

The architecture and decoration of Catholic churches and their importance as part of our heritage has gone largely undiscovered and unappreciated. This book is a celebration of 100 Catholic churches in England and Wales, with lively and informative text and stunning photography specially commissioned for the book. Each chapter is devoted to a milestone in the history of the Catholic Church since the Reformation, with a short, informative introduction followed by a description of each church complementing Alex Ramsays photographs. The churches vary enormously in their scale, date and location. The small, now unconsecrated, 14th-century chapel at Rotherwas near Hereford survived centuries of official persecution and more informal terror from local anti-Catholics. The 19th-century church of St Everilda in Yorkshire was built after Catholic Emancipation, but although off the beaten track in the park of a big house it still hid its interior magnificence behind non-committal, blank walls. The Gothic churches of architect Joseph Hansom strike wonder into the hearts of their visitors: at Manchesters Holy Name he contrived a space of breath-taking vastness - architecture designed to shock and awe. Early-20th-century church architects adopted a lighter - and in some cases extraordinary - approach that gave Rochdale a church with a Byzantine dome and a wall of sumptuous mosaics. All these are important, architecturally, decoratively, historically and socially, and each has an additional powerful and poignant dimension because of their remarkable stories.

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Christopher Martin, A Glimpse of Heavenâ€™ Catholic Churches of England and Wales, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and.

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