This list is not exhaustive but is provided for those who desire additional reading on historical topics. The works selected are a mixture of scholarly and popular reading and are written by historians with either a Catholic worldview or sympathetic to that worldview.

**General Church History:**


Clark, Kenneth. *Civilisation*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1969. – a history of Western Civilization utilizing art – very perceptive review of historical events and the shaping of culture. This book is a companion to the BBC television series that is available on DVD.


**The Mustard Seed:**

Carroll, Warren H. *The Founding of Christendom*. Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1985. – Volume 1 of a planned 6-volume work. This is a scholarly read with great detail and an excellent and well-documented work.

Whitehead, Kenneth D. *One, Holy Catholic, and Apostolic – The Early Church was the Catholic Church*. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000. – *an excellent apologetic work on proving the early Christian Church was one, holy, catholic and apostolic – which are the marks of the Catholic Church.*

**Persecution:**


**Conversion & Councils:**
Carroll, Warren H. *The Building of Christendom*. Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1987. – *Volume 2 of a planned 6 volume work. This is a scholarly read with great detail. It is an excellent and well-documented work.*

Eusebius. *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*. Translated by G.A. Williamson. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1989. – *Eusebius of Caesarea is the father of Church History and lived during some of the most interesting times in history. He chronicles the history of the Church from Apostolic times to the reign of Constantine. Unfortunately, he was sympathetic to Arius and his teachings but he was a top-notch scholar and his History is a classic.*

Fortescue, Adrian. *The Early Papacy to the Synod of Chalcedon in 451*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008. *Excellent short work on the papacy in the early Church; answers questions raised by some that the roles and responsibilities of the Pope were later developments and not present in the early Church.*

St. Augustine, *The City of God* and *The Confessions*. – *There are many translations of these two books available (some are even online), and they stand as two of the greatest works by one of the Church’s most revered theologians.*

**Rengers, Rev. Christopher, O.F.M. Cap. The 33 Doctors of the Church.** Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 2000. – Contains great biographical info on all 33 Doctors of the Church, including St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and more.


**Missionaries & the Emperor:**


**Anonymous. The Song of Roland.** Translated by Dorothy Sayers. New York: Penguin Books, 1957. – This poem is a legendary depiction of a battle between some of Charlemagne’s forces and a Basque army in the Pyrenees. While both Roland and the battle are historical, the descriptions in the poem are dramatic exaggerations. However, this is certainly one of the jewels of Catholic literature, and it reveals the way in which the men who lived in the centuries immediately following his rule viewed Charlemagne.


**Bostom, Andrew, MD. The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims.** Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005. – This book is a compilation of eyewitness accounts, taken from Muslim and non-Muslim sources alike, of the early conquests of Islam. While modern Muslim scholars may argue that the jihad is to be interpreted as an internal struggle, it is clear that the early Muslim warlords took the idea of Holy War quite literally.

**Carroll, Warren H. The Building of Christendom.** Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1985. – Volume 2 of a planned 6-volume work on the history of Christendom. These volumes are a scholarly read but highly enlightening and entertaining. Chapters 6-16 deal with this time period.


Wallace-Hadrill, J.M. *The Barbarian West, 400 – 1000*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, Ltd. – a study of the Germanic tribes in Western Europe that shaped the history of Western Civilization and the Church

**Crusaders & Scholars:**


Karsh, Efraim. *Islamic Imperialism – A History*. New Haven and London CT: Yale University Press, 2006. – a secular historian traces the rise of Mohammed and the history of Islam to the present day. Focus is on the imperialistic ambitions (present from the beginning) of Islam. The chapter on the crusaders does not reflect current scholarship but overall a well-done and engaging narrative.


Rega, Frank M. *St. Francis of Assisi and the Conversion of the Muslims*. Rockford, IL: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 2007. – a short work that provides an overview
of the life and work of St. Francis with a particular emphasis on his participation in the Fifth Crusade and his desire and efforts to convert Sultan al-Kamil to the Christian Faith.


**Weak Leaders & Schism:**

Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy: Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradisio*. – Numerous translations are available. This is another crown jewel of Catholic literature. Constructed entirely around the theme of the Holy Trinity (from 3 books and 3 line verses to Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven being 3-levels of 3 circles each and a rhyme scheme where each word rhymes 3 times), Dante weaves Catholic doctrine through a captivating story and masterful poetry.

Chaucer. *Canterbury Tales*. – Numerous editions exist, some with the original text and others with modern translations. Be sure that whatever edition you have includes the full Parson’s Tale, which is a long sermon that serves as the real conclusion to the book.


