



The Other Catholics: Remaking America's Largest Religion

Julie Byrne

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Independent Catholics are not formally connected to the pope in Rome. They practice apostolic succession, seven sacraments, and devotion to the saints. But without a pope, they can change quickly and experiment freely. Some affirm communion for the divorced, women's ordination, clerical marriage, and same-sex marriage. From their early-modern origins in the Netherlands to their contemporary proliferation in the United States, these "other Catholics" represent an unusually liberal, mobile, and creative version of America's largest religion.

In *The Other Catholics*, Julie Byrne shares the remarkable history and current activity of independent Catholics, who number at least two hundred communities and a million members across the United States. She focuses on the Church of Antioch, one of the first Catholic groups to ordain women in modern times. Through archival documents and interviews, Byrne tells the story of the unforgettable leaders and surprising influence of these understudied churches, which, when included in Catholic history, change the narrative arc and total shape of modern Catholicism. While Pope Francis fights to soften Roman doctrines with a pastoral touch and his fellow Roman bishops push back with equal passion, the independent Catholics continue to leap ahead of Roman reform, keeping key Catholic traditions but adding a progressive difference.

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