

The Pivotal Players

A Bishop Robert Barron Video Series

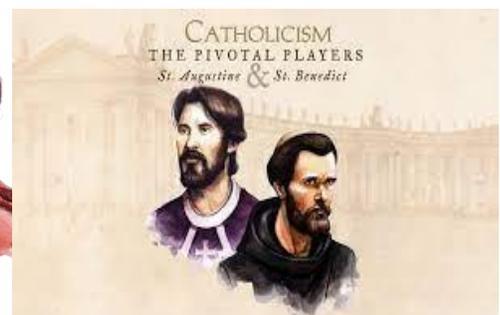
Session Schedule

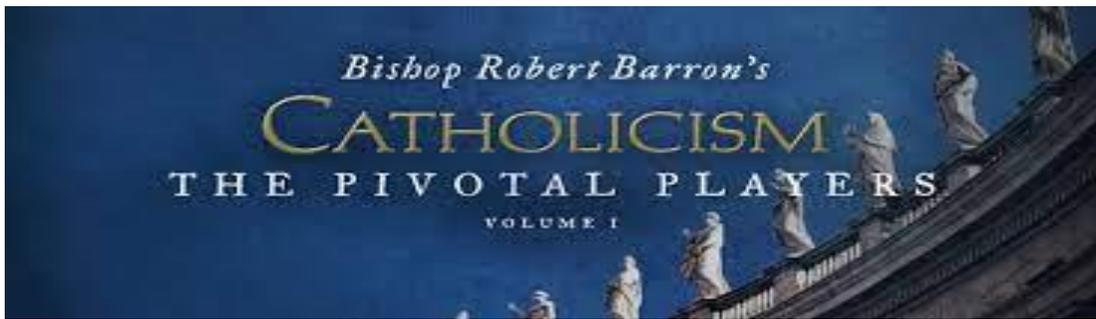
Session #	Date	Saint studied	Lifetime
1	July 7	Augustine of Hippo	354-430 AD
2	July 14	Benedict of Nursia	480-547 AD
3	July 21	Francis of Assisi	1181-1226 AD
4	July 28	Thomas Aquinas	1225-1274 AD
5	August 4	Catherine of Sienna	1347-1380 AD
6	August 11	John Henry Newman	1801-1890 AD

Half of the saints listed above are “Doctors of the Church,” meaning that their lives and teaching illuminated a doctrine of the Church. All of those we’ll study are canonized saints, some of the most influential people in the Church. The Incarnation of Christ shines through these pivotal players who shaped the life of the Church and changed the course of civilization.

Please join me on Thursday evenings at 7 PM via Skype:

<https://join.skype.com/hUNIIBqhJRfT>





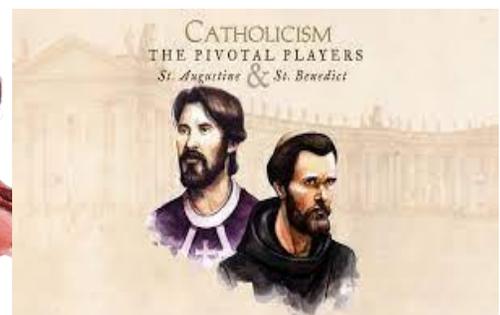
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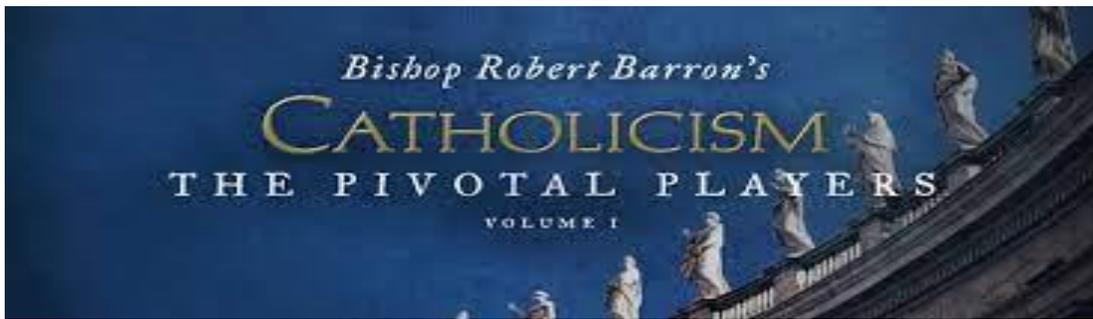
Session One: St. Augustine of Hippo, Doctor of Grace

St. Augustine is known almost as much for his life of debauchery as he is for his powerful conversion. He was declared a “Doctor of the Church,” meaning that his life and teaching illuminated a doctrine of the Church.

