

A NOVEL

CARDINAL GALSWORTHY



EDWARD R. F. SHEEHAN



CARDINAL
GALS

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藏书章



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BY EDWARD R. F. SHEEHAN

FICTION

Kingdom of Illusion
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Innocent Darkness
Cardinal Galsworthy

NONFICTION

The Arabs, the Israelis, and Kissinger
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DRAMA

Kingdoms
American Innocence

A.M.D.G.

This novel is gratefully dedicated

to the memory of the late

JOHN CARDINAL WRIGHT

Whose friendship in America and in Rome

I much valued in time past

... and to

MR AND MRS CARL J. MADDALENI

Whose friendship in America

I much value in time present.

What therefore have I to do with men that they
should hear my confessions—as though it were they
who could banish all that is evil in me? Men are a
race eager to learn of others' lives but indolent to
correct their own. My memory contains the feelings
of my mind because memory is like the mind's belly.
Happiness is invisible because it has no body.

St Augustine

CONFESSIONS



A U T H O R ' S N O T E



I wrote this novel as a Romance. The *Random House Dictionary* defines "romance" as "a narrative depicting heroic or marvelous achievements, colorful events or scenes, chivalrous devotion, unusual or even supernatural experiences, or other matters of a kind to appeal to the imagination." Thus this novel narrates much of the tale of Latin Christianity in our modern time, as embodied in the life of a single very gifted, heroic, flawed, and complex man—Augustine Cardinal Galsworthy.

In reading modern novels I have often reacted uncomfortably when authors attached real names to characters from history, and then filled their mouths with fictitious dialogue. Several recent Popes appear in this book; but of course all of their conversations with Cardinal Galsworthy are fictitious. For authenticity I have never strayed far from the true and distinct personalities of these pontiffs; yet out of literary respect I have not given them names. They will appear here as "Stern Pope," "Sunny Pope," "Sad Pope," and "Slav Pope." I have omitted the Pope who reigned for only thirty-three days and whose impact on history was thus not significant.

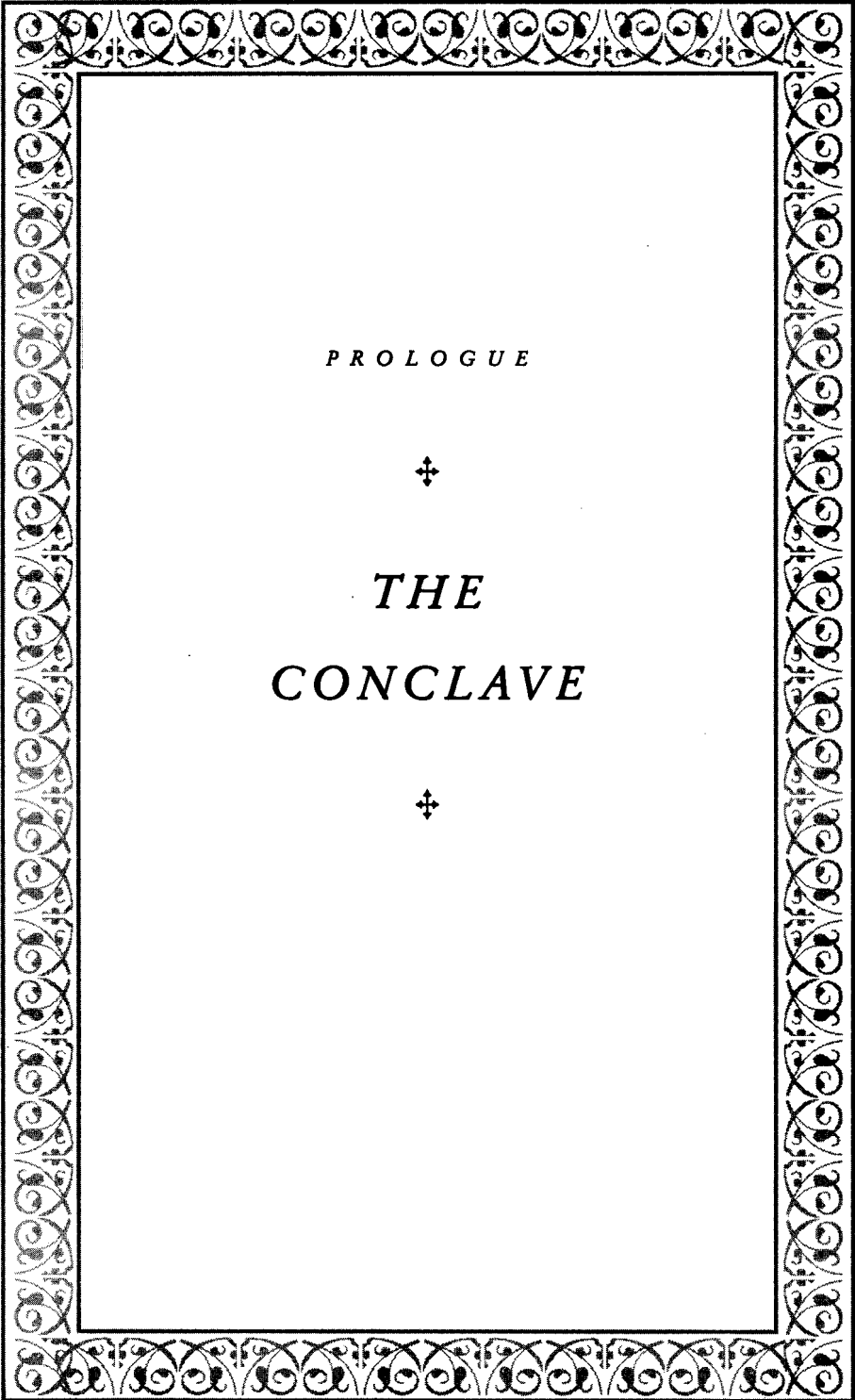
My exchanges in St Peter's basilica during the Second Vatican Council echo selectively what was truly said. I have occasionally taken very minor liberties with history; also with the geography and languages of the Congo. The cognoscenti will know whether Leo XIII had been indeed the Archbishop Titular of Trebizond or of Damietta. Certain arrangements in the papal Conclave have recently been modernized, but for drama I have favored the traditional protocols in force until 1963.

