

IN THE CLOSET
OF THE
VATICAN



POWER,
HOMOSEXUALITY,
HYPOCRISY

Frédéric Martel

FLOUWSEUR

**In the Closet of the Vatican: Power,
Homosexuality, Hypocrisy**

Frédéric Martel? (Translation)

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In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy Frédéric Martel? (Translation)
The *New York Times* bestselling account of corruption and hypocrisy at the heart of the Vatican.

In the Closet of the Vatican exposes the rot at the heart of the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church today. This brilliant piece of investigative writing is based on four years' authoritative research, including extensive interviews with those in power.

The celibacy of priests, the condemnation of the use of contraceptives, countless cases of sexual abuse, the resignation of Benedict XVI, misogyny among the clergy, the dramatic fall in Europe of the number of vocations to the priesthood, the plotting against Pope Francis – all these issues are clouded in mystery and secrecy.

In the Closet of the Vatican is a book that reveals these secrets and penetrates this enigma. It derives from a system founded on a clerical culture of secrecy which starts in junior seminaries and continues right up to the Vatican itself. It is based on the double lives of priests and on extreme homophobia. The resulting schizophrenia in the Church is hard to fathom. But the more a prelate is homophobic, the more likely it is that he is himself gay.

"Behind rigidity there is always something hidden, in many cases a double life." These are the words of Pope Francis himself and with them, the Pope has unlocked the Closet.

No one can claim to really understand the Catholic Church today until they have read this book. It reveals a truth that is extraordinary and disturbing.

In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy Details

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Sean Whelan says

I think Fr James Martin's review on this text is the wisest. While the writing is pleasing and enjoyable, the gossipy-tone is unnecessary and off-putting. To be sure, there is a great issue within the Church. If, as Fr Jim says, a tenth of this is true-and most likely is, it is a terrible shame. However, the impact of this book could be far greater without things like calling Benedict "our little queenie" or making observances without any hint of proof. This could have been a truly earth shattering book, but the author's lack of professionalism in places damaged its potential effect.

Don Watkins says

Riveting, interesting and a beautiful ending.

Antonio Nunez says

This is a very important book, based on hundreds of interviews of churchmen, including 41 cardinals and nearly a hundred bishops, monsignors and priests, both diocesan and belonging to religious orders, as well as visits to over thirty countries, often multiple visits to multiple countries. The author, a former Catholic born in France, a product of the country's superb secular education system, is relentless in his pursuit of the rot at the core of the Catholic Church in this century.

This rot he calls "Sodom", a Republic of gay men in orders who very often pay their respects to mandatory celibacy not by complying with this rule but by viciously persecuting other gays both in and out of the Church, in and out of the closet. Because all non procreative sexuality is disordered and therefore sinful, consensual sexual relations between adult men and women, or between men, are considered on a par with the sexual pursuit of minors of either sex (although, indeed, about 80% of child victims of priests are male). So, often bishops and priests did not deliberately protect pedophiles because they sympathized with them and did not care about their victims, but because the bishops and priests had their own secrets to hide. This is not to say that there is a gay lobby in the Church, there are a majority of gays overall, and their dominance is absolute the higher one moves in the hierarchy: in the Vatican the author estimates 70%-80% of gays there and in the College of Cardinals. What rather happens is that there are gay networks of power that pervade the Church and these networks fight each other. Some of these networks are headed by powerful men like John Paul II's Secretary of State Angelo Cardinal Sodano, who wrecked Benedict XVI's papacy (Vatileaks I) and by Benedict's ham-handed Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone, who has made life miserable for Francis (as shown in Vatileaks II and Bishop Viganó's unhinged buy mainly reliable open letter).

