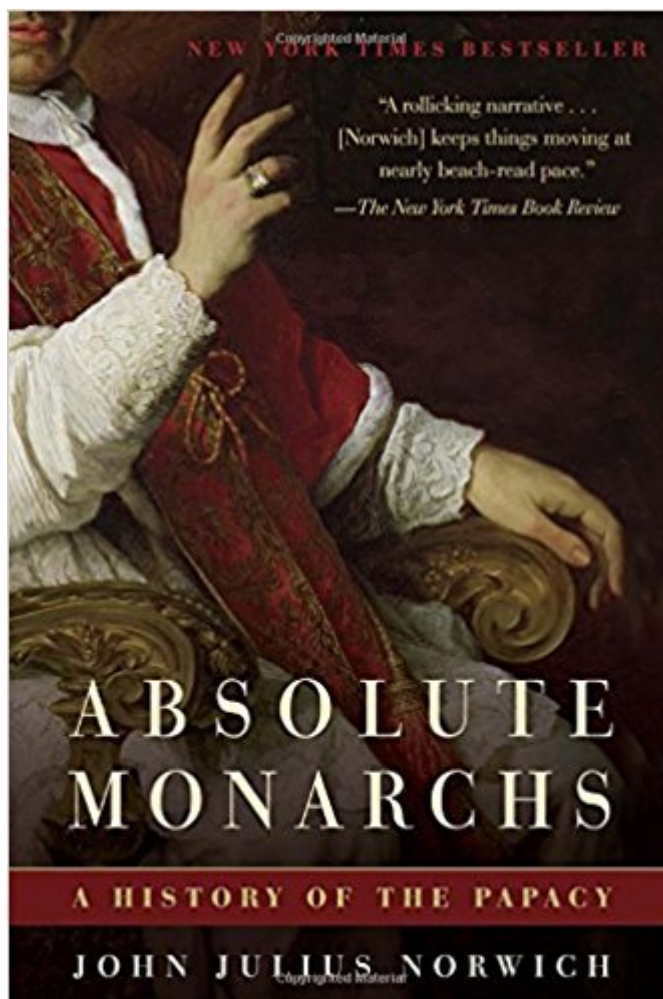


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# Absolute Monarchs: A History Of The Papacy



## Synopsis

**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 “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).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A rollicking narrative . . . [Norwich] keeps things moving at nearly beach-read pace.” *The New York Times Book Review* — “A highly entertaining read . . . [John Julius] Norwich has a lightness of touch and caustic sense of humour. . . . As a lively romp through two millennia of ecclesiastical history, [*Absolute Monarchs* is] well-nigh infallible.” *The Sunday Business Post* — “Very readable and rewarding . . . Norwich possesses an easy grace with words, a gift for

condensation and a wonderful instinct for the memorable and defining detail. •â ”The Plain Dealer  
Â â œDeeply researched, Norwichâ™s history offers a wonderful introduction to papal  
lives.â•â ”Publishers Weekly Â â œExcellent, often surprising . . . An outstanding historical  
survey.â•â ”Booklist Â â œ[A] sweeping history . . . [a] cacophony of temporal sin.â•â ”Los Angeles  
Times

John Julius Norwich is one of Britainâ™s preeminent historians and travel writers. He has written  
the histories of Norman Sicily, Byzantium, Venice, and the Mediterranean. Other books have been  
on Shakespeareâ™s history plays, on music, and on architecture. From the Hardcover edition.

Although a little tedious with details in spots, this was a fascinating read. The interrelationships  
between the popes and the royals was never presented so clearly. It is also evident that the word of  
God was not always as clear at times than at other times depending on the pope. The papacy today  
is so calm and easy to understand compared to what it was in the first 1500 years. The popes,  
antipopes, the female pope, the competition with Protestantism, Judaism and Islam was also  
enlightening. Even the naming of the popes was an education. The book ends with pope John Paul  
II. So it is both historic and somewhat current. Beware Catholics, you may get surprised and have  
your historic beliefs challenged.

Norwich has written the most encyclopedic history of Europe & the Papacy I've ever read, covering  
in detail from Peter to Benedict. I wished it had included the new Pope. The Palace intrigues of  
European royalty, the wars, social upheavals, crimes, passions, stupidity, brilliance; it's all there.  
The book is LONG, but covering 2100 years does require a few more pages than the history of  
England. Well done,

Confirms what I always expected about the history of the church.

Great history lesson, by learning about the popes much about their times is revealed, most of it I did  
not know anything about. Surprising how they were dependent on the citizens of Rome who kept  
taking to the streets, riot or celebrate. And such a study of characters, Donald Trump, Bush,  
Obama, the types have all been there before including the ups and downs.

Great read.

This book is a long slog through papal history. The author seems to have been aware of that length and chose to parse down the rich detail that would have made the length more bearable. The book does do a good job of showing some of the historical context in which the various papal actions were framed, but there is so much more that could have been accomplished with the material. In the end, this book is more like a general overview of papal history than a truly detailed study.

Factual, very well researched and interesting.

This one moves fast through two thousand years of history. Decades sometime get shortened to a sentence; lives, to a paragraph. But for all that, it might be your best bet for a one volume history of ALL the popes (excluding the current one).

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