



Why I Am Catholic (and You Should Be Too)

Brandon Vogt

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With atheism on the rise and millions tossing off religion, why would anyone consider the Catholic Church? Brandon Vogt, a bestselling author and the content director for Bishop Robert Barron's Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, shares his passionate search for truth, a journey that culminated in the realization that Catholicism was right about a lot of things, maybe even *everything*. His persuasive case for the faith reveals a vision of Catholicism that has answers our world desperately needs and reminds those already in the Church what they love about it.

A 2016 study by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 25 percent of adults (39 percent of young adults) describe themselves as unaffiliated with any religion. Millions of these so-called "nones" have fled organized religion and many more have rejected God altogether.

Brandon Vogt was one of those nones. When he converted to Catholicism in college, he knew how confusing that decision was to many of his friends and family. But he also knew that the evidence he discovered pointed to one conclusion: Catholicism is true. To his delight, he discovered it was also exceedingly good and beautiful.

Why I Am Catholic traces Vogt's spiritual journey, making a refreshing, twenty-first century case for the faith and answering questions being asked by agnostics, nones, and atheists, the audience for his popular website, *StrangeNotions.com*, where Catholics and atheists dialogue. With references to Catholic thinkers such as G. K. Chesterton, Ven. Fulton Sheen, St. Teresa of Calcutta, and Bishop Robert Barron, Vogt draws together lines of evidence to help seekers discover why they should be Catholic as an alternative.

Why I Am Catholic serves as a compelling reproposal of the Church for former Catholics, a persuasive argument for truth and beauty to those who have become jaded and disenchanted with religion, and at the same time offers practicing Catholics a much-needed dose of confidence and clarity to affirm their faith against an increasingly skeptical culture.

Why I Am Catholic (and You Should Be Too) Details

Date : Published October 6th 2017 by Ave Maria Pres

ISBN :

Author : Brandon Vogt

Format : Kindle Edition 192 pages

Genre : Christianity, Catholic, Nonfiction, Religion, Faith

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From Reader Review Why I Am Catholic (and You Should Be Too) for online ebook

Domenico says

There are lots of books that outline all the reasons one should give up atheism or other religions and become Catholic and with good reason: Because the path to the Catholic faith has its origins in many places and winds its way through a myriad of obstacles, challenges, and objections.

Brandon Vogt—one of the smartest, engaging, and energetic young Catholics out there—has written a new book, “Why I Am Catholic (and You Should Be Too),” that offers his own take on why one should consider the Catholic faith, a take that seems aimed directly at the “nones”, the large and growing percentage of mostly young Americans today who tell pollsters that they have no religious preference, and does so in a way that should appeal to a younger audience, characterizing becoming Catholic as a way of “joining the Rebellion”, rather than giving into a massive institution.

>" I'll admit it's a weird decision. It goes against the grain. It's radical. It is, in a word, rebellious."

In this concise, yet compelling book, Brandon outlines the reasons why anyone seeking the truth should become Catholic, using arguments both old and new. Brandon is an engineer by training and a philosopher by avocation so it's no surprise that the book and its arguments are laid out in a logical progression, from whether God exists to the necessity of religion vs. pure spirituality to Christianity over other religions to the Catholic Church.

Along the way, he recounts bits and pieces of his own journey from a nominal Protestantism to his discovery of Catholicism in college. However, this is not a memoir. Brandon doesn't delve into his family life or his emotions and motivations, and doesn't look deeply into the events and circumstances. Instead, he uses his own experiences as a buttress for his arguments, to lend an “I was in your shoes” authenticity to his claims.

Like a good philosopher, Brandon breaks down the argument for Catholicism into three parts: Catholicism is True, it is Good, and it is Beautiful. He notes that while truth is the first and most important qualities, the others are harmonious. “If a belief is true, it's almost always good and beautiful,” he writes and notes that is the case in other areas, like science, as well.

Truth and Goodness

The section on Truth deals with the conventional arguments about dogma and creeds, like the existence of God, the divinity of Jesus and so on. He covers all the good arguments and while the ground is well-trod, Brandon manages to find some new and unique ways of expressing himself through appealing analogies.

The other sections on Goodness and Beauty are more unconventional, but no less compelling. In the section on Catholicism as good, he looks at how the the Church was the fount of Western civilization's flowering in four specific ways.

> "Just four of the many ways Catholicism has shaped our world: science, the university system, charities, and our system of law."

Obviously, there are many more, but these offer some of the best and most convincing arguments. Science, in particular, could only have arisen in the way it has from Christian roots, contrary to the way it is popularly

perceived today, because for Catholics even from ancient times, science was a way to understand God through his creation. Many of the great scientists of history were themselves clergy or religious, including Copernicus, Mendel, and Fr. Georges LeMaitre, father of the Big Bang Theory.