The book is a remarkable reporting achievement, particularly for such a famously opaque environment where things always happen behind closed doors and the fiction of harmony is always preserved. Virtually anyone who is someone in the Vatican spoke at length with Martel, and many of these people were quite candid. The corruption of cardinals that squander millions in refurbishing their apartments, which they often occupy

illegally is here. Here too are the rumors about bishops and priests patronizing foreign male prostitutes near Rome's Termini station. There are some I'd heard, about Alfonso cardinal López Trujillo. Martel says that both serial rapist and pedophile Marcial Maciel and cardinal López were especially liked by John Paul II because they channeled funds to the Solidarity union movement in Poland. He dissects the literary preferences of Paul VI and the sartorial preferences of Benedict XVI to show their likely gay affinities, although very likely unconsummated. He says that the factor that led Benedict to resign, piled on top of many other betrayals and frustrations, was learning horrible things about the Church in Cuba prior to his visit there in March 2012): he even says that probably cardinal Ortega of Havana was compromised by Cuban security services, who enticed him to sexual congress with a man and recorded or photographed the encounter. Martel says that sexual misbehavior and abuses are egregious in Cuba because the government allows them in order to control the Church and block its becoming the core of a counterrevolutionary movement. He shows that although the Church has lost most of its power in Europe and Latin America, it still has enough in Africa and Asia where, in alliance with local rulers, it has legitimized the persecution of homosexuals and also permitted many preventable deaths by opposing and discrediting the use of condoms (on this cardinal López Trujillo wrote much). He shows that had the leadership directed to the fight against pederasty even a fraction of the energy it gave to homophobia, many children would have been protected from harm and many criminals would not have been allowed to continue to do harm. He shows multiple instances where sexual perversion was associated with moral compromise (as with Angelo Sodano and Pinochet in Chile) and financial corruption (as with Bishop Marcinkus and the scandals at the Vatican Bank, the IOR). He shows multiple cases of Francis's vengeful nature and political acumen against his foes. I sure hope these latter rumors are true, for Francis needs all the help he can get to survive in such a hostile environment. As seen in the very recent summit in the Vatican, which was quite short in concrete measures to stamp out pedophilia from the Church, making changes that stick is very hard in the Vatican.

So what to do? I don't know if all the things Martel says are true. But the way he piles fact upon fact, interview upon interview, and the great variety of his sources, all suggest that much, perhaps most, is real. The celibate church model is imploding. Having an all-male celibate clergy does seem, in retrospect, an almost certain way to attract men who are not attracted to women. Thus the notion of weeding out gay candidates for the priesthood would be guaranteed to extinguish many or most of the few remaining vocations. The Eastern model of married clergy and single bishops is already in the Church and it seems to work well, as it does in the Orthodox Church. There is clearly an ascetic ideal present in the Church: it comes directly from the gospels and was intensified in Paul's epistles and in the Church father's works, particularly Augustin. It is true a Christ never referred to homosexuality, but Paul did, many times, and it will be hard to strip these from the dogma. There are multiple condemnations of adultery, divorce and also fornication, particularly the harsh Mt 5:28 which John Paul II extended even to the relationship between married couples. Concerning female priesthood, this has been accepted by the Anglicans (although not all of them) but is contrary to universal Christian and Jewish practices, hence would be very hard to accept for everyone except activists who mostly seem to suppose it on secular grounds of equality between the sexes. In the end there is no easy way out of this mess. I pray the Holy Ghost will inspire pope Francis's actions. On his elderly shoulders has fallen the weight of the greatest crisis the Church has faced since the Reformation.

Claudia Hoffmann says

Important Book, Highly Recommended

Frédéric Martel's investigation of the Vatican was conducted over 4 years in Italy and 30 other countries . He interviewed 1,500 individuals, including 41 cardinals, 52 bishops and monsignori as well as apostolic

nuncios, Swiss Guards, and over 200 Catholic priests. Martel estimates that 80 percent of the priests in the Vatican are homosexual and that 80 of the children abused by priest world wide are adolescent boys between the ages of 11-17. The problem is not the large number of homosexuals in the Vatican, but that there is a powerful segment of them that voice strongly homophobic opinions in order to obscure their own life style. The Catholic church's opposition to the use of condoms in Africa has resulted in many needless deaths in the Aids epidemic.

The history and politics of the Vatican in recent decades is reviewed as well as the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI.

Pope Francis is described as realistically acknowledging and accepting gays in the Vatican.

