

12-1983

Review of "Power and Authority in the Catholic Church: Cardinal Cody in Chicago"

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Citation

Keefe, Thomas M. Rev. of *Power and Authority in the Catholic Church: Cardinal Cody in Chicago*, by Charles Dahm and Robert Ghelardi. *Church History* 52.4 (1983): 525. Print.

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Although there was no unified outspoken condemnation of the anti-Semitic laws, individual pastors, particularly the “young barthians” and their congregations, helped the Jews.

Overall, the book provides an admirable compendium of attitudes of religious communities having to deal with the realities of foreign occupation, racist laws, political freedom, and internment camps.

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CHARLES B. PARIS

Power and Authority in the Catholic Church: Cardinal Cody in Chicago. By CHARLES W. DAHM, in collaboration with Robert Ghelardi. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981. xviii + 334 pp. \$18.95.

In this revised doctoral thesis, Charles Dahm, a Dominican priest and a Chicago resident during the Cody era, examines the controversial cardinal's rule until 1980. Since Cody and archdiocesan officials did not cooperate with the author's research endeavors, his study is decidedly unbalanced. It is likewise apparent that Dahm sympathized with the clergy who were challenging the prelate's authority.

Chicago Catholicism historically had been at the forefront of creative ideas and movements, and Dahm suggests that it was “a community waiting for Vatican II to happen.” As the council was completing its work, Cody was appointed to the Chicago see. His reputation as a conservative authoritarian had preceded him, but a large number of Chicago priests hoped that he would prove to be flexible in the light of the council's reforms. Within a few weeks Cody demonstrated that no amount of clerical persuasion would alter his policies. When the priests attempted to improve communications, Cody interpreted their efforts as opposition. Confronted occasionally with public disapproval, and above all wishing to avoid a scandal, the cardinal submitted to some semblance of collegiality only to preserve his control over the final decision-making. As Dahm points out, church law precluded any success for the priests, and the uneven struggle ended with a demoralized, disillusioned, and divided clergy. Dahm is convinced that in the future one must look to the laity to “bring the hierarchy to heel.”

Since Dahm and his collaborator, Robert Ghelardi, have taken a thematic approach, there is an abundance of repetitious material which could have been eliminated by the editors. This monograph also needs an index. Nonetheless, it should be required reading for all intelligent American Catholics, who some day may have to deal with an ordinary like Cody. It will be decades before the cardinal's papers will be available to scholars, and even then they may not appreciably change Dahm's portrait of an astute Machiavellian.

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