



Memorize the Faith! (and Most Anything Else): Using the Methods of the Great Catholic Medieval Memory Masters

Kevin Vost

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Learn how St. Thomas memorized the Faith. St. Thomas Aquinas perfected an easy method for his students to memorize most any information, but especially the truths taught by Christ and His Church. Thanks to the delightful pages of Memorize the Faith!, you can easily learn the Faith by tapping into the power of the classical memory system that helped St. Thomas become the Church's preeminent theologian and made it easier for him to become one of its greatest saints.

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From Reader Review Memorize the Faith! (and Most Anything Else): Using the Methods of the Great Catholic Medieval Memory Masters for online ebook

Lucy says

The entire book is a detailed illustration of the loci method of memorization, using Catholic theology. Very good if you want a complete walk through this method, are a Catholic student, or are homeschooling a Catholic education. If you'd rather not endure a religion lesson, another book would be better for you. I did appreciate the way this book walks the reader through the method using a variety of different examples.

Logan says

Very interesting book so far. Combines the method of loci with Catholic theology, particularly that of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).

Not really essential to the book, but I found the Thomasian idea of the 7 Spiritual Works of Mercy and the 7 Corporal Works of Mercy (*Summa Theologica*, II-II, 32) very interesting. In Chapter 14, the author quotes James 2:20 and then essentially asks the question, "So what are good works?" Good question. At one end of the spectrum, I suppose, someone might say that to do a "good work," according to the New Testament, is to do anything, whether eating or drinking, in faith--perhaps even consecrating the action by prayer or something like that. But what Aquinas presents are 14 distinct "works of mercy" that, in his mind, flesh out a good deal of what the New Testament means when it speaks of "good works," at least toward our fellow man (which indeed seems to be the bent of New Testament good works):

7 Spiritual Works of Mercy:

1. Instructing the Ignorant
2. Counseling the Doubtful
3. Comforting the Sorrowful
4. Reproving the Sinner
5. Forgiving Injuries
6. Bearing Wrongs Patiently
7. Praying for the Living and the Dead (eek)

7 Corporal Works of Mercy:

1. Feeding the Hungry
2. Giving Drink to the Thirsty
3. Clothing the Naked
4. Harboring the Harborless
5. Visiting the Sick
6. Ransoming the Captive
7. Burying the Dead

I don't think Aquinas intended for these 14 works to cover every possible "good work," but I find that such a list (or a similar one) may be helpful for Protestants, for whom the concept of individual, specific "good works" may often be blurred into just "living a moral life" by faith. To be fair, though, it seems that Scripture does present both: it's about specific, individual, particularly faith-induced acts and words, like offering

acceptable sacrifices and building arks and keeping Passovers (Hebrews 11:4, 7, 28), and also about that continual manner of life in which everything we do and say "make[s] it clear that [we] are seeking a homeland...a better country" (11:14, 16).

This is not in the book, but I note that Methodists have their **6 Works of Piety**:

1. Prayer
 2. Searching the Scriptures
 3. Holy Communion
 4. Fasting
 5. Christian Community
 6. Holy Living
-

Erik says

Well organized book describing the method of loci, or memory mansion, technique of memorization. Vost is obviously well-versed in memory techniques, throwing in many references (always in separate boxes so as not to detract from the teaching :) He is also very Catholic, as every chapter takes some example of Christian, often Catholic, teaching and shows us how to memorize it for easy recall. Start slowly with the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deadly sins, but soon you will tackle the 47 books of the Old Testament and the 44 daughters of the seven deadly sins. It will take study, but I think I am far more likely to remember these things this way than any other. Finally, Vost is very frank about what memorization gets us. It is not the end game. He hopes we will memorize so we can use this knowledge, teach this knowledge, and maybe live it. He wraps up quoting the letter of James on works.

Scott says

A great instruction on the method of loci, with lots of examples rooted in the Catholic faith. Most of the book is very useful for memorizing lists of things, and even though it touches on memorization of texts (scripture verses) a little bit, that is really covered in a cursory fashion. Whether you use the house described in the book, or your own house as your keyword/location trigger, the method can be used for any list of things. I'll be working through the examples again with my own locations, rather than the book's house.

Zach Frey says

I bought this so I could return to it. This is not a book that can be digested in a single reading; rather, it rewards rereading and actually *doing* the exercises described. I am slowly (but hopefully surely) doing this.

Vost describes the Art of Memory as the skill of trained recall, focusing on the Method of Loci, but alluding to other means. The rest of the book is a series of directed exercises in building a "memory palace" to hold various memories.

As Vost notes, the method is not limited to the content of the book. His first example is a memorization of the Ten Commandments; I used it to first memorize another list of 10 items I wanted to recall.

Of course, as you might guess from the book's title, Vost is writing as a Catholic and for Catholics.

Protestants like myself need to mentally edit a few details. :) (His Ten Commandments list follows the Catholic division of the Commandments; the list of canonical books includes the deuterocanon, etc.) Grownups should be able to cope.

I was also very intrigued by his discussion of the vices and virtues and their parts, derived from Aquinas. This is developed further in his next book, *Unearthing Your Ten Talents: A Thomistic Guide to Spiritual Growth Through the Virtues and the Gifts*.

Erwin says

Very interesting book. I should have read it when I was a student.

Stephanie says

This book was incredibly motivating to me after years of feeling discouraged by my seemingly weakening ability to memorize. Kevin Vost explains and guides readers through the loci memorization technique. I memorized his lists quite quickly and am able to still recite them forward and backward today. It is written to Catholics, so I highly recommend it to that audience. However, any reader interested in memorization will find this helpful. As I read, I simply filtered out any information I didn't feel applied to me.

Pamela says

You knew there had to be a better memory method out there...well this is it! This book is fun, interesting and to the point. It shows you right away how to begin creating an easily accessible memory of the Faith. And it can be applied to anything you need to memorize!

Jim says

Nice, very specific book on mnemotechnics and Catholic religious education. Kevin Vost presents the art of memory in a catechetical context. The art of memory consists **not** of "drill-and-kill" rote repetition, but rather, of techniques of lively creativity and vivid imagination. For anyone interested in opening his mind and allowing it to reflect on the ideas, beliefs, experiences, and reflections of those who came before us, as well as those who are with us, holding the world and making it vivid in our mind's eye, this is book is a good resource.
