

Theological handbook transmits Catholicism to the next generation

By C.S. Morrissey

The famous theological handbook, *the Enchiridion Symbolorum: A Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations of the Catholic Church*, *Enchiridion* has finally been published in English in a handsome bilingual edition by Ignatius Press.

Also known after its original editor as "Denzinger," the *Enchiridion* (a Greek word meaning "Handbook") has never been available in a volume as pleasurable to use as this new one. Its mainly Latin theological-historical source texts are now displayed with no-nonsense English translations in parallel columns. This latest edition also updates the *Enchiridion* to extend its selection of dogmatic definitions and magisterial documents right on through to 2008, into the pontificate of Benedict XVI.

Enchiridion Symbolorum: A Compendium of Creeds, Definitions and Declarations of the Catholic Church

Edited by Peter Hünermann, Ph.D.

San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 2013

Available from Holy Family Catholic Gift and Bookstore

Heinrich Denzinger (1819-1883) was a great German Catholic theologian who published the first edition of his *Enchiridion* in 1854. Because of its clear documentation of the development of dogma over the centuries, it soon became a standard reference work. The first edition collected texts from only one hundred ecclesiastical documents. The fifth edition (1874) was the last one that Denzinger worked on. This new edition from Ignatius Press is the 43rd edition, with over 5,000 texts, re-

flecting extraordinary theological labors since then.

In the 32nd edition of 1963, the numbering system of the texts in the *Enchiridion*

changed as Adolf Schönmetzer took over the editing. For this reason, one often reads footnotes (in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for example) that refer to "DS", meaning

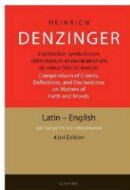
"Denzinger-Schönmetzer", which indicates that the *Enchiridion's* later numbering system is being used. Important theological references will almost always use a "DS" number in the footnotes, to orient readers both dogmatically and historically.

Schönmetzer edited until the 36th edition. More recently, for editions 37 through 43, Peter Hüner-

mann has further updated the documents. His work created a beautiful Latin and German bilingual edition that includes truly superb introductions pertinent to each internal grouping of the *Enchiridion's* texts. Hence we should now speak of "Denzinger-Hünermann" ("DH").

For this new Latin and English edition of "Denzinger-Hünermann" from Ignatius Press, Robert Fastiggi and Anne Englund Nash have acted as editors. Perhaps the handiest feature of their 1,437-page edition is the detailed systematic index in the back, which is convenient for making a dogmatic survey of texts on specific themes. If you are building yourself a solid theological library, you will want to buy this essential book, which is now available, thanks to Ignatius Press, at an impressively reasonable price.

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