



Spiritual Reading Guide

A reading list curated by the author George Sim Johnston

The Imitation of Christ

Thomas A. Kempis

Written in the 15th century, this short volume is the most widely read and translated Christian book apart from the Bible.

The Confessions of Saint Augustine

Saint Augustine of Hippo

Written at the end of the 4th century, this very “modern” book is a first person account of the youth and conversion of the great saint who seemed to always pray with a pen in his hand. The Warner and Chadwick translations are recommended.

Mere Christianity and The Screwtape Letters

C. S. Lewis

Lewis, an Anglican, was the greatest English speaking Christian apologist of the 20th century.

Abandonment to Divine Providence

Jean Pierre de Caussade

This little book has been a spiritual classic for 250 years; it teaches an abiding trust in God's providence.

Searching for and Maintaining Peace

Jacques Philippe

Fr. Phillippe explains how we can progress from restlessness and anxiety to peace of heart. All of his books are recommended reading.

The Seven Storey Mountain

Thomas Merton

Published in 1948, this became a surprise bestseller and has been in print ever since. Merton, who was a very good writer, tells the story of his journey from modern paganism to a Trappist monastery.

The Wisdom of the Desert

Thomas Merton

This little book is a collection of the “sayings” or “doings” of the early desert monks, which are both entertaining and edifying. Merton writes an excellent introduction.

The Spiritual Combat

Lawrence Scupoli

First published in Venice in 1589, this practical book is a guide for those who seek to advance in the spiritual life, with an emphasis on how to struggle against obstacles to sanctity.

The Belief of Catholics, In Soft Garments, The Hidden Stream

Ronald Knox,

This brilliant apologist who converted to Catholicism from Anglicanism wrote many books that are both deep and readable.



This Tremendous Lover

Eugene Boylan

Boylan was an accomplished physicist who became a Trappist monk and wrote several spiritual classics. Worthwhile reading for both doctrine and spiritual guidance.

Into Your Hands Father

Wilfred Stinissen

A Carmelite priest talks about the three stages of abandonment. "There can be so much escapism in our striving for a 'spiritual life'. We often flee from the concrete, apparently banal reality that is filled with God's presence to an artificial existence that corresponds with our own ideas of piety and holiness but where God is not present."

Hail Holy Queen

Scott Hahn

One of the best books on the Blessed Mother. All of Scott Hahn's books are worth reading.

To Know Christ Jesus

Frank Sheed

An outstanding 'biography' of Christ that makes it much easier to understand the Gospels.

Theology and Sanity

Frank Sheed

A great introduction to Catholic theology.

The Three Ages of the Interior Life

Reginal Garriguou Lagrange

This is the magnum opus of a great 20th century disciple of Thomas Aquinas. It is long, but that should not deter you from diving in.