Likewise, the Church has contributed to the world by creating universities, by becoming the largest charitable institution in the history of the world (especially in prior ages when caring for the needy was not a virtue), and by creating the modern system of laws based on the Church's canon law with concepts like the equality of all men.

Catholicism's Goodness is also found in the attractive witness of the saints and martyrs, pulling out St. Lawrence, St. Damian of Molokai, and St. Theresa of Calcutta as examples; in her rebellious refusal to change teachings that cannot be changed in the face of overwhelming pressure; and in her offering of God's forgiveness and mercy to the world. This last one may make the greatest impression in some quarters as it is the one thing so sorely lacking in the world today and which so many people are craving: someone to say I love you, you are inherently good, you can be better, let me show you the way. As Brandon writes, "People don't want mediocrity. All of us—you, me, everyone—we want greatness; we want excellence." Catholicism is a path to excellence and perfection.

It is also in this section that Brandon deals with the most popular objections to the Church's teachings, the so-called "pelvic" issues which are at the root of so much rejection of the faith. He deals with ably here, but there isn't room in his book to give a full exposition, but that's okay because there are plenty of books that do.

Beauty

Finally, Brandon advances the case for Catholicism through Beauty. He notes the Church's unusual insistence on the importance of aesthetics and beauty in art, architecture, and music as well as areas like mathematics.

> "Christians believed that when they studied and applied geometry, whether in mathematics or art, they were tapping into the same underlying structure of reality that God used in Creation. This view bore tremendous fruit in the realm of Renaissance art."

And so beauty is important because it lifts our hearts and minds to God. Even the most hardened atheist can have his breath taken away by a beautiful landscape, a soaring sculpture, or the perfection of their newborn child. They may not be able to identify the source of their wonder, but the source is God. This is what the Church treasures in beauty.

Brandon then moves the discussion of beauty to an unusual place, by finding it in the Church's teaching on authentic humanism. Secular humanism credits humanity alone for all great achievement, but a Christian humanism sees man's harmonious cooperation with God as a kind of symphony at work. And through Christ, our humanity is lifted up, elevated, and divinized, given greater dignity and power and authority than even the secular humanists imagine.

Finally, Brandon finds beauty in the Church's universality, how her call and appeal crosses all boundaries of race, gender, culture, language, place, and even intellectual mindset. He uses the examples of different kinds of people who can find a home in the Church: the Thinker (with Thomas Aquinas as his example); the Partier (G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc); the Ordinary Man in the street; the Skeptic, whose doubts are welcomed because the Church isn't afraid of difficult questions; and the Sinner.

It's the last two-thirds of the book where Brandon really shines. Like I said, the first section is good and I have no objections, but the content is not original. However, in looking at Goodness and Beauty as arguments for Catholicism, he is quite original among today's authors.

This is especially important because his audience of millennial "nones" in the age of "fake news" aren't easily convinced by the old logical arguments anymore. A presentation that less about intellectual proofs and more about appealing to a sense of good and rightness and beauty may get more traction in this very cynical, distracted age live in.

If you know a "none" or any millennial, for that matter, Brandon's book may make an interesting gift to begin a conversation with them and an invitation to reject the Dark Side by joining the Rebellion.

William says

Several years ago, during an ecumenical Bible study group, one of my Protestant friends put me on the spot. "Man, you love Jesus," he said. "And, you know the Good Book. So, why are you Catholic?!" I was dumbfounded. No one ever asked me that question before. And, frankly, I always thought the answers were self evident. Apparently, they are not. I wish I could say that I gave such a profound response that my friend immediately ran out to enroll in an RCIA class. Instead, I muttered something about being born into the faith. Having now read this book, I will have a better answer for the next person who asks me why I'm Catholic. Indeed, Vogt's plainly worded response to the question is a wonderful resource for explaining the Church to people who are not blessed to be "cradle Catholics," whether they come from a Protestant, agnostic, atheist, or other faith tradition.

Harry Dudley says

Worth the read

Brandon Vogt shares his journey of discovery of the rich treasure of the Catholic Faith. Even cradle Catholics can benefit from reading this honest review of what this young man discovered as he wrestled with his questions and objections while searching for a faith worth living and a community in which he could feel at home living it. The book itself also offers a number of suggestions for going deeper.

Jeremiah says

The book is well organized. 1. Is there a God? Is Jesus God? Why Catholic? It revealed some beautiful and eloquent statements that i didn't quite realize about Catholicism. The Church has been a champion of science for centuries and has a love of beauty and art as well. These points were never made so clear and compelling in the book. What was less compelling was the authors description of the church's position on abortion, homosexuality and women in leadership. But overall a really great and simple read.

