



Vows of Silence: The Abuse of Power in the Papacy of John Paul II

Jason Berry, Gerald Renner

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Going deep behind the headlines about scandals in the Catholic Church, Jason Berry and Gerald Renner's *Vows of Silence* follows the staggering trail of evasions and deceit that leads directly to the Vatican -- and taints the legacy of Pope John Paul II. Based on more than six years of investigative reporting and hundreds of interviews, this book is a riveting account of Vatican cover-ups and the tumult they have caused in the church worldwide. Both a profound criticism and a wake-up call to reform by two Catholic writers, *Vows of Silence* reveals an agenda of top-down control under John Paul II and a hierarchy so obsessed with secrecy as to spawn disinformation. *Vows of Silence* is not a book about sexual abuse; it is a book about abuse of power, throughout the Vatican.

The book cuts between the life story of Father Tom Doyle, who sacrificed a diplomatic career with the Vatican to seek justice for sex-abuse victims, and Father Marcial Maciel, an accused pedophile and founder of the militaristic religious order, the Legion of Christ. One of the most mysterious and powerful men in the Catholic Church, Maciel has built a network of priests, lay people, and elite prep schools in more than twenty countries, using the Legion as a fundraising machine to position himself as a favored figure of John Paul II.

In addition to accusations against Maciel of sexual abuse and of using Legion money for his own extravagant lifestyle, many ex-Legionaries claim that the order uses mind-control techniques to isolate seminarians and even priests from their families. And yet, because he enjoyed the protection of Pope John Paul II and members of the Roman Curia, charges against Maciel for sexual misconduct -- all of which he denies -- were blocked in the Vatican court system.

Drawing on in-depth interviews with Father Doyle and with ex-Legionaries who filed a canonical suit against Maciel, as well as interviews with Vatican insiders and an array of sources in Mexico, Ireland, Canada, and Australia, the authors provide a penetrating account of a hierarchy directly in conflict with its followers. With keen insight and scrupulous reporting, *Vows of Silence* is a powerful narrative that chronicles the church's struggle between orthodoxy and reform -- going straight to the heart of one of the world's largest power structures.

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