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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

**Donald S. Prudlo, *Certain Sainthood: Canonization and the Origins of Papal Infallibility in the Medieval Church*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2015, pp. xii + 217. 978-0-8014-5403-5**

Today we take for granted that, in the Catholic church, only the pope officially declares someone to be a saint. Yet this has been the case only since about 1170, when Pope Alexander III began to reserve the declaration of sanctity to the papacy. Before that date, and therefore including at least half the saints we know and many of the best known — Peter, Paul and the other Apostles, Martha and Mary Magdalene, the two Augustines, of Hippo and of Canterbury, and saints from the British Isles, Patrick, Hilda of Whitby, Bede and Boniface — were canonized (declared to be saints) by popular acclamation without any formal intervention of the papacy. The watershed of 1170 occurred a century after the beginning of the schism in 1054 between the eastern and western churches — thereafter called Orthodox and Catholic — and the strengthening of papal authority initiated principally through the Gregorian Reform movement, named after pope Gregory VII (1073-85). However, despite this gap of a century, the reservation of canonization to the papacy and the strengthening of papal authority — ‘the deployment of canonization as a tool for the centralization and consolidation of the papacy’ (p. 4) — leading ultimately to the declaration of papal infallibility at the first Vatican council in 1870, are intimately linked, according to Prudlo. This linking, and by providing a study that combines both doctrinal considerations and popular religion — approaches ‘from above’ as well as ‘from below’ — form the originality of the book, he argues. These points are outlined clearly in the Introduction (pp. 1-12) and then expanded and exemplified in the book’s six chapters.

Chapter 1 traces the earliest papal interventions in canonization from the late tenth century to Pope Alexander III’s reservation of the process to the papacy, focusing on his canonizations of Thomas Becket in 1173 and Bernard of Clairvaux the following year. The

second chapter, entitled 'They Trust not in the Suffrages of Saints,' looks at two groups who denied the Church's authority to canonize saints — Cathars and Waldensians — and, paradoxically, the encouragement their denial gave to the development of papal intervention in the process. Chapter 3 focuses on the succession of popes in the first half of the thirteenth century who were noted for their expertise in canon law, from Innocent III (1198-1216) to Innocent IV (1243-54), and their alliance with the newly founded religious orders of Franciscans and Dominicans. The result was the codification of the process of canonization, as promulgated in the *Decretalia* and other collections of canon law, as well as the canonizations of Francis of Assisi, Dominic and other saints, including significantly other members of the two orders. Prudho provides, too, evidence of the opposition to these canonizations on the part of some Catholics as well as heretical groups, notably the Cathars and Waldensians.

Chapter 4 expands on the roles of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, with the murder and canonization of the Dominican friar Peter of Verona as the focal point. Peter had been a popular itinerant preacher and peace-maker who was appointed inquisitor-general for Lombardy in northern Italy by Pope Innocent IV. Then in 1252 he was ambushed and killed by Cathars near Milan and the following year he was canonized as a saint by Innocent IV. The results were a further cementing of the alliance between the friars and the papacy, some revulsion against the Cathars and desertions from their ranks, but also opposition to the canonization on the part of some Catholics. Here too Prudho brings out well the complexity of religion and society in the Middle Ages. Chapter 5, sub-titled 'The Articulation of Infallibility in Canonization,' links papal control over canonization with the development of the doctrine of papal infallibility, challenging in particular Brian Tierney's assessment of this link. The final chapter 6 focuses on the results of the crucial period 1228 to 1260 investigating, as the Introduction states, 'the response of various groups in the church, such as the Spiritual Franciscans, the Canonists, the theologians, and the curia — always, however, looking toward the laity' (p. 11). The short Conclusion (pp. 175-9) follows.

The wide range of Prudho's reading on canonization is evidenced by both his extensive footnotes and the full Bibliography (pp. 185-211), which is divided into 'Manuscripts,' 'Printed Primary Sources' and 'Secondary Works.' The book finishes with an excellent Index covering both persons and topics.

**Norman Tanner, SJ** (tanner@unigre.it)