



# The Legend of Pope Joan: In Search of the Truth

*Peter Stanford*

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The legend of Pope Joan--an Englishwoman who disguised herself as a man and became pope in the ninth century--has been a source of controversy for a thousand years. Fascinated by her story, but skeptical of its authenticity, British journalist Peter Stanford decided to investigate the facts. His search for the truth has produced the definitive account of one of the most intriguing mysteries of the Catholic Church. With all the riveting drama of an historical detective novel, this exciting study utilizes a variety of sources and methods, from ancient papal tomes to present-day psychological profiling. And in an age when many women identify with Joan's struggle for recognition in a male-dominated institution, Stanford speculates on what her legend's longevity means for the church--and asks why she still has such a powerful grip on our imaginations.

"A compelling account of one of the least-known stories in church history."-- *The Boston Globe*

"The definitive study of an amazing legend."-- *Publishers Weekly*

"Unfolds like a good mystery yarn...thorough, intelligent, and absorbing."-- *The Boston Globe*

"Stanford renders the myth itself--how this woman who penetrated the ultimate men's club has been represented, reviled, and revered for more than a millennium--in fascinating detail."-- *Entertainment Weekly*

"Carefully researched and of broad interest."-- *Library Journal*

"A valuable tool for understanding the sexual politics of the Catholic Church--as contentious an issue now as it ever has been--and an extremely engaging read as well."-- *Willamette Week* (Portland, OR)

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