



The Conclave: A Sometimes Secret and Occasionally Bloody History of Papal Elections

Michael Walsh

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In 1271, with the papal throne vacant for over two years, local officials locked the cardinals of the Catholic Church in a room, forcing them to select a new pope. From this inauspicious beginning arose the practice of the conclave, the highly secretive combination of rituals and politics designed to select a new leader for the world's Catholic population. With Pope John Paul II ailing, the time for a new conclave draws nearer, and Rome is preparing for over 6,000 journalists and innumerable interested onlookers to descend on the Eternal City to witness the election of the next leader of the Catholic Church. In *The Conclave*, prominent Catholic historian Michael Walsh takes readers through the history of conclaves past, highlighting the vendettas, feuds, and political intrigues that have colored the selection of a new pontiff. An entertaining history of the secret deliberations, colorful stories, and even bloody events that surround the making and unmaking of popes, *The Conclave* is a great story, a great history, and an important work for anyone interested in the papacy.

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