Hannah says

I was a Catholic nerd as a teenager, reading every Peter Kreeft book and listening to every Scott Hahn cassette I could get my hands on. Brandon Vogt's recent work, "Why I Am Catholic (and You Should be Too)", is a smooth, intelligible summary of all that led me to choose for myself the faith my parents raised me with. It combines the best aspects of personal testimony and Catholic apologetics into a book that's easy to read and leaves you nodding your head in agreement, often surprised by the clarity with which he writes. He meets you where you are at and patiently, but not patronizingly, walks you home.

I've heard many a convert say, "There is no one book in particular you could have given me to convince me to become Catholic", but I'd have to say that this is the closest thing there is to it.

Tom LA says

As a massive fan of Bishop Robert Barron, one of my current-day intellectual heroes, I've come to know Brandon Vogt's name for his work on Wordonfire.com (for which he is Content Director) and many other great catholic media, including Strangenotions.com, that he founded.

I think "Why I am Catholic" is extraordinary in that it summarizes very complex matters in passionate and easily digestible chapters. As an intellectually curious catholic myself, I found some content that I was already familiar with, and some that I wasn't.

Loved the literary references (especially Brandon's love for Chesterton) and I really loved the chapter on Catholicism and science.

To me, the ONE most important misunderstanding, still tragically spread out in popular culture, is that the Catholic Church has always been bullying its way throughout history, being an obstacle for scientific progress. So frustrating to know that the EXACT opposite is true, but the majority of people in the West - especially young ones - are ignorant about it. So, thanks Brandon for writing a really important book.

It's difficult to communicate the beauty and truth of the Catholic Church to a world that has a ton of pre-cooked and pre-conceived incorrect ideas about it. It's the responsibility of all Catholics to make an effort to - at least - fight this ignorance and clear the air from ill-advised prejudice.

Nick Alexander says

Warm, thorough, insightful and ballsy.

Each generation needs a full-length Catholic apologetic to call their own. For Baby Boomers, it was The Seven Storey Mountain by Thomas Merton. For Generation X, it was Rome Sweet Home by Dr. Scott Hahn. For the Millenials, it will be this book.

There seems to be a scarcity of religious seekers nowadays, for fear of being shouted down by the naysayers (i.e. the "nones"). So right off the bat, Brandon Vogt deserves accolades for willingly stepping into the arena to bare his heart and demonstrate his logical prowess as to why he has chosen this route. There is no air of

condemnation nor superiority in his prose. He's an ordinary guy who had underwent a conversion experience, and goes into immense detail as to why this decision was obvious for him.

Special note must be taken that he is appealing to the Millennial generation, many of whom employ a postmodern mindset. That is what makes this writing unique. He still employs logic and apologetics, but does so in a fashion that takes care to speak to the average twenty-something's worldview. I find that to be refreshing, even if you happen to reside outside that generation.

If you are a Catholic wishing to brush up on your own evangelism skills, this is a great book to ingest. If you are a seeker who is curious as to what the faith is about, this is also a great book for you. If you are a hardened atheist who is looking for fodder to smack down, know that Vogt helps run a forum where atheists and Catholic Christians can dialogue, without judgment, so that both can appreciate each others' views, with no pressure to acquiesce to a side you are not comfortable with.

His care and concern shines through on every page. It is a lofty summit to pursue faith questions, and it is a challenge to understand the faith in a new way, even one that often has less-than-inspiring liturgies. But Vogt is more than up to the task, making this one of the wonderful surprises of this year.

M. G. Zink says

An uplifting profile of Catholicism, perfectly timed.

With the steady stream of disturbing stories about sexual abuse by Catholic priests, this is a challenging moment for Catholics to defend - and more importantly, to recommend - Catholicism. This short, vibrant, accessible book is perfectly timed for this challenging moment.

The author presents the Catholic faith as I recognize it, and presents in straightforward language the reasons why caring, thinking, even skeptical people would embrace it. This young man chose to convert to Catholicism a few years ago when he was a senior in college, and he is open about some of the negative reactions his decision sparked. With patience and grace, he talks about his journey and encourages others to consider that same path.

He shatters the broadly-held myth that Catholics are dour, guilty-ridden, inflexible, intolerant, and backward-looking. Instead, he presents the Catholicism that has been a guiding force in my life, a faith full of joy and forgiveness and beauty and openness, a faith which embraces everyone, everywhere, regardless of circumstances or a person's current state of holiness. [NB: sinners are particularly welcome]. The Catholic Church is navigating a deep crisis right now, but that "universal" church still stands on the foundational rock of its original, beautiful message.

For anyone considering Catholicism, or for those who would welcome an alternative, uplifting profile of this global faith embraced by over one billion believers, this book is an excellent place to start.