I am indebted to many authors in several languages for their accounts of the Second Vatican Council, but primarily to the basic documents of that

assembly. For various bee images in this book, I am grateful to the writings of Count Maurice Maeterlinck (Nobel laureate, 1911). Above all I am grateful to my editor, Al Silverman, whose idea this novel was, and whose editing was rigorous, creative, and inspired.

E.S.

Greycliffe
October 1996



P R O L O G U E



THE
CONCLAVE



*"The cup which my Father hath given me,
shall I not drink it?"*



Often I had reason to brood upon that verse from the eighteenth chapter of St John Evangelist, after I gathered with my brother cardinals in the Sistine Chapel to elect a successor to the Slav Pope. For you see I had more than one mind about the matter. I rejoiced and grieved that I, Augustine Cardinal Galsworthy, was amongst the most favoured candidates to ascend the throne of St Peter. Should I or should I not be Pope?

We were nearly on the eve of the Third Millennium. I had been alone with the Slav Pope when he died, oddly, on the roof of the Apostolic Palace, stung by bees from his apiary. In the moment before he left this vale of tears, he fixed his eyes on Heaven and asked me a riddle: "Will the bees ever taste the honey that they harvest?"

Not so many years before, toward the end of his long pontificate, the Pope had created me Camerlengo, or Chamberlain, of the Holy Roman Church. Thus upon the death of the Pope I became head of the Sacred College of Cardinals and prince regent of the Church during the interregnum—until a new Pontiff should be raised up from amidst his brothers.

As prince regent it was I who summoned my fellow cardinals from around the world to Rome and the Apostolic Palace, where the Conclave assembled to pursue its hallowed task in a Church

Universal ill with discord. I was sixty-nine, an ideal age for the papacy—and too proud not only that my health was so robust but that even into the lengthening shades of life I had kept the elegance of my appearance, the trimness of my tall body, and my face ascetical beneath my silver-white locks of hair, abundant still. The season was July, all wet heat. I opened the Conclave.

