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## Vatican Diplomacy

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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VATICAN DIPLOMACY, by *Robert A. Graham, S.J.*

Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1959. Pp. 442. \$7.50.

*Reviewed by*

KENNETH WANG\*

A study of Vatican diplomacy necessarily involves a close examination of the age-old vexing problem of Church-State relationship, the respective provinces of secular and spiritual domains, the status of the Pontiff vis-a-vis the temporal heads of other states in the family of nations, and the legal basis of the Pope's "right of legation, passive as well as active." The author, a noted Jesuit scholar who has done much research in the archives of the foreign ministries of several European countries, has done an excellent job in tracing the development of Papal diplomacy in medieval and contemporary European history, and in interpreting the "external relationship" of the Holy See with other states, Catholic as well as non-Catholic, in different periods of history.

Divided into four parts, the book traces the origins of the diplomatic missions of the Holy See, describes the organs of Papal diplomacy, explains the status of the Pope in Constitutional, Canonical, and International Law, and finally discusses the function of Papal diplomacy during the two World Wars, and the relationship of the Vatican with the United States and the Soviet Union. Throughout the book, the

author has eminently demonstrated his maturity of judgment in the selection of materials and his objectivity and thoroughness in his evaluation and interpretation of them.

The basic theme of the book which the author seeks to expound is the theory of "Spiritual Sovereignty" of the Pope. He points out the mistakes of many, including Catholics, in overstressing the temporal aspects of the world status of the Papacy at the expense of others. He explains that the dominion over a few acres of land under the Lateran Treaty should not be taken as the sole basis of the right of the Pope to enter into diplomatic relations with other nations, and that the spiritual or religious authority of the Pope should not be overlooked.

On the question of future prospects in Vatican-Kremlin relations, the author, in a cautious manner, seems to imply that some sort of contact will eventually have to be established whether the parties wish it or not. He says:

The past, perhaps, offers a clue to the future. The most difficult chapters in Vatican diplomatic history have been in the century before the First World War, in the areas now under Soviet hegemony. Diplomatic relations between Imperial Russia and the Holy

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See, while tense and often meager of results, were not impossible or entirely without object. At times relations were even cordial. A common interest in resolving otherwise insoluble problems kept the two parties together. What the course of Vatican-Kremlin relations may be in the second half of the 20th century is subject to too many variables to permit confident prediction. Neither party concerned in this dramatic duel will wish to initiate negotiations, or seem to, but both will be equally pushed by the exigencies of events from which neither Church nor State can really dissociate itself, whether it wishes to or not.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible to differ with Father Graham in that his view seems open to the criticism that it minimizes the fundamental ideological cleavage between the Church and the atheistic Communist world, a situation which did not exist between the Vatican and Imperial Russia prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. Since, as Father Graham indicates in his book, the establishment of normal relations be-

<sup>1</sup> GRAHAM, *VATICAN DIPLOMACY* 384 (1959).

tween the Papacy and the Kremlin must be premised upon a clear understanding that the Church shall be permitted to function in the territory of the other, especially to propagate the catechism "not merely to its own adherents but also to those not of the household of the faith,"<sup>2</sup> and since, to a Communist Government, the control of the mind is deemed of paramount importance and belongs exclusively to the realm of the State, it is difficult to visualize any possibility of rapprochement between the two, even in the distant future. The concepts of "freedom of conscience" and of "divisible sovereignty," etc. are incompatible with the Communist creed. Furthermore, it would indeed be a sad day for all mankind if the Church, in its efforts to reach a *modus vivendi* with the Kremlin, were to create the impression that its opposition to Communism is not unequivocal and that, if it serves a useful purpose, even the Pope would shake hands with the devil.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 383.