



The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church

Hans Urs von Balthasar

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In this theological masterpiece on the ministry of the Pope (the Petrine Office) and the nature of the Church, the great Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar examines what he calls the anti-Roman attitude—a widespread hostility toward the Papacy. Unfortunately, this attitude exists even within the Catholic Church. How should we understand this? More importantly, how should we overcome it?

Hans Urs von Balthasar answers these questions by providing a balanced discussion of the Papacy's place in the Church. He shows how the Office of Peter is an essential aspect of the ongoing life and mission of Christ's Church. On the one hand, the Papacy is not "above" the Church, the author insists, nor is the mystery of the Church reducible to the Papacy. On the other hand, writes von Balthasar, the Petrine ministry of the Pope is a crucial element among other indispensable, constitutive principles, which include what von Balthasar calls the Johannine and Pauline dimensions, and above all else on the Marian aspect of the Church.

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