Or rather—a fortnight after the Pope's death—I shut the Conclave. In my capacity as Camerlengo I sealed the College of Cardinals inside the labyrinth of rooms around the Sistine Chapel that we might undertake the election with zealous secrecy. Banishing all but cardinals and their chaplains ("conclavists"), with a golden key I locked the apartments from within. Then I strode towards the chapel—the last in a glorious procession of brother princes, we each of us in our full robes of Sacred Purple, progressing through the marble halls under the lunettes and frescoes—preceded by our conclavists with rococo crosses and blazing candles and sweet incense.

In the Sistine Chapel, we heard Mass invoking the guidance of the Holy Ghost, celebrated by the Dean of the Sacred College—an African—the finely wrought Patrice Cardinal Zalula, Prefect of Bishops, in years only slightly older than myself. We were one hundred and twenty electors. To be chosen Pope, a cardinal needed two-thirds of the ballots, plus one—eighty-one votes. We were to cast our ballots in the chapel twice each morning and twice each afternoon until we should elect the successor to the Slav Pope. Our rubrics were scrupulous and elaborate.

The conclavists withdrew to other rooms, leaving the electors alone in the chapel. The cardinals sat along the walls in nooks at shrouded little desks under miniature baldachins. Since I had been a Prince of the Church for nearly three decades, my seniority placed me near the head of the class: by the high altar beneath Michelangelo's Last Judgement.

For each vote (or "scrutiny") the Cardinal Dean sat before the altar at a great table bearing a huge golden chalice. In order of seniority the cardinals filed solemnly to the table, and into the chalice each elector thrust his ballot. Various cardinals, chosen by lot, assisted His Eminence Zalula in counting out the ballots and announcing the results. The first scrutiny chastened me.

I received but five votes. I had not, of course, voted for myself. I had voted for Cardinal Zalula—as rock-like in the Faith as I, more heroic and saintly. Cardinal Zalula received three votes. The other ballots were scattered between various Italians from the sternly traditional to the mildly modern. The learned Archbishop of Turin (who pretended to be both) led the pack with twelve votes.

No cardinal having received the required great majority, the ballots were stuffed into an old stove, mixed with straw and chemicals, then burned: their souls ascending as black puffs of smoke through a twisting pipe to tell the world outside that we had no Pope.

Afterwards, Cardinal Zalula told me, "But my dear Augustine, it was only the first scrutiny. You will be Pope!" I kept silent and thought, Surely I shall

never be Pope. And I thought of the several reasons why I should not be Pope and of the thousand reasons why I must be.

As the scrutinies proceeded, I craned my neck to gaze from my gilded chair at Michelangelo's vaulted ceiling; at the Sibyls and Prophets and Stories from the Book of Genesis; at God separating light from darkness, making the sun and planets, fashioning fish and birds, creating Adam and Eve, then banishing them both from the Garden of Eden. Then I looked to the Last Judgment—to the floating, redeemed nude bodies; to the angels astride clouds sounding trumpets; to the writhing damned in Charon's boat sailing off to Hell; and to the thick-waisted, thick-thighed Christ who sent them there.

I thought: Images from my childhood. Often during those days and nights, I brooded also about my childhood. May I tell you why?



PART I



CHILDHOOD





O N E



My presence in the Conclave and my wish for the papacy were the ordained and pitiless result of my infancy and youth. Indeed, as the voting in the Sistine Chapel continued, inexorably I reflected upon the sweet and turbulent romance of my length of life—much as any man might repeat in suspended time or in the instant before his death every footstep of his journey through the bright, dark world.

I was the child of minor nobility. My father was an English baronet who had married my mother for her modest fortune. My mother was American. I happened to be born in the United States on 25th December 1927, but as the years unfolded my birthplace seemed to me of small consequence. I was educated in English and in French; I spent much of my lonely childhood and youth in France. To this day I do not identify myself with any nation, though I hold four passports. When asked, I reply, as did St Paul to his tormentors, even to my auditors who do not understand, "*Civis Romanus sum.*" Or: "*Civis Vaticanus sum.*"

You will have noticed that I was born on Christmas Day—a happy portent to my parents. Then, like Christ according to the Old Covenant, I was circumcised on the eighth day of my life. (In that Tridentine era, the sacred liturgy began the New Year with the Feast of the Holy Circumcision.) Yet as my childhood progressed I was