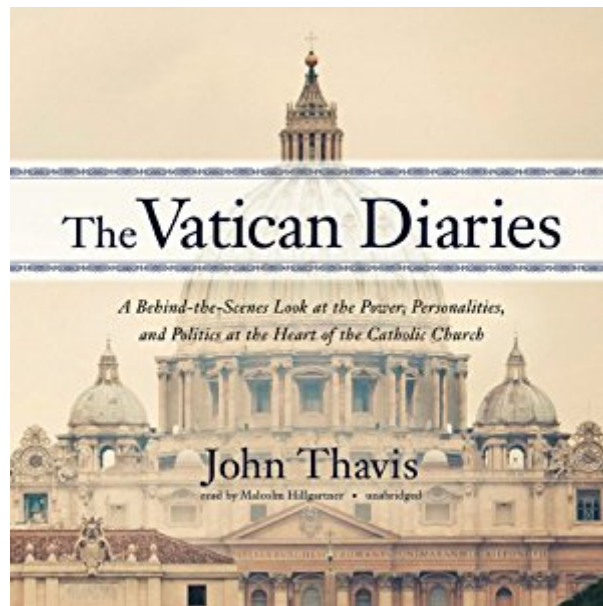


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# The Vatican Diaries: A Behind-the-Scenes Look At The Power, Personalities, And Politics At The Heart Of The Catholic Church



## Synopsis

A revealing inside look at one of the world's most powerful and mysterious institutions For more than 25 years John Thavis held one of the most fascinating journalistic jobs in the world: reporting on the inner workings of the Vatican. His daily exposure to the power, politics, and personalities in the seat of Roman Catholicism gave him a unique, behind-the-scenes perspective on an institution that is far less monolithic and unified than it first appears. Thavis reveals Vatican City as a place where Curia cardinals fight private wars, scandals threaten to undermine papal authority, and reverence for the past is continually upended by the practical considerations of modern life. Thavis takes listeners from a bell tower high above St. Peter's to the depths of the basilica and the saint's burial place, from the politicking surrounding the election of a new pope and the ever-growing sexual abuse scandals around the world to controversies about the Vatican's stand on contraception and more. Perceptive, sharply written, and witty, *The Vatican Diaries* will appeal not only to Catholics - lapsed as well as devout - but to anyone interested in international diplomacy and the role of religion in an increasingly secularized world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I watched *Inside the Vatican* by National Geographic which documents how the Vatican City functions but not what it takes to run a religious business with so many characters in the picture. *The Vatican Diaries* is not about Catholicism as a faith, it is not about the Vatican as a city, it is about the players inside as well as outside the Vatican. This knowledge can not be achieved unless

you are an insider or live by Vatican. Forget about the presidential politics since that is boring, Vatican's politic is not. This is a book that exposes many facets of Vatican and that means religion plus the spice of humanity in Italian style. This book certainly does justice to Pope Benedict since many of the issues that Benedict had to deal with during his service was not really analyzed and discussed in US media as it should have been and John's writing certainly covers that era considerably. This is a book about human beings who have to deal with many issues in an environment that regardless of how spiritual they may want to be or they may want to get, they still cannot avoid the arrogance, sexuality and the personality that it comes with that creation of god, the other human beings. I never thought this could be such an informative book. Unlike many other books this book has no ending due to what is happening in Vatican in the given moment. Wish Pope Benedict health, happiness and mainly peace. Great, informative and educational read.

Bravo.....:UPDATE

2014: Watch the two hour 2014 documentary which documents all the facts provided in this book and more. Amazing story. Link provided in the comment section.

As my title indicates, John Thavis has written a remarkable books on a couple counts. At the same time as Pope Benedict has decided to close his reign, John has opened up the recent history of the Vatican and its players in a very well-written manner. I was impressed throughout and could barely put the book down as a couple things stood out. First, the Vatican like most complex and large organizations works to conserve its own interests. This resulted in immeasurable tragedy, as in the case of Maciel, with support for the beast and the victimization of many. And the mind boggling absorption with homophobia and dedicated priests who were made to suffer. This book shows clearly how this occurred and how difficult it is to turn an aircraft carrier on a dime. Second, the stories are beautiful. Some are sad and cynical but some are full of joy. My favorite part of the book is the story about Father Foster. The images of him exhorting his students to appreciate Latin ("My God, every prostitute in ancient Rome spoke Latin") and telling a reporter "I'd like to say Mass in the nude" are memorable. What else can I say? Great book!

Only two days ago people the world over waited for white smoke to appear above St. Peter's Square and it isn't hard to understand why. The Holy See is arguably the most influential organization in the entirety of human history, the power it wields is sacred to the faithful, but equally impressive to those outside the Catholic church. In The Vatican Diaries, John Thavis lifts the veil of secrecy and sheds light on the politics that characterize life in Vatican City. Offering readers insight

into the world he knew while working for the Catholic News Service. The thing I liked most about this book is that unlike some other titles I've sampled over the years, Thavis humanizes the Vatican. He talks about her quirks and idiosyncrasies, points to her character by examining her structure and inhabitants. Even in print the city seems more real as seen through the eyes of one who holds such obvious passion for her past, present and future. Thavis' writing isn't tinged with superiority either, its steady rhythm and light humor make *The Vatican Diaries* both easy to understand and delightfully entertaining. A great book for those looking for a more intimate look at the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

I admit this was a leap of faith to purchase and read this book. Few reviews existed and I hesitated. What helped my decision to read this was the discovery that it was written by a veteran journalist. It is very timely, does not steer away from the major controversies of the day, and is very engaging. The author has a writing style that is very easy to read and makes you feel like you are on a tour that has a guide who is thorough, communicates well, is very amiable, well respected, and candid. Some of the material does take you behind the scenes of the power struggles occurring daily at the Vatican, and much of it is fascinating and bewildering. At times it does feel like the Keystone Cops but it is not done maliciously but with wit and elegance. Worth the time to read and digest all the subject matter he exposes. Well done.!

Boy, what great timing for the author. *The Vatican Diaries* comes out just as Pope Benedict XVI has resigned. What this book shows me is that for anything this inept and mismanaged to have survived over 2,000 years - it has to be from God. And - God has a great sense of humor! Good Catholics do not have to shy away from reading this entertaining and enlightening book about their Church. I would suspect their own parish may be reflected in these pages as well. This "diary" is a quick read and very interesting. The Catholic Church is nothing if not human and *The Vatican Diaries* illustrates that wonderfully. Buy or download this book quickly so you'll be up to speed when the new Pope is elected.

The subtitle promises "A Behind the Scenes Look at the Power, Personalities and Politics at the Heart of the Catholic Church," but what John Thavis really provides here is a relatively objective and even-handed behind-the-scenes look at the journalistic coverage of the Vatican, a kind of "Boys on the Bus" of the papacy in the last 20 years. Still, the book is journalistically solid. It will also be fairly boring to anyone not deeply interested in the machinations of the Vatican.

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