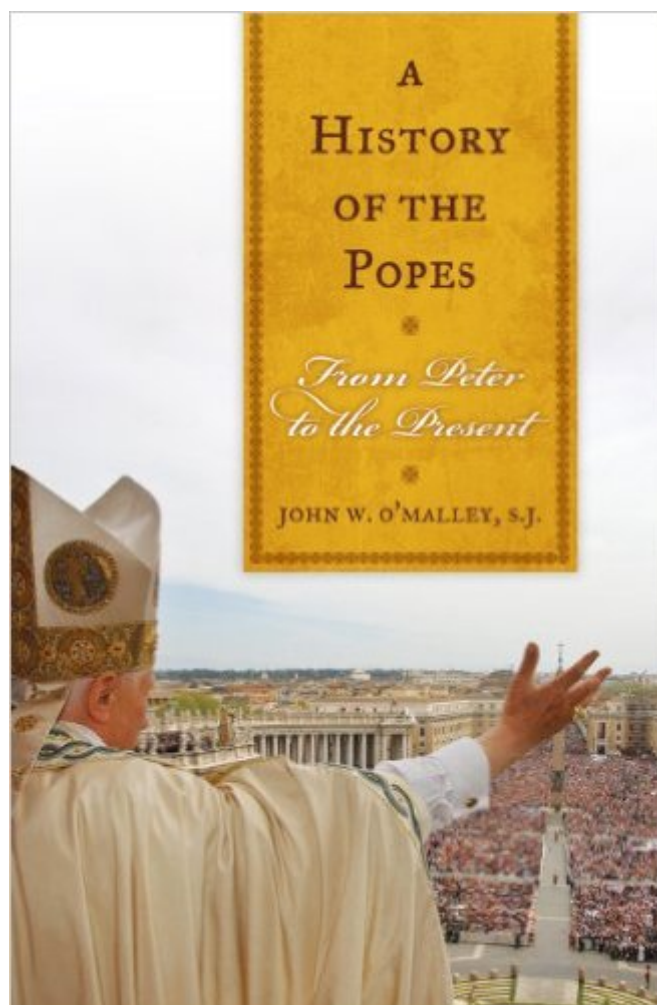


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A History Of The Popes: From Peter To The Present



Synopsis

A History of the Popes tells the story of the oldest living institution in the Western world—the papacy. From its origins in Saint Peter, Jesus's chief disciple, through Pope Benedict XVI today, the popes have been key players in virtually all of the great dramas of the western world in the last two thousand years. Acclaimed church historian John W. O'Malley's engaging narrative examines the 265 individuals who have claimed to be Peter's successors. Rather than describe each pope one by one, the book focuses on the popes that shaped pivotal moments in both church and world history. The author does not shy away from controversies in the church, and includes legends like Pope Joan and a comprehensive list of popes and antipopes to help readers get a full picture of the papacy. This simultaneously reverent yet critical book will appeal to readers interested in both religion and history as it chronicles the saints and sinners who have led the Roman Catholic Church over the past 2000 years. The author draws from his popular audio CD lecture series on the topic, 2,000 Years of Papal History, available through Now You Know Media (www.nowyouknowmedia.com).

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Customer Reviews

With all of the recent historical news coming out of the Vatican recently, starting with Pope Benedict XVI's resignation, the first pope to do so in almost 600 years, to the also historic election of Pope Francis who claims a number of firsts for the papacy, I had become more interested in learning about the institution. The papacy itself is one of the most enduring institutions in Western civilization

having been in existence for around 2000 years. Starting with Saint Peter, the papacy has endured to the present day. With such a long history there are many interesting stories surrounding it and the men who have been pope. Despite the current job description of the pope, the papacy used to be a very powerful position, especially during the Middle Ages. Popes could create and depose emperors and kings and launch holy wars. Not only were they seen as a religious leader, but also, for about 1000 years, the pope was also a monarch as head of the Papal States, a sovereign country formerly located in central Italy. Because of these historical aspects, even if you are not Catholic, understanding the papacy is critical to understanding human history, especially the history of Europe. As it currently stands, the Catholic Church officially lists 266 popes and the book seeks out to look at the most interesting ones. Some of the popes were truly great men who tried to do the right thing in their position while some were truly despicable who instead abused their position, plus many in between. The book paints the many popes for what they were: human. They had flaws, but even that should not take away from the truly great popes. I thought this book did a good job of explaining and exploring the most important events in papal history.

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