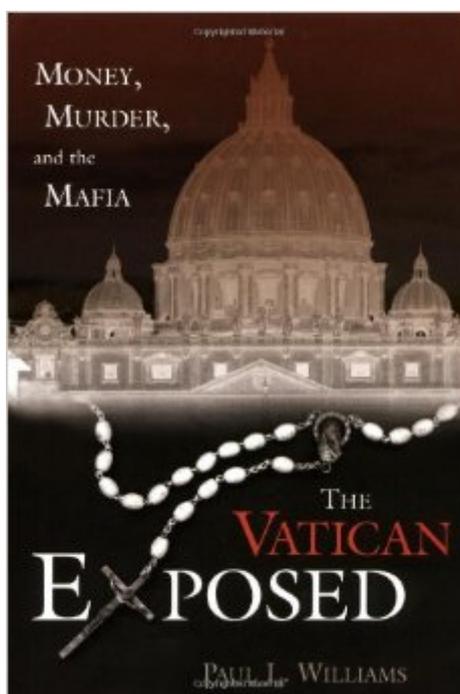


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The Vatican Exposed: Money, Murder, And The Mafia



Synopsis

Over 50 billion dollars in securities. Gold reserves that exceed those of industrialized nations. Real estate holdings that equal the total area of many countries. Opulent palaces containing the world's greatest art treasures. These are some of the riches of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet in 1929 the Vatican was destitute. Pope Pius XI, living in a damaged, leaky, pigeon-infested Lateran Palace, could hear rats scurrying through the walls, and he worried about how he would pay for even basic repairs to unclog the overburdened sewer lines and update the antiquated heating system. How did the Church manage in less than seventy-five years such an incredible reversal of fortune? The story here told by Church historian Paul L. Williams is intriguing, shocking, and outrageous. The turnaround began on February 11, 1929, with the signing of the Lateran Treaty between the Vatican and fascist leader Benito Mussolini. Through this deal Mussolini gained the support of the staunchly Catholic Italian populace, who at the time followed the lead of the Church. In return, the Church received, among other benefits, a payment of \$90 million, sovereign status for the Vatican, tax-free property rights, and guaranteed salaries for all priests throughout the country from the Italian government. With the stroke of a pen the pope had solved the Vatican's budgetary woes practically overnight, yet he also put a great religious institution in league with some of the darkest forces of the 20th century. Based on his years of experience as a consultant for the FBI, Williams produces explosive and never-before published evidence of the Church's morally questionable financial dealings with sinister organizations over seven decades through today. He examines the means by which the Vatican accrued enormous wealth during the Great Depression by investing in Mussolini's government, the connection between Nazi gold and the Vatican Bank, the vast range of Church holdings in the postwar boom period, Paul VI's appointment of Mafia chieftain Michele Sindona as the Vatican banker, a billion-dollar counterfeit stock fraud uncovered by Interpol and the FBI, the "Ambrosiano Affair" called "the greatest financial scandal of the 20th Century" by the New York Times, the mysterious death of John Paul I, profits from an international drug ring operating out of Gdansk, Poland, and revelations about current dealings. For both Catholics and non-Catholics this troubling expose of corruption in one of the most revered religious institutions in the world will serve as an urgent call for reform.

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Customer Reviews

Growing up in America, one of my favorite topics in school was history, be it American, Western, or world history. Never in all those classes did I come across anything like the tales told in this book. The author is a historian of Christianity, and in this book he gives an inside history of the Vatican, with an emphasis on the 20th century. Specifically, he tells the facts that the Vatican would not like people to know. The major events covered in this book are: 1. The Vatican's treaty with Mussolini and the Fascist Party in Italy whereby the Vatican would get its own land and country from Italy. In exchange, the Vatican would support the Fascists publicly and privately. This occurred in 1929, I think. 2. The Vatican's agreement with Hitler in the 1930s whereby the Vatican would pressure Catholics in Germany to not oppose Hitler. In return, the Nazis gave money to the Vatican in the form of a church tax levied on German Catholics. 3. The Vatican covering up for some of its officials who took part in the Holocaust. 4. The Vatican helping Nazi scientists escape to the US at the end of WWII. In return, the Allies kept secret knowledge about the Vatican's complicity in the Holocaust and private arrangements with the Axis powers. 5. The Vatican aligning itself with the Mafia after WWII to help secure inroads into foreign governments, and get good deals on investments world-wide. All in all, this was a very impressive book. It is quite short, and probably as easy to read as a Harry Potter book, though shorter than a Potter book. The book is written in chronological order, and there are a lot of references to various primary and secondary sources. I highly recommend this book.

I found this book quite intriguing from start to finish. Williams does a really good job of outlining the politicking that goes on in the Vatican from the prewar period to the present. A must read for those interested in what goes on behind the closed doors of the Vatican. It is disturbing it has garnered less than a score of favorable reviews over a decade. Even more disturbing is the weight of reviews. Yet, if one removes negative reviews posted by right wing visitors who can't accept the truth, this is

the five-star book I say it is. Whereas Williams gives us a good outline, I found another book that goes into much greater depth. Aside from being a biography of a pope's revolutionary life and dealing with what happens when the politicking that goes on when a pope is elected turns to murder. *The Vatican Murders: The Life and Death of John Paul I* does the best overall job of proving the Vatican's role in World War II and the Holocaust--its proof: scores of surviving photos, many never before published. What's more, it explains how it is possible the Vatican Bank has been able to circumvent Italian and international banking controls in carrying on clandestine dealings from drug money laundering to funneling hundreds of millions to the Contras in the great Vatican bank scandal of 1979. Perhaps, most important, employing a barrage of court testimony 'The Vatican Murders' proves that the conspiracy that planned the Great Vatican Bank Scandal (The Ambrosiano Affair) was the same conspiracy that plotted the murder of John Paul I. This is consistent with the courts which tried the scandal which proved that Ambrosiano (John Paul II) raised the first 'scandal' dollars from unsuspecting investors thirty days after the death of John Paul I. I would get both books to get free shipping.

Mr. Williams traces the dark history of the characters inside the Vatican from prior to WWII to the recently deceased Pope's time. The history is of the dark side from Pius XI's actions and inactions with the Hitler Regime to Pope John Paul II's Vatican Banking scandals. Other reviewers have criticized the author for dwelling on the dark side and have accused him of fantasizing. The notes are there to check. His intentions weren't to point out the benevolence of the Vatican - they were to point out the side that up to recent times have not been brought to light. If a reader is truly interested in history, one has to have all the facts. Some of the facts are contained within Mr. Williams' book and I commend him for bringing them to our attention. Also contained are Appendices of THE LATERAN TREATY OF 1929, a chronological listing of Popes from Peter to John Paul II, and THE CONCORDANT BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE GERMAN REICH. The facts are noted within the chapters and the notes contained at the end of the book. One can use the notes as a further reading bibliography if desired. This book is 202 pages long and this reader read it in one Saturday sitting. If you're interested only in polemics, read something else. If you're interested in facts, even if they have warts, you need to read this book.

Although the title promises a lot of eye-opening revelations, the book flags after the first few chapters. I found the issues surrounding Pius XII and Archbishop Stepinac quite startling, I am eager to read the reviews of others. I would be surprised if there were not some controversy about

the author's findings.(Reviewer's confession: my eyes glaze over when I read details of financial shenanigans.)

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