There are an enormous number of theological reference works which provide an overview of a particular topic, and lead the student to the most important books and journal articles. Determining which reference sources are “standard” largely depends on the theological perspective and denominational background of the particular user. This guide aims to identify and describe some of the most important reference sources, emphasizing (but not exclusively) those written from the Catholic perspective.

**ENCYCLOPEDIAS**


This work is the major English-language encyclopedia on Catholic topics. It contains some 17,000 articles, each with a bibliography. Unfortunately many of the articles in the 2003/online edition are reprints from the 1967 edition without any updating. The 1967 edition (St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area BX 841 .N44 1967) and the 1907 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia (available online: http://www.newadvent.org/catech; St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – BX 841 .C25 1907) include some articles on topics not included in the 2003 edition of the New Catholic Encyclopedia. These older works may be particularly useful for some historical topics.


This work is the major English-language theological encyclopedia from a Protestant perspective. It emphasizes post-Reformation and particularly contemporary Christianity. The articles included are substantial but selective; there are many topics which are not addressed. Many of the articles are translated from the German Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon (Robarts 4th Floor Reference Area – BR 95 .E92 1986).

*Routledge Religion Resources Online.* [Available online for UofT use: http://www.library.utoronto.ca]

An online collection of thirty different encyclopedias and dictionaries on various religious topics. Very strong in some areas (e.g. Protestantism, monasticism, early Christianity), but weak in other areas.
**DICTIONARIES**

See also the separate *Research Guide to Systematic Theology*.


Brief, scholarly articles with bibliographies on over 6,000 topics. This dictionary is particularly good for identifying individuals and for historical topics.


Precise paragraph-length definitions of theological terms, as well as some biblical, catechetical, ethical, historical, liturgical, and philosophical terms used in theological studies. Written from a Catholic perspective. A similar Catholic work is *Saint Mary’s Press Glossary of Theological Terms* by John T. Ford (St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference BX1751.3 .F66 2006). A similar Protestant work is *Essential Theological Terms* by Justo L. Gonzalez (St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference BR 96.5 .G66 2005).


Short signed articles. This work has a British and Anglican emphasis – but not exclusively.


Over 200 essay-length articles which explain the official teaching of the Catholic Church as well as theological opinions held by individual scholars. Includes bibliographies.


This work includes some 220 articles, over half of which are written by professors of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Thirty of the articles are major essays (e.g. christology, Church, revelation) which serve as guides to the other articles in the dictionary. A similar work is *Handbook of Catholic Theology*, edited by Wolfgang Beinert and Francis Schüessler Fiorenza (St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – BX 1747.5 .L4913 1995).


Over 300 articles on the key figures, theological movements, and texts that have shaped Christian thought. The choice of topics in the modern period is overwhelmingly Protestant.
ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES – PERIODS AND TOPICS

See also the separate Research Guide to Church History.


The most scholarly English-language dictionary of Christian antiquity with twice as many articles and a broader coverage than Everett Ferguson's Encyclopedia of Early Christianity (available online for UoT use: http://www.library.utoronto.ca.).


Major survey articles as well as shorter articles on lesser topics. Covers the Byzantine Empire from the 4th to the 15th centuries.


Articles (many of essay length) on all aspects of medieval scholarship. A much smaller work is Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages, edited by André Vauchez (available online for UoT use: http://www.library.utoronto.ca).

The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation. Edited by Hans J. Hillerbrand. Online

More than 1,200 scholarly articles. Many of the bibliographies are annotated and are divided into separate lists of primary and secondary sources.


This work covers Catholic and Orthodox, Byzantine and non-Byzantine, Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian traditions. Articles on geographical areas, important persons, theological issues, and liturgical items. Includes bibliographical references, mostly to English-language works.


Articles on the ecumenical aspects of particular theological topics (e.g. grace), as well as articles on important persons and groups in ecumenical dialogue. This work is generally more useful than the Historical Dictionary of Ecumenical Christianity (St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – BX 6.3 .V36 1994), which does, however, include more biographical articles.
**BIBLICAL RESOURCES**

See also the separate *Research Guide to the Bible*.

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<td>The major online software program for Biblical exegesis and research.</td>
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Bible dictionaries include articles about Biblical persons, places, events, concepts, and institutions. The articles are normally brief; they note the most relevant Scriptural passages, but usually do not include any bibliographies.

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_NIBD_ and _ABD_ are the standard scholarly English-language encyclopedias on Biblical topics. _NIBD_ is more current and is directed to pastors and theological students. _ABD_ often has longer more in-depth articles.

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The _TDOT_ and the _TDNT_ (often called "Kittel") are respectively the standard works for biblical word studies in Hebrew and Greek. Each article includes a discussion of the etymology of the word, an examination of the secular use of a term, followed by a more extensive examination of its theological significance.

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The standard one-volume scholarly commentary to the Bible from a Catholic perspective.
[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – BS 491.3 .E37 2003]

One of several one-volume scholarly commentaries to the Bible from a mainline Protestant perspective.

OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES

[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – BX 1747.5 .C4813 2001]

This work is the standard English-language translation of excerpts of papal and conciliar statements arranged by subject. It is the appropriate tool to use when looking for the major magisterial documents on a particular theological topic (e.g. grace). The original language text of each document (usually Greek or Latin) can be found in the Enchiridion symbolorum, first edited by Johannes Denzinger (St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area – BX 1749 .D415 1999). An older but similar work, The Sources of Catholic Dogma (St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area – BX 1749 .D413 1957), arranges excerpts of the most important papal and conciliar statements in chronological order.

[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – BR 141 .D6 1999]

A standard collection of excerpts from the primary sources most frequently referred to in theological study: from antiquity to the modern period and including both Catholic and Protestant documents.

[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – BR 63 .F3 1970b]

This work is a very selective chronologically-arranged collection of English-language translations of the most important patristic passages needed for theological study. Each volume has a detailed doctrinal index to locate patristic passages by subject. The original Greek or Latin text of most of these passages can be found in Rouet de Journel's Enchiridion patristicum (St. Michael's 3rd Floor – BR 63 .E56 1959).

[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – BX 1749 .T5 S913 1964]

**HANDBOOKS**


"A statement of the Church's faith and of catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium. ... A sure norm for teaching the faith." (John Paul II, *Fidei depositum*).


This book is a basic outline of the teachings of the Catholic Church which presents essential statements of doctrine and attempts to explain the foundations of that teaching in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. It is excellent for determining how official a particular teaching is (e.g. *de fide* or merely the more probable opinion held by most theologians). Since it was published in 1955, it does not include any references to sources from the past fifty years.

**FINDING JOURNAL ARTICLES**

*ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials.* [Available online (1949 – present) for UofT use: http://www.library.utoronto.ca]

Over one million bibliographic citations to journal articles, essays in books, and book reviews in the field of religion. Covers all aspects of the major world religions, but excludes most Catholic journals (which are indexed in the *Catholic Periodical and Literature Index*).


Over 200,000 bibliographic citations to Catholic books, book reviews, and journal articles from more than 160 Catholic magazines. Includes both scholarly and popular material. Use the print version to find articles published before 1981.

Both the *ATLA Religion Database* and the *Catholic Periodical and Literature Index* include links to many full-text electronic journal articles.

*Index Theologicus.* [Available online: http://www.ixtheo.de]

The major index to European theological journals.

This research guide is maintained by Noel McFerran (noel.mcferran@utoronto.ca). It was last updated July 2012. The latest version is available online: http://stmikes.utoronto.ca/kelly/research_guides/grad_theology.asp