According to Bishop Barron: “Through his literary genius and spiritual perception, St. Augustine allowed numberless people over the centuries to see their own stories of sin and grace in his.”

- ☞ Can you identify with Augustine’s search for the Truth?
- ☞ Are you inspired by his personal transformation?
- ☞ Does knowing about his “late have I loved You, Lord” conversion give you hope? Or are you scandalized that such a sinner is now a saint?
- ☞ How crucial were the prayers of his mother Monica in his conversion? What does this tell you about the power of persevering in prayer?
- ☞ What “pivotal” role did St. Augustine play in the life of the Church?





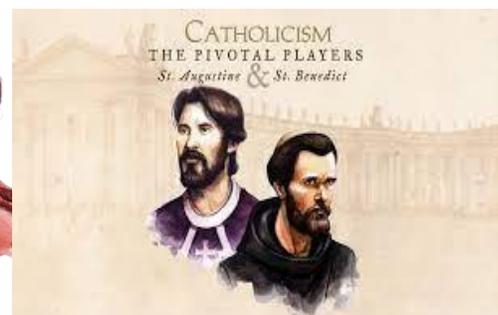
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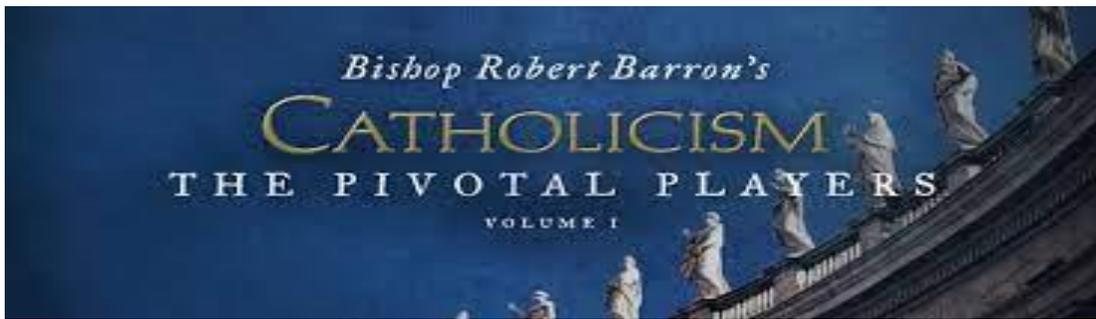
Session Two: St. Benedict of Nursia

St. Benedict, a monk, insisted that the Gospel ought to be expressed in peaceful community life guided by the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. His Rule was adopted by many religious houses and is still used today. This “Rule,” which might seem at first glance to be rigid, unleashes dynamic spiritual growth.

According to Bishop Barron: “At one of the most crucial moments in history, Benedict preserved a form of life that would eventually shape the civilization of the world.”

- ☞ Would you go to the lengths of throwing yourself into a thorn bush to tame the temptation against chastity?
- ☞ Do you see the value of a life lived according to “Ora et Labora”?
- ☞ Have you ever prayed with the Scripture in the *lectio divina* style?
- ☞ What do you find the most attractive about the Rule? What do you find the most challenging aspect of the Rule?
- ☞ What “pivotal” role did St. Benedict play in the life of the Church?





