

Vatican: A Novel

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A young Chicago-born priest is called to serve in Rome and is soon drawn into an international intrigue involving bishops, bankers, and the highest levels of the Catholic Church

The subject of this long and intriguing novel is the Vatican's elaborate bureaucracy, in particular its powerful financial network, headed by a mysterious figure known as the Keeper. Another central character, who gives the story its slant, is American Richard Lansing, who joins the Vatican as a young monsignore in 1945, and becomes the confidant of five successive popes. When he reaches the apex of his career, he staunchly opposes any Church bargain with Mammon. Martin (author of bestsellers *The Final Conclave* and *Hostage to the Devil*), was a professor in the Vatican's Pontifical Biblical Institute; he has an insider's knowledge of the intrigues and power plays that go on behind the papacy's smooth facade. His tale encompasses the fall of Mussolini, the penetration of the Vatican by a Soviet mole, the murder of a pope in the Soviet interest (with help from Vatican officials), and other major events real or imagined. Vatican is not unlike a bureaucracy itself: intricate, far from iconoclastic, and impeded in its forward progress by obsessive attention to detail. 60,000 first printing; \$75,000 ad/promo; author tour. Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club alternates February 12

Copyright 1985 Reed Business Information, Inc. Those who read Martin's *The Final Conclave* (LJ 3/15/78) will experience a strong sense of déjà vu while reading his latest. The basic facts and premises in that work are here woven into a story around Richard Lansing, a young priest from Chicago, who arrives in Italy in 1945 for his "Roman stint." The first 200 pages of the novel are a bit ponderous, but the pace picks up and the problems and factions in the Church are well portrayed. Vatican is scheduled to be a TV mini-series, so public libraries will want to be prepared for the demand. Mary Reimer, Harris Psychiatric Hosp. Lib., Anderson, S.C.

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