

# SECRETS OF THE VATICAN

1 X 90 HD



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In 2013, after receiving a confidential dossier on troubles in the Catholic Church, Benedict XVI became the first pope in nearly 600 years to resign. In *Secrets of the Vatican*, FRONTLINE exposes the threats and scandals that rocked Benedict's papacy: a far-reaching clergy sex abuse crisis; money laundering and corruption at the Vatican Bank; and Vatileaks—the release of internal documents revealing cronyism, power struggles, and allegations of blackmail within the Holy See.

From award-winning director Antony Thomas, this special FRONTLINE presentation tells the inside story of the collapse of the Benedict Papacy—and the extraordinary challenges facing Pope Francis as he tries to reform the powerful Vatican bureaucracy, root out corruption, and chart a new course for the troubled Catholic Church and its 1.2 billion followers.

Using undercover footage and interviews with Vatican insiders, as well as abuse victims, whistleblowers, and journalists, *Secrets of the Vatican* shows the deep sexual hypocrisy within the Catholic Church and the long legacy of clergy sexual abuse of children.

Drawing on firsthand accounts, FRONTLINE shows how for years the Vatican supported the head of the powerful Legionaries of Christ order, Marcial Maciel, despite accusations that he had been sexually abusing boys and misappropriating money. The film also tells the story of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, where clergy sex abuse victims have accused the church of covering up abusive priests and trying to shield millions of dollars from mounting legal claims. The archdiocese has filed for bankruptcy, but hundreds of victims are still seeking compensation.

*Secrets of the Vatican* examines what is described as a “don't ask, don't tell” culture within the Vatican when it comes to priests' sexual orientation and finds that some priests are embarking on illicit relationships despite vows of celibacy. In the film, one gay priest who works in the Vatican responds to the church's teachings on homosexuality, saying, “It's like a knife in your heart, because I believe in vocation. I believe in the calling of God. I believe in Jesus. I believe He wants us to serve his people, and when a document says: oh, you are not able, that is ... that is terrible. It's painful. I hope that, one day, priests can be freely in a relationship, and be good priests. That celibacy in the church will be optional.”

Nearly a year in the making, *Secrets of the Vatican* presents a stark picture of the church Pope Francis inherited, and raises tough questions about whether he will be able to make meaningful headway on the many problems within the Vatican and the powerful Curia that runs the Vatican bureaucracy.

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CREDITS

A Quicksilver Media production for WGBH/FRONTLINE and Channel 4.

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