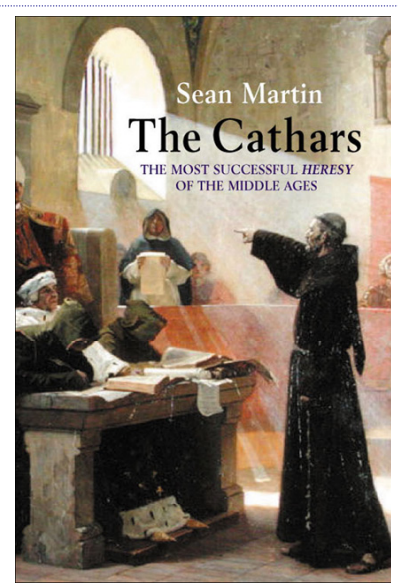


The Cathars

Sean Martin

new title

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- **Gripping, tragic true story of a peaceful sect who were wiped out in Europe's first genocide, the Albigensian Crusade.**
- **Equal appeal to the History and New Age/Mind Body Spirit Market**
- **First complete history of the Cathars for a general readership, including sections on the Cathars in Italy and Bosnia. Earlier books for a general readership only covered one aspect, while other books are aimed at an academic audience only**
- **Sean Martin is the author of the highly successful *The Knights Templar Pocket Essential***

Catharism was the most successful heresy of the Middle Ages. Flourishing principally in the Languedoc and Italy, the Cathars taught that the world is evil and must be transcended through a simple life of prayer, work, fasting and non-violence. They believed themselves to be the heirs of the true heritage of Christianity going back to apostolic times, and completely rejected the Catholic Church and all its trappings, regarding it as the Church of Satan. Cathar services and ceremonies, by contrast, were held in fields, barns and in people's homes.

Finding support from the nobility in the fractious political situation in southern France, the Cathars also found widespread popularity among peasants and artisans. And again unlike the Church, the Cathars respected women, and women played a major role in the movement. Alarmed at the success of Catharism, the Church founded the Inquisition and launched the Albigensian Crusade to exterminate the heresy. While previous Crusades had been directed against Muslims in the Middle East, the Albigensian Crusade was the first Crusade to be directed against fellow Christians, and was also the first European genocide. With the fall of the Cathar fortress of Montségur in 1244, Catharism was largely obliterated, although the faith survived into the early fourteenth century.

Today, the mystique surrounding the Cathars is as strong as ever, and Sean Martin recounts their story and the myths associated with them in this lively and gripping book.

Sean Martin is a filmmaker, poet and writer. He has written three previous books for Pocket Essentials: *The Black Death*, and the best-selling *Alchemy and Alchemists* and *The Knights Templar*. His poems have appeared in numerous magazines, and he has just directed his second feature film, *The Notebooks of Cornelius Crow*.

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