Although I am not Catholic, I think that this is an important book for the general public to read in view of the civil rights now accorded the LGBT community, as well as the need for the Catholic Church to accept contraceptives for family planning and disease protection. The issues of celibacy, married priests, and the role of women in the church are also discussed.

Sam Nigro says

The book is really about the gay cult: power, genital maniacs, and hypocrisy. The book is a projection of gay cult into the Vatican. The book itself is an example of why gays have been rejected and ostracized for thousands of years. The book is an addition to the Homosexual Manifesto which was read to U.S. Congress in 1987--check the Manifesto out and understand the gay sickness better. As Sigmund Freud demonstrated, unnatural sex makes people crazy as does violence. "In the Closet of the Vatican" is the gay cult, crazy and violent as every where else.

Jan Stedehouder says

Though a fascinating read, 'In the closet of the Vatican' isn't a very good book. Martel obviously did his research, interviewing a great many people in various countries over a number of years. Frankly, the research costs alone must have been staggering. And for what? To describe corruption at the highest levels of the Vatican? Nothing new there. I read Peter de Rosa's 'Vicars of Christ' quite a few years ago, and that is just one of the books dealing with the topic of corruption.

The key argument that (forms of) repressed/secretly expressed homosexuality and homophilia are at the heart of the corruption and power plays in the second half of the 20th century, is in the end supported by a lot of innuendo and 'obvious' patterns, interspersed with some more solid evidence. It is amazing that apparently so many clergy were willing to go on the record and share their observations and opinions. But to me, in the end, the connection between the power plays at the courts of the last five popes and the 'closet' is not convincing.

Martel also attempts to separate homosexuality from pedophilia and the scores of abuse cases. Unfortunately, the attempt fell short because quite a substantial amount of the solid evidence for his key argument stems from the abuse cases.

So, this book provides interesting insights in the political power play in a church trying to move away from

it's Ratzingerian ideology, a play in which various key players are not below accusing one another of being part of the 'parish'. Easy to read, but in the end lacking the substance to support the key argument.

Owlseyes says

[Or, things are about to change? (hide spoiler)]

booklady says

There are not many books I regret wasting time and money on as much as I regret this one. But then I didn't waste nearly so much of my life as Mr. Martel has in writing this unfortunate piece of gossip, scandal, speculation and opinion. According to Mr. Martel, in the Catholic Church, conservative cardinals, bishops and priests—but especially the cardinals and bishops and he likes to name specific men—are closet homosexuals not in touch with their own sexuality; Liberal clergy are either openly homosexual or homophiles, i.e., openly supportive of the gay agenda.

Mr. Martel's agenda—discernible fairly early on—is that the solution to the clergy sex scandal is for all homosexual clergy to be honest about their sexuality, to come 'out of the closet'. But as most true Catholics know, when it comes to desires, fulfilling them is impossible. Giving way to our desires, as opposed to disciplining them, only allows them to grow stronger, increase in size and number and become deviant, until eventually they completely control us. There is no *satisfying* the desires of the human heart except through God alone, a God, Mr. Martel does not recognize or accept.

An interesting observation: Mr. Martel accuses a number of Conservative cardinals and bishops of being misogynists. I'm not sure what *he* means by that term, but I have always understood it to mean a man who does not like women. Doesn't male homosexuality contain a bit of misogyny in it? In this book, Mr. Martel doesn't even consider the possibility of men returning to women, for the two sexes—and no, I refuse to call them genders—working together to solve this problem of the whole human race. That the love and involvement of women is desperately needed to solve this and so many other problems in the Catholic Church. God made women for men, for a reason and when women live as fully feminine, loving wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, whether in the home, church, workplace or any where, they will influence men for the better.

AngelaR says

This book provides a historic insight in the church politics for decades and links current problems to the culture: its like a rizoom....

Every roman catholic should have the courage to read what Mr Frederic Martel has to say before just saying "it's probably all bullshit" and prefer to close their eyes...

