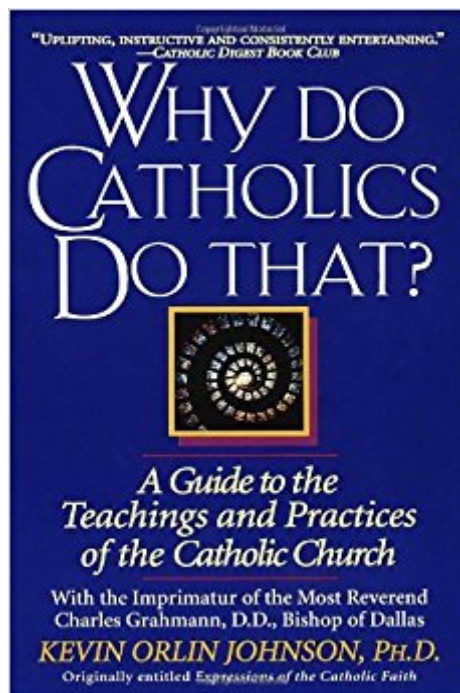




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Why Do Catholics Do That?: A Guide To The Teachings And Practices Of The Catholic Church



Synopsis

In *Why Do Catholics Do That?* renowned scholar and religion columnist Kevin Orlin Johnson answers the most frequently asked questions on Catholic faith, worship, culture, and customs, including:

- * How the Church Makes Laws
- * The Hard-Fought Genesis of the New Testament
- * The Cycle of Redemption
- * A Short Guide to the Meaning and Structure of the Mass
- * Decoding Symbols of Scripture and the Sacraments
- * The Calendar as the Image of Christ's Life
- * The Rosary
- * The Stations of the Cross
- * Monks, Nuns, and the Rules That Guide Them
- * The Pope
- * The Laity in the Modern World
- * Saints
- * Fatima, Lourdes, and the Story of Apparitions
- * The Vatican: A Holy City
- * The Sign of the Cross, Christianity's Best-Known Symbol
- * Candles in Prayer and Liturgy
- * The Meaning of the Nativity Scene

Blending religious history, a deep appreciation for art and culture, and an enlightened reverence for the traditions of the Church, *Why Do Catholics Do That?* is the definitive resource for any one who wants to learn more about the rituals, symbols, and traditions that can strengthen our faith every day. "Johnson offers lucid explanations of a dizzying array of customs and beliefs."--Publishers Weekly

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Customer Reviews

Why Do Catholics Do That? by Kevin Orlin Johnson assumes nothing and tells all. As such, it's not only an ideal catechism companion but also a source of infinite wisdom for students of art history, politics, literature, philosophy, and pretty much any other subject connected with Catholic history. In a voice refreshingly free of condescension (and full of humor, witnessed in chapter titles such as

"Saints: How You Get To Be One"), Johnson defines and expatiates upon hundreds of topics, including the Mass, the rosary, the cross, the eucharist, and the pope. *Why Do Catholics Do That?* is destined for the all-time top 20 list of indispensable desk references. Whether your interest in Catholicism is devoutly religious or defiantly secular, you'll be glad Kevin Orlin Johnson has fulfilled his vocation so faithfully. --Michael Joseph Gross

Why Do Catholics Do That? A Guide to the Teachings and Practices of the Catholic Church, by Kevin Orlin Johnson, Ph.D., describes the various traditions and customs inherent in the Catholic faith. One section of the book that I found very interesting was the significance of numbers. Many numbers have very obvious significance, for instance seven means a complete series, whether it is the seven sacraments or the seven deadly sins. The symbolic explanation that I found most intriguing was that of the number five. The author asserts that the number is actually quite "naughty," because it is through out five senses that we find temptation. Who knew?-- JMC

More of a history book than what I expected. It starts slow but it has really good stuff about what is behind the rituals like Stations of the Cross and such. I bought it because I noticed some things that made me wonder about certain masses, even though I went through 12 years of Catholic education. And actually some of the things that I wondered about were not answered. But many things were explained that I said "yeah! Why DO we do that?" It never occurred to me to think that making the sign of the cross was strange -- dying on the cross was traditionally for criminals in the days of the early Catholic church under the Roman justice system. So things about which I did not wonder were brought up and I should have wondered! I was not really interested in the candle chapter and the incense chapter, but the Miracle Medal chapter was so interesting and inspiring. This really is a good book to read if you are Catholic. Or even if you are not!

This is a handy and easy read organized into brief chapters dedicated to a particular distinctive of the Catholic faith. The organization of material is perfect for ready reference to a specific interest or to be read through in any order. Dr. Johnson organized the material into 4 parts under the headings, faith, worship, culture, and customs. Each part is organized into brief chapters on focused topics. Part one on faith covers such topics as the formation of the canon of scripture, how the church makes laws, and how the church views other documents of the early church not included in the canon. Part two on worship provides material on topics such as the meaning of common symbols and order of the mass as well as background on the stations of the cross and the rosary prayer. Part

three concerning culture delves into the pope and vocations in the church and provides background on apparitions and signs (Fatima, weeping images, etc). Part four on customs provides a wealth of information on the meaning of materials and symbols in worship including music, medals, sacramentals, incense, water, and even numbers. Whether you are a Catholic who has wondered the significance of a given practice or a non-Catholic seeking to understand, you will find a treasure of information here. It is a fantastic introduction to many of the practices that have been wrongfully dismissed as mere superstition. The history and culture of the Catholic faith is rich with meaning and significance. It is an heritage Catholics too often neglect. This is not just a how-to of these practices but a well developed study in why we do them. All within a text that is easy and enjoyable to read. A great resource and part of that Catholic heritage to be cherished.

This helpful book is authored by Kevin Orlin Johnson, a PhD in art history. He has a firm grasp on church history and on topics like art and culture and he does a good job explaining many of the Roman Catholic customs and practices that often confuse those who aren't Catholic (not to mention many Catholics themselves!). He does use a rather uncritical approach, however, so his book will be especially beneficial to those who prefer a more conservative view of the issues he covers (such as sacraments, funerals, popes, ordained ministry, monasticism, vestments, holy objects, etc.). For those who lean toward a more progressive stance on many of these issues, this book will probably not be suitable. For them, I recommend an approach such as that of Greg Dues in *CATHOLIC CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS: A POPULAR GUIDE* (also available on [Amazon](#)). Catholicism is a religion that is much more pluriform and rich than many are willing to admit. Indeed, the various approaches of different authors are probably a sign of the church's continuing relevance today. This review may not be received positively by some persons, but as a professional religious educator and a life-long Roman Catholic, I think we honor Christ and the church when we admit our differences without marginalizing or excluding one another. On that score, I welcome emails and discussion!

Great book for Catholics & those of another faith, that have some higher being to an atheist. Easily understandable without making it a history book. I especially wish those that criticize Catholicism would read but unlikely. Ignorance that leads to bigotry is unacceptable. I purchased several copies for Catholics & non-Catholics. One was for my children b/c their beliefs were openly criticized & made fun of thruout junior high & high school. While it is not acceptable to ridicule or belittle a person b/c of race, sexual orientation... lots of people voice prejudice against Catholics. I would never criticize a person of another faith or of no faith & am not forcing my religion on anyone.

Enjoyable book to dispel ignorance & to explain further any questions current Catholics have.

Grew up Catholic on my wife reminded me about some things I was taught early on and had forgotten. Enlighten me about other things

Good

Does have some good answers..

Very informative.

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