



# Handbook for Curates: A Late Medieval Manual on Pastoral Ministry (Medieval Texts in Translation)

*Guido of Monte Rochen, Guido of Monte Rochen*

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Guido of Monte Rochen's *Handbook for Curates* became the most popular pastoral manual at the close of the Middle Ages as thousands of copies were printed in Europe. Composed of a mixture of practical "how to" and theological instruction, the *Handbook* taught pastoral basics to everyday priests. As such, it is an essential and vibrant source on late medieval religion and parish practice, which this full-length translation makes available in English for the first time.

The *Handbook* is divided into three parts: sacraments and their administration, the sacrament of penance, and basic catechesis. Together they reflect Guido's mission to facilitate the fundamental duties priests were expected to fulfill for souls under their charge. Guido explains constituent parts of each sacrament, how each is done, who receives it, and what problems might arise in its practice. In step with broader religious currents of his day, Guido treats penance extensively, addressing topics from instances of the deadly sins to how to question penitents in confession. His *Handbook* concludes with explanations of the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments for the benefit of his readers and their flocks.

To help contemporary students and scholars understand fully the *Handbook's* richness as a historical source, the introduction situates it within the intellectual milieu of late medieval Christianity. Guido is well acquainted with the vagaries of real life in a parish and a sense of compassion underlies his directives. Evidence of readers' hands-on engagement abounds in the annotations that were written in the book's margins. Examination of both the content of such comments and their location within the text suggests how Guido's readers sought to translate his advice into practice.

### ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR:

Anne T. Thayer is the Paul and Minnie Diefenderfer Professor of Mercersburg and Ecumenical Theology and Church History at Lancaster Theological Seminary. Katharine J. Lualdi is professor of history and on the faculty of the Honors Program at the University of Southern Maine. Thayer and Lualdi share an interest in late medieval and early modern Christianity, particularly at the parish level, and have collaborated on the edited volume *Penitence in the Age of Reformations*.

### PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

"This excellent translation provides an invaluable window into the late medieval culture of parish life and expectations about priestly knowledge and activity, as well as a resource for exploring the transformation of scholarly expertise for practical use. Anne Thayer and Katharine Lualdi follow Guido's lead in creating a volume that offers both neophytes and advanced audiences a distillation of deep learning in an engaging, user-friendly compendium."--Anne L. Clark, Professor of Religion, University of Vermont

"A most welcome addition to our growing knowledge of practiced, popular, and parish religion in the late Middle Ages. Scholars and students, priests and pastors will find much of interest in this late-medieval bestseller. The translation is careful and clear, while the introduction places the *Handbook* in its proper historical and pastoral context."--Peter Dykema, Associate Professor of History, Arkansas Tech University

"The first English translation of *Handbook for Curates*, one of the most oft-consulted texts by neophyte parish priests in the late Middle Ages, is a cause for celebration. The editors have examined scores of early printings of this text and analyzed the heavily annotated readers' comments. The result is a rich analysis of the duties of a parish priest on the eve of the Reformation."--Mack P. Holt, Professor of History, George Mason University

"This lucid, highly readable translation, grounded on painstaking and insightful research, masters the direct but complex style and content of this im

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