



Earthly Mission: The Catholic Church and World Development

By Robert Calderisi

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With 1.2 billion members, the Catholic Church is the world's largest organization and perhaps its most controversial. The Church's obstinacy on matters like clerical celibacy, the role of women, birth control, and the child abuse scandal has alienated many Catholics, especially in the West. Yet in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the Church is highly esteemed for its support of education, health, and social justice. In this deeply informed book, Robert Calderisi unravels the paradoxes of the Catholic Church's role in the developing world over the past 60 years.

Has the Catholic Church on balance been a force for good? Calderisi weighs the Church's various missteps and poor decisions against its positive contributions, looking back as far as the Spanish Conquest in Latin America and the arrival of missionaries in Africa and Asia. He also looks forward, highlighting difficult issues that threaten to disrupt the Church's future social role. The author's answer to the question he poses will fascinate Catholic and non-Catholic readers alike, providing a wealth of insights into international affairs, development economics, humanitarian concerns, history, and theology.

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Editorial Review

Review

"‘I do not believe’, wrote Bertrand Russell, a man famous for his hostility to all religion, ‘there is a single saint in the whole calendar whose saintship is due to work of public utility’. In *Earthly Mission*, Robert Calderisi sets out to prove him wrong . . . Calderisi’s credentials for such a task are impeccable. Much of what Calderisi describes is indeed admirable, and his decision to focus on individuals within the Catholic Church – nuns and missionaries as well as popes and cardinals – makes for lively reading.”—Caroline Moorehead, *Literary Review*

(Caroline Moorehead *Literary Review* 2013-08-09)

"A wide-ranging survey with many touching stories of the work the Catholic Church has achieved in the developing world: much good, some bad . . . A levelheaded work by an author determined to hold the church to its humanitarian ideals."—*Kirkus Reviews*

(*Kirkus Reviews*)

"Few will approach his [Calderisi’s] book with an open mind. The faithful will find his candid assessment of the church’s transgressions unsettling. Its critics will find his praise of its mission similarly discomforting. Both can learn, though, from his work."—*The Economist*

(*The Economist* 2013-09-07)

"The reason this book is so stimulating is Robert Calderisi’s research over five continents and his conversations with laity, with priests, bishops and with the highest officials in the Vatican itself. He offers a cogent analysis of both the present and future trends in development."—Ed Standhaft, *Methodist Recorder*
(Ed Standhaft *Methodist Recorder* 2013-11-08)

"Robert Calderisi presents a wide-ranging and comprehensive overview of the Church’s charitable and development work, but he is also refreshingly honest and critical where he feels the Church has not been true to itself."—Lesley-Anne Knight, *The Tablet*

(Lesley-Anne Knight *The Tablet* 2013-11-02)

About the Author

Robert Calderisi, a former World Bank director concerned with issues of international development, lectures widely on Africa, development, and foreign aid. He lives in Montreal.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Barbara Cook:

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