



# Radical Reinvention: An Unlikely Return to the Catholic Church

*Kaya Oakes*

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## **Radical Reinvention: An Unlikely Return to the Catholic Church** Kaya Oakes

As someone who clocked more time in mosh pits and at pro-choice rallies than kneeling in a pew, Kaya Oakes was not necessarily the kind of Catholic girl the Vatican was after. But even while she immersed herself in the punk rock scene and proudly called herself an atheist, something kept pulling her back to the religion of her Irish roots.

After running away from the Church for thirty years, Kaya decides to return. Her marriage is under stress, her job is no longer satisfying, and with multiple deaths in her family, a darkness looms large. In spite of her frustration with Catholic conservatism, nothing brings her peace like Mass. After years of searching to no avail for a better religious fit, she realizes that the only way to find harmony—in her faith and her personal life—is to confront the Church she'd left behind.

Rebellious and hypercritical, Kaya relearns the catechisms and achieves the sacraments, all while trying to reconcile her liberal beliefs with contemporary Church philosophy. Along the way she meets a group of feisty feminist nuns, a “pray-and-bitch” circle, an all-too handsome Italian priest, and a motley crew of misfits doing their best to find their voices in an outdated institution.

This is a story of transformation, not only of Kaya's from ex-Catholic to amateur theologian, but ultimately of the cultural and ethical pushes for change that are rocking the world's largest religion to its core.



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