should be written about, to counteract the tendency for those who follow their conscience as being derisively called "cafeteria Catholics." Rather than present theology as a static monolithic institution, Gaillardetz presents it as a dialogue between the

entire living church; not just the exclusive domain of the hierarchical clergy. His perspective is refreshing, and uplifting. Hopefully many more works by him will follow.

With due respect to another reviewer, Gaillardetz's book is the last place an RCIA candidate or confirmandi should go for guidance on how to understand an appropriate response by the faithful to Church teaching. Gaillardetz believes that only a very rigid form of heresy that involves the explicit rejection of a dogma impairs one's status with the Catholic Church. He even goes so far as to say that the rejection of morally-binding social doctrines (he cites Church teaching on cohabitation) "does not in any way separate" a person from communion with the Church. This is pure conjecture. Doctrines exist in order to establish boundaries around what is morally licit behavior. In other words, to go beyond those boundaries is to sin, and sinning does indeed impair one's communion with Christ and His Church. At any rate, on too many questions Gaillardetz provides foggy responses instead of clear answers.

Richard Gaillardetz is one of the most perceptive and skilled theologians around, as well as being gifted with the ability to write in a simple and clear manner. I say this having read and used a number of his other publications in articles and teaching. This little book on the Magisterium is more evidence of that. He is faithful to the Magisterium while explaining it in a way that makes sense to anyone willing to read the material. This is a solid introductory presentation on the topic of the Magisterium that can be used for undergraduate theology students or interested general readers.

As a Catholic you must give the assent of the intellect and will to everything the Church teaches, the author presents the question of women's ordination, contraception, and a variety of other social issues on the table and open to personal preference; which they are not, I mean, even atheists know the Catholic church teaches against cohabitation. Of course, he is an academic and this sort of pedagogy is acceptable in academia, but for RCIA or any person trying to get to heaven this is totally confusing and misleading. Good resource for academic, but misleading to call it a primer. For those interested in the Catholic Church I would suggest EWTN.

Great product! Was received on time

text for class

My instructor has this as one of our primary readings and I appreciated getting it so fast. I was able to start on it ahead of time, excellent.

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