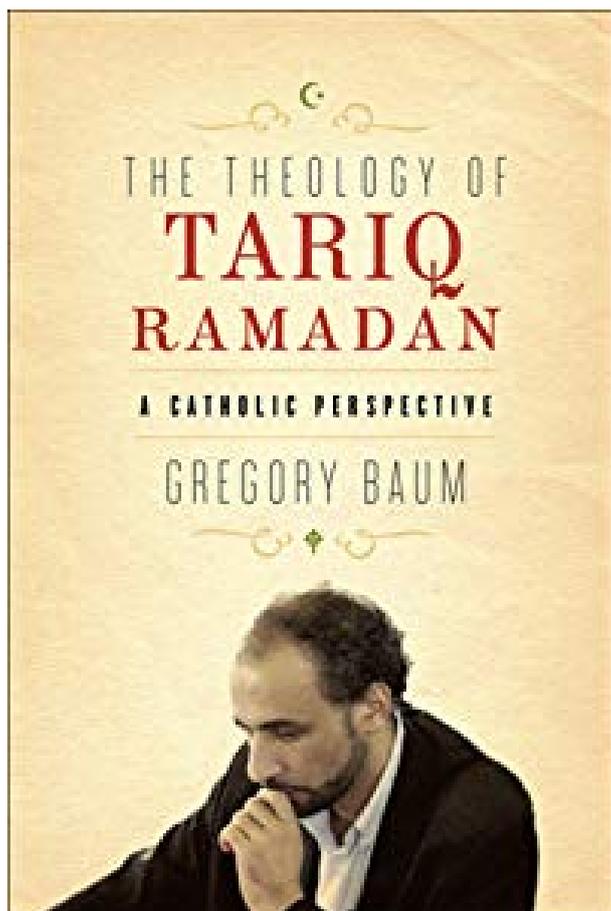


# The Theology of Tariq Ramadan: A Catholic Perspective



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Tariq Ramadan has emerged as one of the most influential Muslim theologians in the world today. In this important book, Gregory Baum presents for the first time an introduction to several key aspects of Ramadan's theological enterprise. Baum examines Ramadan's work historically within an interfaith perspective, drawing several parallels between Islamic and Catholic encounters with modernity. His comparison of the debates in the two traditions suggests that reform and renewal are compatible with the substance of both Catholic and Muslim traditions. After a brief account of the evolution of Catholic theology up to the Second Vatican Council, Baum introduces Ramadan's published work and theological orientation, examining both within the historical development of Islam.

He outlines Ramadan's theology of God, humanity, and the universe and discusses Ramadan's interpretation of sharia, the divinely revealed Islamic way of life. The book then addresses what fidelity to Islam means for Western Muslims and contrasts Ramadan's theology with the theological liberalism advocated by some Muslim authors. Throughout, Baum makes helpful connections between Islam and Vatican II Catholicism. Both belief systems are steeped in ancient traditions, rely on a sacred book, and find themselves confronting a modern context. Reformist Islam shares much with Catholic social thought in showing a regard for the poor

and marginalized. Baum concludes by examining points of difference between Muslim and Catholic theology that support further conversation. This readable introduction to Ramadan's work is accessible to non-Muslim students, teachers, clergy, and general readers interested in Islam and interfaith dialogue. "This book is a beautiful example of serious theological dialogue between two seminal theologians of our age: Gregory Baum and Tariq Ramadan. It is a balanced and significant contribution to scholarship about Ramadan's thought for at least two reasons: first, it provides a very important perspective on the similarities that Catholicism earlier and Islam today have shared in facing the many challenges of modernity; and second, the conclusion Professor Baum reaches may be short, but is profound: 'the time for religious-secular dialogue has come.'" —Patrice Brodeur, Canada Research Chair on Islam, Pluralism, and Globalization, Université de Montréal "Gregory Baum is a gift to the Church, and indeed to the world. A stalwart of the Vatican II era, he is now an *éminence grise* of North American Christianity in its efforts to engage the secular world through a confident and critical dialogue about meaning. In this remarkable and pioneering volume, he engages contemporary Islam through a typically generous reading of one of its most influential theologians, Tariq Ramadan. Avoiding the often silly but sometimes brutal polemics that have obscured the quality of Ramadan's reformist thought, Baum notes the striking affinities between Islam's and Catholicism's respective encounters with democracy, religious freedom, and critical reading of sacred sources, among other contested issues. Having absorbed the deepest insights of Catholicism's recent revolution in self understanding—a revolution he helped to stimulate and advance—this unofficial, quietly charismatic ambassador of Christian intellectual innovation has provided invaluable insight into the mind of the person who has been termed the 'Muslim Martin Luther.' Baum, as he has in the past, is pointing the way forward for innovative and serious theological work; in the opening of sustained dialogue and conversation with the contemporary current of Islamic reform represented by figures like Ramadan, he rightly sees an opportunity for a renewal of Catholic theology in its service to the cause of reconciliation and peace." —Scott Appleby, University of Notre Dame