



Behind Locked Doors: A History of the Papal Elections

F. Baumgartner, McNamara

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Since 1600, whenever a Pope dies, the Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church convene in Rome to elect a successor. The Papal Conclave is an event like no other. Highly secret and conducted behind the locked doors of the Sistine Chapel, it happens about eight times every century. It is an event that has evolved over the centuries and is always filled with high drama: cardinals meeting en masse in their scarlet robes, throngs of the faithful standing watch in St. Peter's Square, the black or white smoke billowing from the chimney signalling the election of a new Pontiff. Since secrecy was not heavily invoked until the twentieth century, there is a vast store of rich material to work from and Fred Baumgartner uses it to its utmost detailing the bickering and blatant politicking that goes on behind the locked doors of the Sistine Chapel in this important and timely book.

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