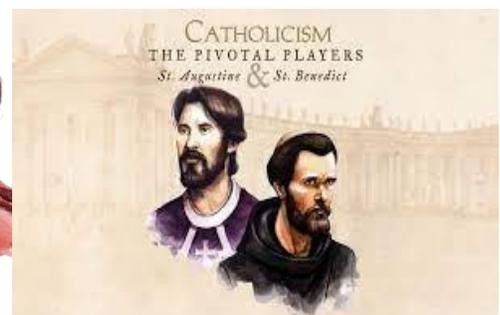
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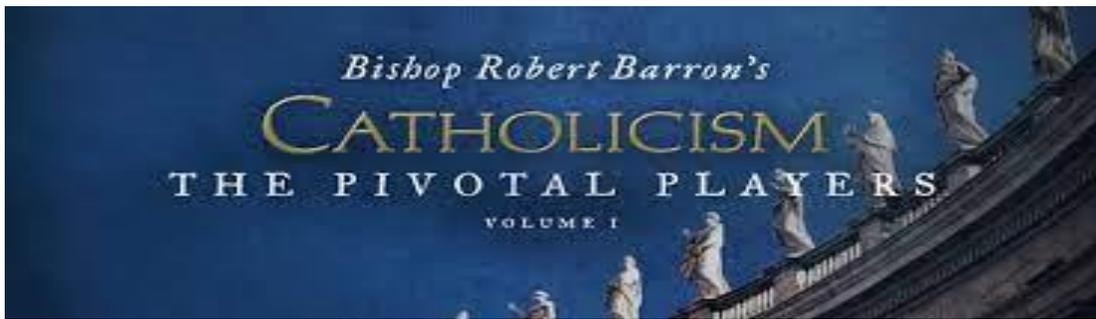
Session Three: St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis of Assisi is probably best known as one who praised God in all His creations: “Brother Sun and Sister Moon,” as well as animals. He is also known as the creator of the first Nativity scene.

According to Bishop Barron: “Francis realized that the commission given to him at San Damiano was not simply about restoring church buildings, but building up the life of the Church itself.”

- ☞ St. Francis embraced a life of radical poverty, renouncing his fortune and his father’s house. Are you attracted to his choices?
- ☞ Do you think you take God’s inspirations literally, as did St. Francis?
- ☞ Do you look more deeply into God’s inspirations, as St. Francis eventually did?
- ☞ Are you called upon to build up the Church in your own soul? In your home? In your community?
- ☞ What “pivotal” role did St. Francis play in the life of the Church?





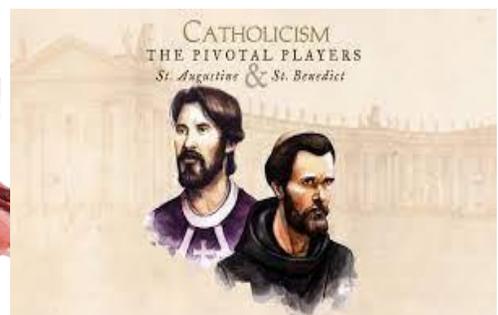
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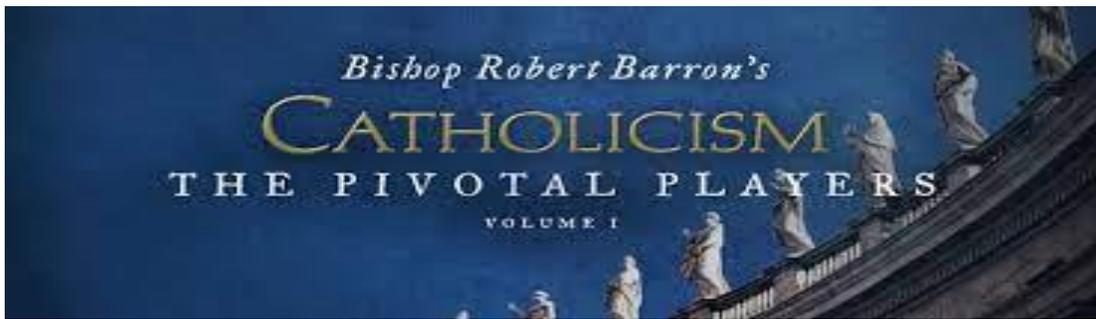
Session Four: St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of Light

St. Thomas Aquinas had to fight his own family in order to follow his vocation to the Dominican Order, parrying away a prostitute with a fire iron. His brilliant mind showed the world that faith and reason do not conflict with one another, that God gave us reason so we could find Him and gave us faith so we could love Him.

According to Bishop Barron: “With all his heart, Thomas Aquinas wanted nothing other than Christ, nothing more or less than Christ.”

