



The Church on Earth: The Nature and Authority of the Catholic Church, and the Place of the Pope Within

Ronald Knox

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Recent scandals have led many to claim that the Catholic Church is inherently flawed and that to save it, the Pope and bishops must yield decision-making authority to the laity.

With clarity and verve, Ronald Knox here shows that by the very terms of its commission from Christ, the Catholic Church cannot become a democracy. Unlike Protestant congregations, the Church on earth is not just an assembly of Christians, pledged to keep intact a set of dogmatic truths and moral principles. It is directly God's handiwork, deliberately designed by Him as a hierarchical institution headed by the Pope.

Knox explains that although the Church is not inerrant in its policies, it is infallible in its doctrines; and it rightly serves as the living interpreter of Scripture and of its own teachings. He shows that despite the faults of its members (and even the faults of many of its leaders), the Church on earth has a higher claim on our loyalty than country, party, or even family.

Indeed, argues Knox, when Catholics obey the Church, they obey the voice of God.

These pages offer a bracing counterpoint to the recent popular rush to democracy in the Church. They are essential reading for all who genuinely desire to understand the Church as Christ established it for us, and who seek to ensure that in our day the Church will remain faithful to the holy mission He entrusted to it.

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