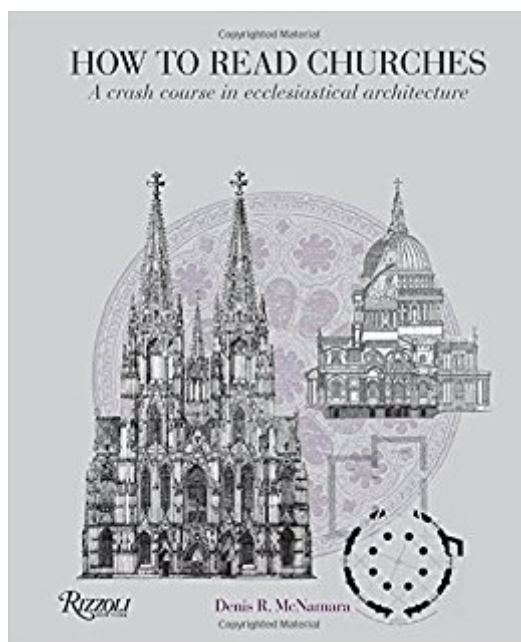


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How To Read Churches: A Crash Course In Ecclesiastical Architecture



Synopsis

Small enough to fit in a pocket yet serious enough to provide real answers, this primer is a must-have for architecture and history buffs, tourists, and churchgoers interested in decoding the styles and symbols of religious buildings. Every building contains clues embedded in its design that identify not only its architectural style but also who designed it, what kind of congregation it was built for, and why. This practical yet charming handbook is the key to decoding the style, history, evolution, and social significance of religious buildings. Not strictly limited to churches, it also covers abbeys, chapels, and monasteries, among other structures. Organized according to architectural element (windows, domes, arches, etc.), each element is presented in chronological order. Additional chapters explore the architectural influence of geography, history, and various creeds, along with an illustrated timeline showing how, where, and in many cases why certain church features evolved through the centuries. There is also a useful introduction to naming each component of a church, from vaults to buttresses and transepts to apses. All entries are illustrated with period engravings and line drawings. This book will be invaluable for architecture buffs and anyone who has ever wondered why classic New England churches are white with little ornament, why Quaker meetinghouses have no altars, or why Episcopalians traditionally favored the Gothic style.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Denis McNamara is a former lecturer in architectural history at the University of Virginia and has

written two books on Christian architecture. He is currently assistant director of the Liturgical Institute, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois.

Very nice hand-sized book that contains many well-printed diagrams of various types of church architecture. It's detailed, informative, and printed on high-quality paper, and it's nice as a conversation book to keep at home but also portable enough to take on a tour.

Author Denis McNamara is a recognized expert in classical church architecture, which after 40 years of dreadful utilitarianism is thankfully making a comeback. In his new book, he uses beautiful sketches of famous and lesser-known churches, chapels, and cathedrals to teach readers about the styles, materials, motifs, and purposes of ecclesiastical buildings. It is a wonderful resource and, like a mini-coffee table book, a great thing to leave around the house for visitors and family members to pick up and read at their leisure. My one criticism is its topical organization. It would have benefited from earlier explanations of key concepts and terms, which the reader must learn as he or she reads along. Regardless, McNamara satisfies a need for a book on ecclesiastical architecture easily understood by non-expert laymen. Highly recommended.

This small gem informs the reader about numerous different details of sacred architecture, giving interesting examples and images. It's small enough to bring on the plane or train. Not meant as a complete tome on the subject, this book will serve the amateur very well. Highly recommended.

Great info & illustrations in compact form!

Exactly what I hoped it would be.

This is a wonderful reference. I received one as a gift and have given two as gifts. Great if enjoy church architecture.

I ordered 5 different books on church architecture. This was the most useful!! I will keep it for future reference.

Catholic College, Son ordered for class-- no complaints

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