



Triumph: The Power and the Glory of the Catholic Church

By H.W. Crocker III

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For 2,000 years, Catholicism—the largest religion in the world and in the United States—has shaped global history on a scale unequaled by any other institution. But until now, Catholics interested in their faith have been hard-pressed to find an accessible, affirmative, and exciting history of the Church.

Triumph is that history. Inside, you'll discover the spectacular story of the Church from Biblical times and the early days of St. Peter—the first pope—to the twilight years of John Paul II. It is a sweeping drama of Roman legions, great crusades, epic battles, toppled empires, heroic saints, and enduring faith. And, there are stormy controversies: Dark Age skullduggery, the Inquisition, the Renaissance popes, the Reformation, the Church's refusal to accept sexual liberation and contemporary allegations like those made in *Hitler's Pope* and *Papal Sin*.

A brawling, colorful history full of inspiring pageantry and spirited polemic, *Triumph* will exhilarate, amuse, and infuriate as it extols the glories of Catholic history and the gripping stories of its greatest men and women.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Catholics who tire of histories critical of their church will find much to love in *Triumph*, by the journalist and novelist H.W. Crocker III. With the enthusiasm of a convert, Crocker (formerly an Anglican) tells a story spanning 2,000 years, concentrating on the most heroic and adventurous chapters of church history. Crocker writes clear, crisp sentences ("Origen severed his genitals," begins one chapter; "A little looting goes a long way," opens another), and his version of Catholic history is one amazing scene after another. *Triumph* reads more like a historical novel than most other church histories, and that quality makes the book one of the most accessible historical surveys for younger readers. Theologically, however, Crocker is so eager to depict the church in a positive light that he's all but blind to its flaws. There's a lot of catechism here, but not much probing into the complexities of the church's involvement in the Inquisition or in World War II, or contemporary controversies such as the ordination of women. --*Michael Joseph Gross*

From Publishers Weekly

If history, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, then writer and novelist Crocker (Robert E. Lee on Leadership) obviously liked what he saw when he looked at the 2,000-year life of the Catholic Church. A convert to Catholicism from Anglicanism, Crocker has produced an exhaustive, thoroughly sourced narrative which reflects his love for his chosen faith. Although his accounts of episodes like Christianity's East-West split and the Inquisition will be seen by some as mere defenses of the Roman church, Crocker has made a creditable attempt to place events in a more balanced context, providing details that are typically downplayed by or absent from more critical chronicles. For example, he acknowledges that tortures and executions occurred during the Inquisition and does not excuse them, but he also observes that they were miniscule compared to the bloody conflict that was to follow as a result of the Protestant Reformation. Crocker's treatment of reformer Martin Luther seems unnecessarily harsh at a time when relations between Lutherans and Catholics have been steadily improving, as witnessed by the 2001 signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. In discrediting Luther and his purposes, Crocker dredges up a multitude of the reformer's personal flaws, calling him an "ill-tempered, unbalanced, and unhappy monk." He is much kinder to reformer John Calvin, whom he deems "undoubtedly the finest theologian the Protestant churches ever had." Readers interested in a detailed history that minimizes criticism of the Catholic Church will most appreciate this work.

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From [Booklist](#)

Written in a breezy style, this sweeping chronicle effectively condenses and communicates the intricate history of one of the world's most complex and intriguing institutions. The Catholic Church has evidenced a remarkable ability to triumph and prosper through the ages. With the fervent ardor of the true convert, the author, a former Anglican, conducts the reader on a remarkable 2,000-year odyssey of the Catholic faith. Though both affirmative and negative aspects and eras are represented, Crocker attempts to place the most positive spin possible on such dreadful episodes as the Crusades and the Inquisition. Epic in scope and featuring a vividly drawn cast of saints, sinners, and martyrs, this eminently readable account provides a compelling overview of the often-controversial history of Catholicism. *Margaret Flanagan*
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