- ☞ How would you react if Jesus said to you, “You have written well of Me. What would you like as a reward?” Could you answer with Thomas: “Nothing but you, Lord.”?
- ☞ Have you read – or skimmed – the *Summa Theologica*? Thomas wrote it as a primer – a summary of theological arguments for *beginners*.
- ☞ Do you agree that our faith is shored up by our reason, and that reason leads us to a deeper faith?
- ☞ Literalism does not stand up to scrutiny, and fideism is akin to superstition. Have you found yourself falling into one of these holes?
- ☞ What “pivotal” role did St. Thomas play in the life of the Church?





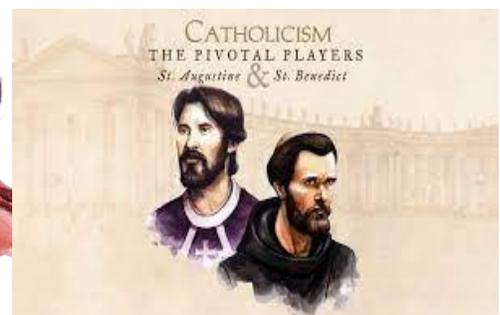
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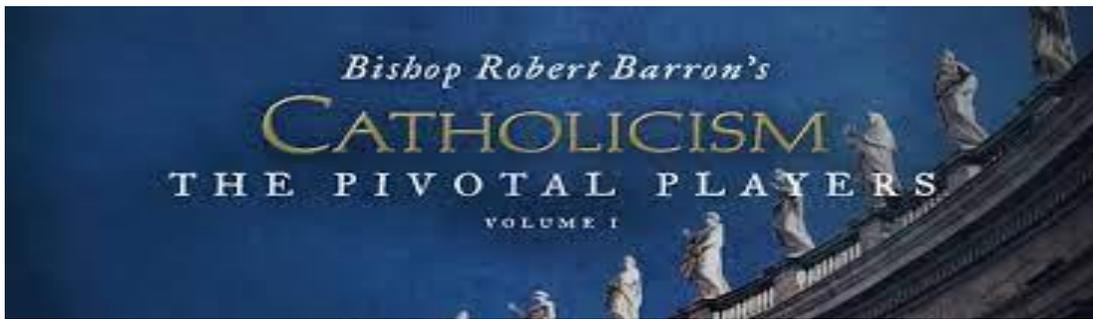
Session Five: St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church

St. Catherine of Siena was a mystic, a stigmatic, a miracle worker, and was influential in papal politics, encouraging the Pope to return to Rome from Avignon. Her love for Jesus cast out all fear. She did not hesitate to speak to the Pope in endearing terms (Bappo, as Papa) or in severe terms (be a man!). It is said that her small frame cast a large shadow.

According to Bishop Barron: “The God that Catherine loves is not an abstraction or a distant principle. Rather, God is intimately involved in the world that He continually sustains in existence.”

- ☞ What do you think of Catherine’s determination not to wed?
- ☞ Why do you think she did not enter the Dominican convent?
- ☞ Do you reach out to the poor and the sick as Catherine did?
- ☞ Does your faith embolden you to speak Truth to power?
- ☞ Do you love God “with all your heart, and all your strength, and with all your mind”? Or do you love Him as an abstract idea?
- ☞ What “pivotal” role did St. Catherine play in the life of the Church?





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Session Six: St. John Henry Newman

St. John Henry Newman was canonized in 2019, after Bishop Barron filmed this series. He spearheaded the “Oxford Movement” at the prestigious Oxford College in Great Britain, touting the wisdom of the Church Fathers. The more he learned, the more he became convinced that the Church of the Fathers was the Catholic Church. He converted from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism and continued writing and preaching on the wisdom of the Church.

According to Bishop Barron: “At a time when many felt that a self-respecting intellectual of the modern age could not believe in the Biblical view of the world, Newman, but the witness of his life, proved this false.”

- ☞ How did John Henry Newman clarify the Church’s identity and mission? Who needed this clarification – the Church or the world?
- ☞ Do you agree with Newman that the lived experiences of the Church’s saints is an important witness to the Truth of the Faith?
- ☞ What does Newman’s motto mean: “*Cor ad cor loquitur*” – that is, heart speaking to heart?
- ☞ Do you express your faith in our Revealed Religion in Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy?
- ☞ What “pivotal” role did St. Newman play in the life of the Church?

