



## The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present

By Jay P. Dolan

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Catholicism has had a profound and lasting influence on the shape, the meaning, and the course of American history. Now, in the first book to reflect the new communal and social awakening which emerged from Vatican Council II, here is a vibrant and compelling history of the American Catholic experience—one that will surely become the standard volume for this decade, and decades to come.

Spanning nearly five hundred years, the narrative eloquently describes the Catholic experience from the arrival of Columbus and the other European explorers to the present day. It sheds fascinating new light on the work of the first vanguard of missionaries, and on the religious struggles and tensions of the early settlers. We watch Catholicism as it spread across the New World, and see how it transformed—and was transformed by—the land and its people. We follow the evolution of the urban ethnic communities and learn about the vital contributions of the immigrant church to Catholicism. And finally, we share in the controversy of the modern church and the extraordinary changes in the Catholic consciousness as it comes to grips with such contemporary social and theological issues as war and peace and the arms race, materialism, birth control and abortion, social justice, civil rights, religious freedom, the ordination of women, and married clergy.

*The American Catholic Experience* is not just the history of an institution, but a chronicle of the dreams and aspirations, the crises and faith, of a thriving, ever-evolving religious community. It provides a penetrating and deeply thoughtful look at an experience as diverse, as exciting, and as powerful as America itself.

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### **Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

Dolan writes in a lively manner and synthesizes vast amounts of material with a flair reminiscent of Martin Marty at his best. Tracing the history of Catholicism in America from the Spanish missions to the 1983 pastoral letter "The Challenge of Peace," Dolan (who considers himself a social historian) describes the life and faith of the "little" people without ignoring the intellectual currents that swirled about them. Despite some occasional choppiness and confusion engendered by the book's mixed chronological/topical organization, this is an admirable work that will appeal to general readers and still serve for academic use; indeed, the footnotes are a treasure trove for students and scholars of American Catholic history. Highly recommended.  
D. Stephen Rockwood, Mt. St. Mary's Coll. Lib., Emmitsburg, Md.  
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About the Author

Jay P. Dolan is professor emeritus of history at the University of Notre Dame, where he founded the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism. He is the author of several books, including *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*.

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**Cleveland Bolton:**

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