



Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy

John Julius Norwich

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

In a chronicle that captures nearly two thousand years of inspiration and intrigue, John Julius Norwich recounts in riveting detail the histories of the most significant popes and what they meant politically, culturally, and socially to Rome and to the world. Norwich presents such popes as Innocent I, who in the fifth century successfully negotiated with Alaric the Goth, an invader civil authorities could not defeat; Leo I, who two decades later tamed (and perhaps paid off) Attila the Hun; the infamous “pornocracy”—the five libertines who were descendants or lovers of Marozia, debauched daughter of one of Rome’s most powerful families; Pope Paul III, “the greatest pontiff of the sixteenth century,” who reinterpreted the Church’s teaching and discipline; John XXIII, who in five short years starting in 1958 instituted reforms that led to Vatican II; and Benedict XVI, who is coping with today’s global priest sex scandal. Epic and compelling, *Absolute Monarchs* is an enthralling history from “an enchanting and satisfying raconteur” (*The Washington Post*).

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