



Supplications from England and Wales in the Registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary, 1410-1503 (Canterbury & York Society)

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Supplications from England and Wales in the Registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary, 1410-1503 (Canterbury & York Society) From Canterbury & York Society

The Apostolic Penitentiary was and remains the highest office in the Catholic Church concerned with sin and matters of conscience. The papacy reserved to itself absolution from certain grave sins, and successive popes empowered the cardinal penitentiary in charge of the office to absolve sinners in these reserved cases, which included violence against or by the clergy and abandonment of the religious life. The cardinal was also authorised to grant other favours that were a papal monopoly, including dispensations, notably for marriages between close relatives normally forbidden by church law, and special licences, for example allowing confession to a personal chaplain rather than one's parish priest.

Petitioners from across Western Europe requested such favours in their thousands and their supplications shed important new light on religious, social and even political history, covering themes as varied as marriage, sexual deviance, violence, the religious life, popular piety, illegitimacy, and pilgrimage. This valuable evidence, recorded in the registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary held in the Vatican Archives, has only been available to researchers since 1983. This edition makes accessible for the first time over 4,000 supplications concerning England and Wales in the office's fifty earliest surviving registers; they are presented with notes and introduction and other apparatus. Peter D. Clarke is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Southampton; Patrick N.R. Zutshi is Keeper of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cambridge University Library, and a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

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Review

This painstaking edition stands alongside the *Repertorium Poenitentiariae Germanicum* as a source for the Penitentiary, and represents an ambitious project that will serve students of the British church for generations to come. COMITATUS

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