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Strange Gods: A Novel About Faith, Murder, Sin And Redemption



Synopsis

The Archbishop of New York fell down dead. Michael Manning was the sixth cardinal among the international Catholic clergy to die under violent and suspicious circumstances. Somebody is killing cardinals. But what is going on and why? With the latest death, the Vatican is forced to act. The Church pulls Nate Condon, a young New York attorney, into the investigation. As the history of the crimes unfolds, we are drawn inside the magnificent city of Rome, her ancient secrets, and the most privileged inner sanctums of the Catholic hierarchy. In the midst of Nate's investigation, more tragedy befalls the Church: The pope dies, a Vatican cardinal commits suicide, and the Mafia murders Nate's primary contact, a self-loathing gay monsignor who is knee-deep in scandal. Soon after, an American cardinal, determined to change the corruption deep within the Church, is elected as the new pope. Will he be able to narrow the divide that is destroying everything he holds dear, or will the schism that separates the Church win out? *Strange Gods* was written by two priests with firsthand knowledge of the degree to which the Church will go to cover up financial corruption, abuse of power, sexual scandal, and evil. With an eye on the holiness and grace of ordinary people who keep the Church alive and want to change her future, *Strange Gods* promises to be an exciting, engaging and thought-provoking read.

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed this book for many reasons: (1) One of the writers is the Pastor of my church, Fr. Peter Daly of St. John Vianney in Prince Frederick, Maryland. Fr. Daly is such an intelligent, caring priest and a wonderful shepherd to our parish. He has preached about many of the themes from the book -

this year, our church opened a "Hospital for Sinners" as mentioned in the book, when the book mentions that the cost of one of the Cardinal's robes could build a nursing home in Nicaragua -- Our parish actually did build a nursing home there, thanks to Fr. Daly's leadership! And of course, the most important theme - LOVE - which is an ever-present theme in every Homily; (2) I have been to Rome, so the descriptions of the Holy City bring back beautiful memories; and (3) most importantly, the book gives hope for a brighter future for our beloved Church! Congrats, Fr. Daly for finally finishing and publishing your book - I know how long you've been working on it, and it was well worth the wait! To read more thoughts from Fr. Daly, visit his "Parish Diary" on our church website at: (...)

"Strange Gods" is spellbinding! This mesmerizing murder mystery takes readers around the globe and thrusts them into gems of cathedrals, cafes and crossroads where high intrigue and horrific hypocrisy reign. The authors' attention to detail--in their descriptions of people, places and passings--is extraordinary. I was so captivated by this book that I increasingly resented my schedule interrupting the steady devouring of each page!

I love this book! From the very first chapter, you find yourself immediately pulled into the attractive--and at the same time disturbing and dangerous--world of a powerful religious institution. Nothing prepared me for the alarming honesty and, at times, almost unbelievable detailed account of the corrupt clerical world hidden behind a dark curtain of secrecy and excess on every level. The authors (2 Roman Catholic priests with one being a Monsignor) seem to offer little hope for any real reform but present very credible, emotional and moving argument in that direction. This is a book that I need to read again!

A very good friend of mine recommended that I read Strange Gods. I usually agree with her book selection. I ordered the book and, upon receiving my copy, flipped it over to see the photos of the authors, both of whom are priests. I felt as though my friend had lost her mind. I could not fathom as to why she would recommend a book written by two Catholic priests! I consider myself a very content atheist and so, reluctantly, I opened the book and, to my astonishment, loved it. It is a fascinating novel that smartly weaves questions about faith and human nature with insider info of the workings of the Vatican. Strange Gods also takes you on an exciting ride with its fictional story of murder and intrigue. It is a novel that not only keeps you engaged throughout but leaves you pondering the bigger questions that the characters in the book struggle with: God, faith, love, hate,

greed and the strange workings of the human mind. Strange Gods is not a "Catholic" book. It is a book that provokes thought, discussion and, even, argument. Perfect.

Fast Read! Very informative and thought provoking. Not your normal historical murder fiction. A unique way to discuss the problems faced by any large institution, including governments worldwide, going forward. Hopefully readers that understand the issues will help make a difference. Bravo to the authors.

This is a novel but the authors also speak from their experience as parish priests and even trained in the seat of this story, Rome and the Vatican itself. I found this story very interesting especially the part of Cardinals participating in the work of actually assassinating those who would somehow destroy what they thought should be the Church. Surely the story is far fetched in that it makes the whole institution appear like a focus for corruption at all levels. But as history tells us and as Pope Francis has discovered for himself, there is more to corruption than meets the eye. The depth levels of corruption and power and the various fiefdoms with the various dicastery offices of this multi layered "organization" is filled with those who see themselves as indispensable. The most important part of this book is the call to the reader to realize how important each person is in the community of faith. We have allowed power to be in the hands of "men" who have used that power to control the minds and hearts of all of us. This book reminds us that we are adults and we must act like adults and take back the Church from an elite oligarchy and recognize that we are the Church, and power resides in each of us not in some Roman-Vatican "official". The "age of Terror" is over. We are liberated from institutionalism. Pope Francis has begun the dismantling and it is up to each of us to continue to find the real meaning of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, The real Church of Mercy and Love. *Amoris Laetitia* is our only hope!!!

Strange Gods is a captivating novel that leaps to life in the wake of a string of suspicious deaths of cardinals. Racy? Yes! It runs the gamut from rich and poor, to good and evil, to gay and feminist, to racist and pedophile, to agnostic and scholarly myth. Everything that sells books. Downside? It ends in a sermon. Much too long and boring for this reader to swallow up. Yet, overall a good read. Coincidence. I found a striking resemblance of *Strange Gods* in the true-crime-biography of John Paul I which investigates the suspicious deaths of the 33-Day Pope and eight of his closest allied cardinals in the fall of 1978 in rapid consecutive order as if a machine gun had mowed them down. The Vatican Murders: The Life and

Death of John Paul I

This book captures a challenging review of the Catholic Church in the past 50 years. The perpetual struggle between lofty ideals and human weakness comes alive in this exciting read. Love or hate it, the "Church" remains a challenge to faith.

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