

New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2009

New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2009. Detroit: Gale, 2009. (<http://www.gale.com>) Price available on request. eISBN: 9781414464138. [Available in print November 2009. 2 vols: 955 pp. \$260.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 9781414475264.]

As its title implies, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2009* (both in eBook and hard copy) is intended to supplement the current second edition of the well-known *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. If “new” and “supplement” and “second edition” sound cumbersome, that is because this resource comes with a long history, or perhaps we should say it comes with “baggage.” Some librarians working in Catholic institutions may remember when the 1967 *New Catholic Encyclopedia*’s long-awaited second edition came out in 2003. It proved to be a big disappointment. Apparently, much of the 1967 material had not been revised, but merely reprinted. Many claimed that misleading marketing had led librarians to buy the same material twice. (See Jan Malcheski’s thoughtful and detailed “June Reference Review” in the *ATLA Newsletter* 50, no. 4: 24–27. Also see Melody Layton McMahon’s account of the controversy in “Librarians, Publishers, and Theological Reference Resources: A Way Forward” in *Theological Librarianship* 2, no. 1 (2009): 8–19, <http://journal.atla.com/ojs/index.php/theolib/article/view/86/235>). Unfortunately, the flawed second edition of the *NCE* is the one now being sold as an eBook and augmented with this current *Supplement 2009*. Gale plans at least three more supplements: Modern Church History (2010), Literature, Music and the Arts (2011), and Philosophy and Ethics (2012). Each supplement will offer revised versions of previous articles, as well as brand new articles. A cynical person might say that by producing the *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2009*, Gale finally gives librarians some of the updated material that should have been in the unsatisfactory second edition all along. Seen in a more positive light, the *Supplement 2009* delivers lots of much-needed new content.

According to the publisher, the *NCE Supplement 2009* contains 182 entries. Forty percent (or fewer than half) are new articles, fifty-one percent are revised versions of earlier essays, and nine percent are re-writes (the publisher explains this as completely re-written, usually by another author). Article length ranges from 750 to 15,000 words. Advertising states that the *Supplement* has a double theme of the Church and Science, and the Church in the United States. The editors also added other new material as well: obvious topics like the election of Pope Benedict XVI in 2005, and helpful entries like “Annulment,” “Internet and the Church,” “Theology of the Body,” etc. Like its predecessors, the *Supplement 2009* is intended for a wide audience. The signed, peer-reviewed articles were written by specialists and come with extremely useful bibliographies. The illustrations are adequate, but not lavish. Although the Gale fact sheet says the work was produced “in partnership with Catholic University of America” (a long-standing connection), the editorial board is dominated by well-known professors from other institutions (Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Fordham University, and St. John’s University, New York).

Gale says that the majority of the new articles are science-related. These articles are unquestionably welcome. Examples: “Brain Death,” “Cloning,” “Artificial Insemination,” “In Vitro Fertilization,” “Persistent Vegetative State,” “Bioethics,” “Ectopic Pregnancy,” “Reproductive Technology,” “Embryology, Human” and “Assisted Nutrition and Hydration.” As a marketing tool, Gale cites the Facts on File *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (2007) as “competition”

for the *NCE Supplement 2009*—but there is no contest here. The Facts on File work, written for “grades 9 and up” by a single author (Finn), tries to cover all of Catholicism in less than 700 pages. The *Supplement* alone, which is after all only a supplement to the “parent” work, runs to 955 pages in hard copy. It is suitable for college and even graduate students, and it is written by a variety of experts. If we use “Evolution” as a comparison point, we see that Malcheski pointed out the inadequacy of the 2003 *NCE* entry, because it was really only a superficially edited version of the original 1967 article, with its outdated bibliography (“June Reference Review” p. 25). Finn’s necessarily oversimplified, one-page evolution essay has a mere five items in its bibliography. Now, in the *NCE Supplement 2009*, we finally have a new, thorough twelve-page entry on evolution. Its wide-ranging bibliography offers fifty-nine entries, including thirteen Magisterium documents—and the eBook version gives hyperlinks to the actual text of some of those documents. This is the kind of treatment theological librarians always hope to find in a reference work like the *NCE*: a succinct but thorough overview, and a good bibliography.

As far as the *Supplement 2009*’s secondary focus, “Church in the United States,” updated material is evident. Yet coverage still seems spotty. “Boston, Archdiocese of” serves as an example of a sensibly revised entry. In the 2003 edition, it concluded with one, noncommittal sentence about Archbishop Law’s tenure having been clouded at the end by a major scandal. The *Supplement 2009* article expands this, describes those dark times of the sex abuse scandal in Boston, and brings us up-to-date with Sean O’Malley’s tenure as Archbishop. “Sexual Abuse Crisis” has its own, separate entry. Gaps are apparent, however, when the user searches for information on other recent controversies, such the phenomenon of pro-abortion, Catholic politicians being denied Holy Communion, or the ongoing debate about academic freedom on Catholic college campuses. The brief 2003 entries “Ex Corde Ecclesiae” and “Mandatum, Academic” have not been redone, even though plenty has been written since 2003 in the Catholic press about the Catholic identity of institutions versus the need for academic freedom. If one searches for the highly visible and well-publicized Cardinal Newman Society (a conservative activist group that lobbies in this area), all one finds is “Newman Apostolate”—which is an essay about the old campus “Newman” clubs (its short bibliography lists nothing newer than 1980). We can only hope that the planned “Modern Church History” supplement will include better coverage of the Church in the United States.

In terms of functionality, the eBook *NCE Supplement 2009* (examined for this review) utilizes reliable features already familiar to users of Gale’s Virtual Reference collection. Here, newly updated entries in the results list are flagged with an obvious “most recent” tag, and entirely new entries are labeled with “new.” So it is easy to find the newest material if you are searching across the *NCE 2003* edition and the *Supplement 2009*. A handy link at the top of each new entry helps the reader jump to the bibliography. Helpful links at the ends of new articles lead to related articles. The addition of audio files will be welcomed by those who are visually impaired (although the voice that reads the text is somewhat robotic).

This *Supplement* can be purchased independently of the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Although it is available in both print and eBook versions, there is no discount for customers who want to purchase both formats. Potential buyers have to ask themselves: If we do own the *NCE* eBook and/or the print version of the 2003 *NCE*, should we get this as a supplement? in print? or just as an eBook?, etc. Inevitably, librarians may experience that familiar, sinking feeling of paying full price, twice, for the same content. In spite of misgivings that some purists may have, the *NCE Supplement 2009* is a viable purchase. There is no one, great Catholic encyclopedia. This *Supplement*, along with its previous manifestations (which go back to the 1913 *Catholic Encyclopedia*), all offer something to the careful reference librarian who knows that useful material was cut with each successive edition. The uninitiated

will naively accept the *Supplement* as a good addition to their eBook and/or print collection. Those with “battle fatigue,” however, from dealing with the vagaries of librarianship vis à vis the publishing industry over the years, will probably only grudgingly accept the *NCE Supplement 2009*. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* is still a useful reference “workhorse,” and this updated content—especially in the area of science—is sorely needed. This resource is recommended for all academic libraries and large public libraries.

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