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## ***Introduction to the DOCTORS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH Definition and List***



by [Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.](#), *Catholic Theologian and Speaker*



Unlike the popular title “[Father of the Church](#),” the title “***Doctor of the Church***” is an official honor that is bestowed by the Pope in recognition of the outstanding contribution a person has made to the understanding and interpretation of the sacred Scriptures and the development of Christian doctrine.

As of 2009, there are thirty-three male and female ***Doctors of the Catholic Church*** who hail from all ages of the Church’s history. Of these, three are women (Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, and Therese of Lisieux) and twenty-four are quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (The eight who are not quoted are Saints Ephraem, Isidore, “the Venerable” Bede, Albert the Great, Anthony of Padua, Peter Canisius, Robert Bellarmine, and Lawrence of Brindisi).

There are three requirements that must be fulfilled by a person in order to merit being included in the ranks of the

***“Doctors of the Catholic Church”:***

- 1) holiness** that is truly outstanding, even among saints;
- 2) depth of doctrinal insight;** and
- 3) an extensive body of writings** which the church can recommend as an expression of the authentic and life-giving Catholic Tradition.

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During the "golden age of the Fathers," (300-600), eight **Doctors of the Church** particularly stand out and are called "Ecumenical Fathers" because of their widespread influence. Bronze statues of several of these eight are to be found in St. Peter's Basilica. Four of these **Doctors of the Church** hailed from the Western (Latin-speaking) half of the Roman Empire.

- [St. Ambrose](#), 340-397
- [St. Jerome](#), 345-420
- [St. Augustine](#), 354-430
- [St. Gregory the Great](#) (Pope), 540-604



Four of the Ecumenical Fathers who were **Doctors of the Church** came from the Eastern (Greek-speaking) Roman Empire:

- [St. Athanasius](#), 295-373
- [St. Basil the Great](#), 330-379
- [St. Gregory of Nazianzus](#), 330-390
- [St. John Chrysostom](#), 345-407

There are eight other **Doctors of the Church** from the patristic period:

- [St. Ephraem the Deacon](#), 306-373 (Syriac)
- [St. Hilary](#), 315-368 (Latin)
- [St. Cyril of Jerusalem](#), 315-387 (Greek)
- [St. Cyril of Alexandria](#), 376-444 (Greek)
- [St. Leo the Great](#) (Pope), 390-461 (Latin)
- [St. Peter Chrysologus](#), 400-450 (Latin)
- St. Isidore of Seville (last of the Latin Fathers), 560-636
- [St. John Damascene](#) (last of the Greek Fathers), 676-749



There are nine **Doctors of the Church** during the Latin Middle Ages:

- [St. Bede "the Venerable,"](#) 673-735
- St. Peter Damian, 1007-1072
- [St. Anselm](#), 1033-1109
- [St. Bernard of Clairvaux](#), 1090-1153
- [St. Anthony of Padua](#), 1195-1231
- St. Albert the Great, 1200-1280
- [St. Bonaventure](#), 1217-1274
- [St. Thomas Aquinas](#), 1225-1274
- [St. Catherine of Siena](#), 1347-1379

There are six **Doctors of the Catholic Church** who were prominent in the 16th century Catholic Reformation, all from the Latin Church:

- St. Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582
- St. Peter Canisius, 1521-1597
- St. John of the Cross, 1542-1591
- St. Robert Bellarmine, 1542-1621
- St. Lawrence of Brindisi, 1559-1619
- [St. Francis de Sales](#), 1567-1622



There are two **Doctors of the Church** in the modern era, both from the Latin Church:

- St. Alphonsus Liguori, 1696-1787
- [St. Therese of Lisieux](#), 1873-1897 (proclaimed **Doctor of the Church** by John Paul II 10/19/97)

This list of **the Doctors of the Church** was adapted from that provided by Louis Miller, *Beacons of Light: Profiles of Ecclesiastical Writers Cited in the Catechism* (Liguori, MO: Liguori, 1995), 61-62.

### **The Early Church Fathers**

A society characterized by the violence, loss of respect for life, exotic religious cults, homosexuality, sexual promiscuity, and even pedophilia. No, we're not talking about modern times -

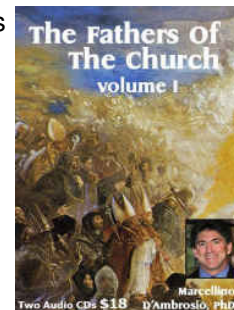
The Early Church Fathers succeeded in bringing a Pagan society to Christ. If we pay attention to what they taught, we will succeed in doing the same for our own de-Christianized society!

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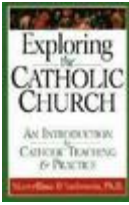
"The Feast of Faith," is an enlightening, four-part adult faith formation series (on 2 CDs, or 2 DVDs) guaranteed to unlock the life-changing power of the Eucharist in your life. Be sure to order the Feast of Faith Workbook, you may view it online, to get the most out of this amazing Eucharist Series!

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The Catholic Church has always emphasized how important the seven sacraments are for our lives. Yet many take these 7 sacraments for granted. With little understanding of the sacraments, many are simply going through the motions. This CD will give you new insight into the meaning of these seven unique embraces of divine love that will unlock the power of the sacraments in your life!



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