



# Practical Theology: Spiritual Direction from St. Thomas Aquinas

By Peter Kreeft

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From a lifetime of studying the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, popular author Peter Kreeft says that his amazement has continually increased not only at Aquinas' theoretical, philosophical brilliance and sanity, but also at his personal, practical wisdom, his "existential bite." Yet this second dimension of St. Thomas has usually been eclipsed by the other. Kreeft wrote this book to help bring that sun out from its eclipse. He provides easily digestible samples of the religious wisdom of Aquinas.

Here are 359 pieces of wisdom from St. Thomas's masterpiece, the *Summa Theologiae*, which Kreeft says "are literally more valuable than all the kingdoms of this world because they will help you to attain 'the one thing needful,' or 'the greatest good'", the ultimate end and purpose and meaning of life. Three of its names are "being a saint," "beatitude" ("supreme happiness") and "union with God." That was the principle for Kreeft in choosing which passages to use: do they help you to attain your ultimate end - sanctity, happiness, union with God? St. Thomas would have agreed with writer Leon Bloy, who often wrote that in the end "there is only one tragedy in life: not to have been a saint".

These 359 gold nuggets have helped Kreeft in the struggles of real life, to live in the real world, to grow closer to the Lord, and he hopes they will do the same for his readers. After each passage directly from Aquinas, Kreeft provides brief spiritual commentary to help explain it and apply it - practical, personal, existential, "livable" thoughts.

He has framed these readings as answers to questions that people actually ask their spiritual directors. Each answer is taken word for word from Aquinas.

Among the many topics Aquinas and Kreeft cover here include:

- The problem of evil
- Interpreting the Bible
- Love vs. knowledge
- Reconciling justice and mercy

- Human freedom and divine grace
- Angels and demons
- The need for theology
- Predestination and free will
- Three kinds of goods

"Its notoriously difficult to synopsise Aquinas on anything. However, if I were to choose someone to do the job well, it would be Peter Kreeft. Many will find this presentation helpful to develop their own replies to the questions that bother the minds of today's searchers."

- **Romanus Cessario, O.P.**, Saint John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Peter Kreeft's writings fall into the category of true genius, and this work, *Practical Theology*, may be his opus. Not only does Dr. Kreeft make Aquinas' thought more accessible, but he does so in what I believe to be Aquinas' most important gift to the Church, the revelation of truth illuminating the path to union with God. If this path isn't quite clear to you, this is the book for you." --**Dan Burke**, Executive Director, *National Catholic Register*

"A scintillating commentary on the deepest book by the greatest mind. Expert guide Peter Kreeft points out every foothold and crevice you need to scale Mount Summa, and feeds you plenty of oxygen along the way. Brimming with Kreeftian profundity and levity, this book scores a hat trick: it's informative, formative, and transformative." --**Patrick Coffin**, Radio Host, Catholic Answers

"How can we know the living God and attain to everlasting union with God? This is really the only question of life. Kreeft's dialogue with Aquinas shows us what it means--existentially, not solely academically--to learn from a saint." --**Matthew Levering**, Professor of Theology, Mundelein Seminary

#### About the Author

**Peter Kreeft, Ph.D.**, a Professor of Philosophy at Boston College, is one of the most widely read Christian authors of our time. His many bestselling books include *Back to Virtue*, *Because God Is Real*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *You Can Understand the Bible*, *Angels and Demons*, *Heaven: The Heart's Deepest Longing*, and *A Summa of the Summa*.

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##### Lillie Moreland:

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**Bernard Lewis:**

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