Mary M. says

Reading this was like being trapped in a maze: an infinite number of corridors, all leading to a dead end. Who is, was, might be gay? You keep hitting an unknown. But there are several points, all repeated frequently: those who preach the loudest against being gay are most likely leading double lives and are gay themselves. The whole book could have been edited down by cutting these same statements.

Also, if any book cried out for an index, this does! Yet there is no index.

There are valid points to be made here and clearly a lot of effort went into this project. The end shows how Benedict was so overwhelmed by corruption that he was driven to resign. Yet not enough is said about the vast difference between homosexuality and pedophilia, which is totally different and the real reason for the scandals of today.

This book appears to have been pushed through production too quickly and needs a re-think.

Thomas Van says

Finally, the truth

I'm 75, and Catholic most of my life. I'm also a Gay man who was married for 46 years to my husband Robert. When he died from cancer I was not allowed to speak about our relationship at his Funeral in a Catholic Church. I was Baptized, Confirmed and Educated during 16 years of Schooling in Catholic Schools. When the Church found out that I was Gay I was treated like garbage. Now we find out about the double standard and hateful homophobia in the Catholic Church by closeted gay me. I am beyond disgusted.

Álvaro Curia says

Trata-se de uma investigação exemplar sobre os meandros da vida dos habitantes de um país, o Vaticano, que partilham, ao contrário de todos os outros países no mundo, a obrigatoriedade de uma fé comum que acarreta determinados pressupostos, como o celibato. A investigação de Martel é digna de uma tese de doutoramento, com confrontação de fontes, avaliação de material prévio, entrevistas, hipóteses de trabalho e conclusões, que atestam o rigor e a compromisso do autor com a fidelidade da obra. Ao longo do livro passei por sentimentos de choque, repulsa, pena, comiseração, esperança e sobretudo a ideia de que talvez o pior, no que se refere à hipocrisia e abusos por parte de homens da Igreja, já tenha passado. Surpreendeu-me a consistência da investigação e só não classifico com a nota máxima pela extensão do livro: 600 e muitas páginas quase nos fazem, erradamente, desistir de uma das abordagens mais sinceras e atuais ao misterioso mundo da Santa Sé.

Antony says

Boekrecensie: in de Vaticaankast

Frédéric Martel heeft met “Sodoma, het Geheim van het Vaticaan” een magistraal boek geschreven. Om dat voor elkaar te krijgen is hij persoonlijk afgedaald in de hel. In ruim 600 bladzijden loodst hij ons door de ellendige, meedogenloos cynische wereld van de katholieke kerk, inzonderheid de Romeinse curie van

Vaticaanstad. Sodoma is een sociologische studie waar dringend behoefte aan was en ik voorspel dat er nog vele zullen volgen.

Het is jammer dat we de informatie die Martel ons meedeelt niet kunnen verifiëren. Bovendien heeft hij zich voor een deel noodzakelijkerwijs moeten verlaten op verhalen uit de tweede hand. Maar gezien de aard van deze schimmige duistere wereld, waar de waarheid zich met de grootste mogelijke moeite laat veroveren op alle schijnheilige leugenachtigheid, ontkom je daar eigenlijk niet aan. 'Katholieken houden niet van de waarheid,' zo citeert Martel André Gide. En dat blijkt de duivelse waarheid van Sodoma. Al met al heeft Martel met dit boek een formidabele prestatie geleverd.

Ik kan eigenlijk niet goed concreet over het boek schrijven zonder tegelijk onpasselijk, kwaad, treurig en blij te worden. Laat ik daarom hier wegblijven van de anekdotiek; die zou geen recht doen aan het boek, dat ik iedereen die de wereld beter wil begrijpen aanbeveel te lezen.

Martel formuleert gaande het boek veertien sociologische wetten van Sodoma - een benaming hij ontleent aan de verzuchting van don Julius, biechtvader van het Vaticaan: 'Welkom in Sodoma.' In het kort komen die op het volgende neer.

