



# **Popes and Politics: Reform, Resentment, and the Holocaust (Handbooks of Catholic Theology)**

*Justus George Lawler*

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In the last three decades, many books have been published on the role of the Vatican in the modern world. Popes and Politics shows that many recent authors, whether devoted or antagonistic to the papacy, have been guilty of factual distortions and biased interpretations that lead to a flawed picture of the church and its relation to contemporary society. Among the authors analyzed are James Carroll, John Cornwell, Margherita Marchione, Ralph McInerny, Michael Phayer, Garry Willas, Susan Zuccotti. Lawler cites "chapter and verse" to illustrate that many of these critics are doing to the church what the church historically did to the Jews—methodically scapegoating an imaginary enemy. Though in the recent past the central themes of Popes and Politics have often been exhaustively (and exhaustingly) analyzed, the treatment in the present book is fresh and original. To consider only one issue—the pope and the Jews—in addition to a re-assessment of Pius XII, Lawler also treats of the takeover of the Shoah for Catholic purposes; the connection of saturation bombing to the pope's "silence"; the significance of Hochhuth's other play, "The Soldiers"; the possibility of a Polish "holocaust; the reticence about "speaking out" by the head of the worldwide Anglican communion; the conflicts over both German and Israeli revisionist historians; the curious parallels between the Bermuda and the Wannsee conferences; the denigration of Pacelli and of Ben-Gurion—and many other non-stereotypical perspectives on this crucial moral issue of our time. The second part of the book—a discussion of the self-regulating principal of reform—is replete with intriguing and informative lessons, quotations, and anecdotes concerning some of the most fascinating and tragic figures in modern religious history: de Lamennais, Newman, Loisy, Montalembert, Dollinger, Rosmini, Acton, Blondel, Maritain, Bernanos, Congar, HSring, and several popes—to mention only a few. In the context of a reform that goes beyond "the politics of rancor," Popes and Politics treats also of church governance, structures of sin, intellectual freedom, gender conflicts, episcopal synods, sexual vs. social morality, signs of the times, and doctrinal claims.

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