Libby says

I heard about this book on a podcast I listen to and wanted to hear both the author's experience and

arguments. I think he makes a better case toward people who are already Christian: even though he tries to start at ground zero with the existence of God, he skips very quickly from arguing against atheism to arguing specifically for Christianity (What about all the religions that believe there is a god or gods but not in the same way as the Judeo-Christian tradition). Additionally, I don't think he educated himself enough in the Orthodox Christian tradition. But to a Protestant Christian, he makes a pretty well-argued case for Catholicism that, if I can't (at this time...) completely agree with, I can better respect and understand some of the beliefs of my Catholic friends and neighbors. (And yay for the Methodist group on campus that got him attending Bible study!)

Ernesto Sanz says

This book has a very specific target audience (in my opinion) and those in that target audience will benefit the most from it and find it the most compelling. I would say that individuals in the age range of 16-20 would be that target audience. Nevertheless, anyone can pick this book up and give it a quick read.

The substance is not terribly complicated (rather simple actually) yet manages to intrigue. It is well written (clarity emphasized over technicality), making for a quick and easy read. I would suggest this book to anyone who:

- 1) Wants to learn the basics of Catholicism
 - 2) Is interested in religious studies
 - 3) Is thinking of "Why Catholicism vs. Other Religions"
-

Griffin says

Enjoyable book, and a nice primer for someone wanting to know more. It's not an end all be all, but merely the authors reasoning of why he chose this religion and this specific denomination, searching for something that met his criteria of "truth, goodness, and beauty". It was divided in those three parts, each one showing his progress and findings and his misconceptions as he searched. If you're looking for an end all be all, this isn't it, nor does it pretend to be. Written without the at times annoying "look how smart I am" style that theologians on this topic seem to have, the author writes in a simple manner what he found and his choices, to get you equally interested in your own search, as well as a reference at the end of the book of other helpful things to read or listen to that helped him.

Kate Hendrick says

There are a lot of good things about the book. I think the best thing about it is how it is organized; Vogt's book is split into parts based on the true, the good, and the beautiful. Though Vogt shares portions of his personal faith journey and conversion, the book primarily focuses on providing information. This allows the book to find a good balance between personal testimony and apologetics. I loved that he synthesized information from a variety of sources so he had things like data and theological arguments. This is the first book I've read by Vogt, and I was very impressed with his writing style. Not only was the information solid, it was expressed in an eloquent way.

A potential downside (or upside) to this book is it doesn't go into detail on some points that perhaps could've benefited from more depth. That being said, Vogt acknowledges that there is only so much that he can cover in the book. He alludes to other information and provides sources for readers to explore. In most cases, I think this is a great alternative to making this book heavy with details. The only part that I truly felt was lacking was the part on moral arguments relating to God. As someone who has spoken to atheists as much as Vogt, I would've expected a more thorough consideration of moral relativism. Though he touches on relativism later in his book, his claim that everyone accepts that there are things people accept as objectively wrong disregards that there are people who believe there is no such thing as objective wrong or right (or perhaps I met the few exceptions to that).

A small criticism I have of the book is that I thought the "rebellion" sections were a little cheesy. I understand where he was going with it, but it seemed weak in comparison to the rest of the book.

Though it is true that he didn't present any radically new concepts, the way he presents the information is unique and interesting. Plus, with a Church that has been around for 2,000 years, there is bound to be some repeat information.

All that being said, *Why I am Catholic (And You Should Be Too)* is informative, interesting, and well-written. I think this book is best suited for Catholics who are questioning their faith or people who are considering Catholicism, but I would recommend it to anyone who wants a solid introduction to good reasons to be a Catholic.

Kristi says

I am not Catholic, but appreciate someone who is able to articulate why they are- not just because they were baptized. That being said- there isn't much "new" in here. It is about the same as others I have read: Cavins, Hahn, etc...

Amanda says

I wasn't as impressed by this as I expected to be. It just wasn't that convincing, and I say this as someone who's already Catholic.

I think it might be a good starting point for someone who's already really close to joining the Catholic Church or for someone who feels a bit like they're drifting from it. It's also perhaps a good introduction to apologetics for Catholics.

I don't think Vogt's arguments are thorough enough to convince many people. He also assumes a familiarity with certain things that I think most people just aren't familiar with anymore.

Jules says

Vogt didn't write this book for cradle Catholics, which I am. I still gladly accepted the ARC because I'm a huge fan of Word of Fire, the podcast he hosts with Bishop Barron. The book is simple, straightforward, and

short. He goes over the reasons he found Catholicism compelling as an engineering major in college and addresses many of the misconceptions surrounding the faith. Overall, it's a good primer for those interested in Catholicism but not ready to tackle books by classic theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, and Blessed John Henry Newman, or modern intellectuals like Chesterton, Kreeft, Bishop Barron, and others. (A struggle Vogt admits having his first go round with *Summa Theologica*.) I gave the book an additional star for the well-rounded lists of recommended books to read and websites to visit.