Het priesterschap is jarenlang voor jonge homoseksuelen de ideale ontsnapping geweest uit de heteroseksueel georganiseerde wereld. Bij het beklimmen van de kerkelijke institutionele ladder ontmoet de ambitieuze homopriester steeds meer gevoelsgenoten, die met vriendjespolitiek en verleiding zijn geselecteerd om carrière te maken. Dit zichzelf in stand houdende mechanisme zorgt ervoor dat de curie en het hele Vaticaan voor het grootste deel uit al dan niet praktiserende heimelijke homo's bestaat; hoe hoger je komt in de piramide, hoe groter het percentage homo's.

De prelaten delen behalve hun geheimen één dwanggedachte: homoseksualiteit moet wereldwijd te vuur en te zwaard worden bestreden. Hoe verwoeder iemands homofobe obsessie, hoe waarschijnlijker het is dat deze priester, bisschop of kardinaal iets te verbergen heeft en zelf homo is.

Het Vaticaan blijkt het toneel van geruchten, roddel, lastercampagnes, afrekeningen, wraaknemingen en ongewenste seksuele intimiteiten, intriges die alle worden aangedreven door machtswellust, rivaliteit en corruptie binnen deze gesloten homoseksuele religieuze 'gemeenschap' of kliek. Nee, de homo's komen er niet te best af in Martels sociologische onderzoek!

Naar de buitenwereld toe geldt daarentegen een strenge omerta. Wee wanneer bij een publiek schandaal de eigen homoseksuele geaardheid aan het licht zou komen! Uit vrees hiervoor wordt seksueel (kinder)misbruik toegedekt en kunnen kinderverkrachters eindeloos hun gang blijven gaan.

Dat laatste is boven enige twijfel verheven de meest weerzinwekkende manifestatie van de rooms-katholieke methodiek: wereldwijd worden vele honderdduizenden onschuldige kinderen opgeofferd aan deze door en door verziekte corrupte multinational die unieke morele superioriteit claimt als basis voor haar (extreemrechtse) politieke macht.

Mij moet van het hart dat ik tijdens het lezen meerdere keren tot het voornemen kwam om mijn naam volledig en voorgoed uit de annalen van dit instituut te laten verwijderen.

Patrick Ries says

Unfortunately an important subject (homosexuality in the clergy of the catholic Church) is treated by Martel in a blathering, gossipy way. It is extremely hard to keep track of what is rumour, what is backbiting and revenge, and what is sound information. Since Martel does not seem to want to out living clergymen, he settles for innuendo (at times strenuous) when it comes to them.

Martel's style is equally poor; he writes a terrible, self-important, tiresome French (not sure what a translation makes of this).

No sociological work on the question is even quoted (although the author claims to be a sociologist).

If you can and if you are interested in analysis, not gossip, spare yourself the 600 pages and rather read e.g. Andrew Sullivan's absolutely brilliant piece "The Gay Church".

Karen Adkins says

Martel's primary focus here is on the sexual hypocrisy in the Catholic Church; as in, as the church has become more explicitly homophobic in the reigns of JPII and Benedict, simultaneously more of its bishops and archbishops are engaging in surreptitious gay behavior. The book is most moving, and hardest to read, when Martel details the exploitation and damage that this hypocrisy wreaks; the undocumented immigrants working as trafficked sex workers near the Vatican who have full rosters of clerical clients, the priests who die of AIDS while condemning condom distribution as a violation of church teaching, financial improprieties that are connected to the sexual hypocrisy. The book is less persuasive when Martel engages in extended Freudian analysis. I'm irritated by the multiple reviews or commentaries on the book that are choosing to dismiss it because it is based on "gossip" or Martel's testimony of his gaydar; while Martel makes a few glancing references to his own perceptions of someone's behavior, the simple fact is that this book is based on hundreds of interviews, many of them on the record, with Church clergy. Of the many other folks Martel spoke with, one sex worker has an extensive database of his clerical clients, including phone numbers that are accurate, photographs, etc., that has apparently been published in Italy. While Martel clearly made a deliberate choice to write the book in an arch tone (sometimes verging on camp), this doesn't mean that he hasn't done his homework. Between this, the seemingly endless sex abuse scandal, the recently revealed guidelines for priests who father children, it seems like the church is long overdue for a serious moral self-reckoning.
