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The Roman Catholic Church: An Illustrated History

Edward Norman, Jill Barrett

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The history of the Roman Catholic Church is a gateway to understanding two thousand years of Western—and at times world—civilization. Edward Norman's lavishly illustrated, incisive account, sure to become a classic, tells the story of the multifarious ways in which the Church has shaped the lives and beliefs of Christians and non-Christians alike.

It is partly a story of remarkable people, from the greatest theologian of the early Church, St. Augustine, to one of the greatest figures of the modern age, Mother Teresa of Calcutta. It is also a story rich in symbols, not least the awe-inspiring basilica built over the tomb of St. Peter in Rome, the most recognizable church in the world. But the focus of the book is a historical account of epic proportions. Here we discover how Rome became the heart of the Roman Catholic religion and played a role in transforming Western Europe into Christendom. We gain a view of the Crusades undistorted by today's agendas, explore the Counter-Reformation as the fruit of the venerable Catholic reforming tradition, and witness the beginning of a new 500-year history, in which missionaries took their message to Latin America and the East. And, in this boldly uplifting account, we come to see how the Church, reflecting the vision of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, today embodies Christ's own injunction to "teach all nations."

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