Twain, Mark. *Joan of Arc*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989. – *Mark Twain was no friend of the Catholic Church, but even he fell in love with St. Joan of Arc. Calling her one of the most captivating human beings to ever live, he spent years researching this book and often remarked that he was most proud of it amongst all his other works.*


**Protestors & Defenders:**

Belloc, Hilaire. *How the Reformation Happened*. Rockford, IL: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1992. – *Belloc’s insightful analysis of one of the most important events in the history of Western Civilization. Belloc traces the careers of Luther and Calvin and includes a discussion of what he terms “the English Accident.” This work also covers the warfare that erupted in the latter 16th and 17th centuries as well as a brief discussion on the Catholic response.*


Carroll, Warren H. *The Cleaving of Christendom*. Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1985. – *Volume 4 of a planned 6-volume work on the history of Christendom. These volumes are a scholarly read but highly enlightening and entertaining.*

Erkison, Erik H. *Young Man Luther – A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1962. – *Fascinating book by a psychologist who studies Luther the man in an attempt to understand his rebellion against the Church.*

Hughes, Philip. *A Popular History of the Reformation*. New York: Hanover House, 1957. – *an excellent and highly readable book by a master Church historian. Hughes provides an overview of Christian belief prior to 1500, the practice of the Faith in 1500 as well as in-depth chapters on Luther, Calvin, England and the Council of Trent.*


**The Catholic Reformation:**


Chesterton, G.K. *Lepanto – with Explanatory Notes and Commentary*, edited by Dale Ahlquist. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003. – *the classic, yet almost forgotten, poem by Chesterton on the Battle of Lepanto. This edition contains several chapters that provide further background and insight into the battle. A bonus Chesterton essay is included on what would have happened had Don Juan and Mary Stuart (Queen of Scots) married.*


**Revolutions & Modernism:**
Carroll, Warren H. *The Revolution Against Christendom.* Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 2005. – Volume 5 of a planned 6 volume work. This volume presents a detailed narrative of the events of the French Revolution and its effect on the Church.

De la Torre, Teodoro. *Popular History of Philosophy.* Houston: Lumen Christi Press, 1988. – A well written history of philosophy stretching from ancient Greece to the 20th century, including chapters on the important “Enlightenment” philosophers.

John Paul II. *Memory and Identity – Conversations at the Dawn of a Millennium.* New York: Rizzoli, 2005. – The last book of Pope John Paul II. In this work, the late pontiff provides his insights on the European history and the politics of the modern world. He gives an excellent and insightful discussion on the Enlightenment and how it affected the Church and European society.


Newman, John Cardinal. *Apologia Pro Vita Sua.* Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005 (Reprint). – This time period was witness to an English Catholic Renaissance. When the well known Anglican, John Henry Newman, converted to the Catholic Faith, he received much criticism, especially from a man named Charles Kingsley. This amazing defense of his conversion is only one of the many brilliant books Cardinal Newman contributed to the treasure trove of Catholic literature.

**A World at War:**
Blet, Pierre, S.J. *Pius XII and the Second World War According to the Archives of the Vatican.* New York: Paulist Press, 1999. – Blet provides a summation of the 12 volumes of Vatican archival wartime information on Pius XII and his efforts to help the Allies and the Jews.


defense of Pope Pius XII against modern critics who claim he was in league with the Nazis.


Rychlak, Ronald J. *Hitler, the War and the Pope*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2000. – one of the first works defending Pius XII and dismantling the modern myths concerning his wartime efforts regarding the Jews.

The New Springtime:
Allen, John L. Jr. *Opus Dei – An Objective Look Behind the Myths and Reality of the Most Controversial Force in the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 2005. – a penetrating look into the ecclesial movement, Opus Dei. Allen provides a brief overview of the organization and its founder as well as a look inside the membership and how they live their vocation. He raises and answers some of the major issues and criticisms levied against the group and finishes with an evaluation of the future of Opus Dei.


Smith, Janet. *Humanae Vitae – A Generation Later*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1991. - Smith provides a scholarly treatment of the issue of contraception, the papal commission established to review the Church’s teaching in light of modern advances, and the dissent from the teaching. This work also provides a thorough analysis from philosophical and theological reasoning why the Church teaches that contraception is intrinsically evil. This work also includes an author’s translation of the encyclical from the Latin and a commentary.

The Threshold of Hope:


______. *Salt of the Earth – The Church at the End of the Millennium – an Interview with Peter Seewald*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997. – a little more than 10 years after the Ratzinger Report, this work addresses the pressing issues in the Church and Cardinal Ratzinger’s thoughts and analysis.

______. *God and the World – Believing and Living in our Time - A Conversation with Peter Seewald*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002. – another book length interview with German journalist Peter Seewald. This work focuses on who is God, what is Faith and what it means to believe while residing in the modern world.


West, Christopher. *The Theology of the Body for Beginners*.