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## **A Reporter in Rome: How the Catholic Church is Governed**

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thoroughly to have had a better picture of the Philippine situation in which he was involved. The second point is the minor one of a number of misspellings or misprints of Spanish and Filipino proper names. But these can hardly detract much from the contribution made by this biography to our knowledge of this period.

JOHN N. SCHUMACHER

## A REPORTER IN ROME

**HOW THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS GOVERNED.** By Heinrich Scharp. New York: Herder and Herder, Inc., 1960. 168p.

Like Christ her Head and Founder, the Church is both divine and human. Christ's mystical Body, she is a communion of faith. "Everywhere where believers gather in the communion of faith, there is the Church." A community of men, she is also an institution with its offices, its "civil servants," its government. "[The Church] is also a communion of law; a communion of men who need guidance, order, administration and organization." Heinrich Scharp, for many years a news correspondent in Rome, has written this book to reveal to the ordinary reader something of the Church's administration, to give us some detailed — and fascinating — information on how the Catholic Church is governed. "On feast-days," he remarks, "Rome shines in splendour; on ordinary days Rome works. The Church is governed on ordinary days. In studies and offices, amid documents and filing-systems, telephones and telegrams and wireless communication, by means of the spoken and printed word, the greatest system of government in the world is carried on" (p. 13).

This is a small book, and the author limits himself to the consideration of the central institutions of the Church's government: the Papacy, the Cardinals and the Curia. In treating of the Papacy, the author deals with the plenitude of papal power, describes the Conclave in which a new Pope is elected, gives us a good chapter on the Pontifical Court. Another chapter follows the Pope through his daily life. Discussing the different consistories (at least four kinds), the creation of new Cardinals is touched on, the role of the Cardinal in Church government, the three orders of Cardinals. Lastly, the central administration of the Church, the Curia, occupies three chapters: the various Roman Congregations, the Tribunals and Offices, their origin, their function, their significance.

This book makes easy and interesting reading. If the subject-matter is the structure of the Church's government (at first blush none

too exciting a topic!), Scharp makes his pages come to life with vivid details caught by the reporter's sharp eye and trained ear, the journalist's knack of telling a good story and picking up the "strange but true" item to feed our curiosity. For instance: the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities does grant honorary degrees, and Dr. Frank Sheed of the publishing firm is one of the very few lay recipients of an honorary doctorate in theology. Again: because of his widely-extended powers, the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith is sometimes called the "Red Pope" (his robes are the Cardinal's scarlet; the Pope's are white). Another item: all the books in the Pope's private library are bound in white.

"The finest hour in the history of the Swiss Guards, the day never to be forgotten," he tells us, "was May 6, 1527, when they covered the flight of the Pope during the sack of Rome, and were massacred to a man in St. Peter's and in the piazza outside. To this day it is on May 6 that new recruits to the Swiss Guards are sworn in" (p. 128). Of Leo XIII, the author tells us that he "spent almost his entire life as Pope in two rooms on the second floor of the Vatican Palace overlooking the Cortile di San Damaso. Anyone received in private audience in his study at noon could see in the anteroom a little table with his simple midday meal upon it, covered with a napkin" (p. 135). Leo was a great lover of the formal Vatican gardens and took personal interest in every detail of their arrangement. St. Pius X, however, disliked the symmetry of the paths, felt oppressed by their walls, longed for "the open spaces of the Venetian Plain." Pius XI, as an old mountaineer, was fond of long walks. Of John XXIII, Scharp tells us that he has restored some of the traditional offices found unnecessary by his immediate predecessors, and has set new precedents, e.g., the strengthening of the College of Cardinals by increasing the customary number of seventy.

HOW THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS GOVERNED is a very informative book and can be recommended to Catholic students and lay people especially. It should prove popular; the original German version has gone into several editions, and the English translation has had its second printing. The Catholic while picking up much useful information will be helped to realize, too, that "the history of the Church teaches how a divine purpose is achieved through human means and prevails over human weakness; how the eternal is associated with the temporal without becoming lost in it; how all that is essential is consistently preserved through all temporal changes" (pp. 13-14).