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MANIFEST CATHOLICITY
Ultramontane Nationalists and American Expansion, 1844–1861

By

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By

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B.A., Lipscomb University, 2006
M.Div., Emory University, 2009

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Abstract

Manifest Catholicity: Ultramontane Nationalists and American Expansion, 1844–1861
By Andrew N. Denton

During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the public voices of Catholicism in the United States cultivated a nationalistic imagination that linked the hopes of the transatlantic Catholic revival to the reigning enthusiasm for transcontinental expansion. Buoyed by the Catholic Church's rapid growth within the United States, these "ultramontane nationalists" embraced their own modified notions of "Manifest Destiny," assured that national expansion would reap spiritual benefits. Yet their confidence in the American experiment could not go far without betraying their concurrent commitment to the international ultramontane alliance against liberal statecraft. Catholic prelates and publicists repeatedly found their patriotic efforts a matter of some ambivalence. They supported the U.S. invasion of Mexico in 1846 but resented the belittlement of the enemy and the damage to church property that predictably accompanied it. They extolled the virtues—and the supposedly Catholic foundations—of their constitutional republic but deplored the republican ambitions of both transatlantic insurgents and homegrown filibusters seeking to "revolutionize" the Caribbean. They styled themselves champions of national unity throughout the sectional crisis, but their conservative social and political instincts lent them a pronounced Southern accent.

In order to reconcile their national ambitions and their supranational commitments, ultramontane Catholics reimagined the United States as a Catholic country. They drew attention to Catholic colonial precedents, lionizing the Spanish foundations of newly annexed territories in particular. They developed a "counternarrative" that traced American liberty to Maryland's pilgrims rather than New England's. By the mid-1850s they began to see a nation unified by Catholic faith as both a realistic possibility and necessary corrective to the republic's divisive tendencies. Cast in increasingly factional terms, however, their national *imaginaire* only exacerbated the rifts that it sought to heal. In all this, U.S. Catholics were not unlike their ultramontane contemporaries in Mexico, who advanced a counternarrative for their own conflicted republic in at midcentury, grounding hopes for national redemption in religious unity.

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Finally, this work belongs to the clergy and people of Immaculate Heart of Mary, a remarkable parish where the faithful daily fashion their own narrative of American Catholicism. Thanks for making it all so real.

With the sale of slaves—with enthusiasts—with the troubadour, the crusader, and the monk…
You and Me arrived—America arrived.

– Walt Whitman, “Chants Democratic”

I’m beginning to suspect that you speak Spanish because in English you no longer believe.

– Richard Rodriguez, *Days of Obligation*

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ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE

ABBREVIATIONS

BQR	*Brownson's Quarterly Review*
CA	*Catholic Advocate* (Louisville)
CDCA	Catholic Diocese of Charleston Archives
CTA	*Catholic Telegraph and Advocate* (Cincinnati)
CT	*Catholic Telegraph* (Cincinnati)
NYFJ	New York *Freeman's Journal*
PC	Pittsburgh *Catholic*
UNDA	Archives of the University of Notre Dame
USCM	*United States Catholic Miscellany* (Charleston)

Chapter One

THE INVENTION OF CATHOLIC AMERICA

Ya lo hemos dicho: la civilización del Nuevo-Mundo es debida unica y esclusivamente al catolicismo.[1]

—*La Cruz*, Mexico City, December 27, 1855

The last national mourning ritual to unfold at a pre-telegraphic pace, funeral honors for Andrew Jackson began at the Hermitage on June 10, 1845 and resumed a fortnight later in a series of ceremonies across the United States. It took a full week for news of the death to spread from Nashville to the seaboard, and a week more for the processions and orations to be arranged—for the bands and militia companies to be drilled, the commemorative banners to be stitched, the soda water and lemonade to be procured for sweating spectators. It would take even longer than expected in the city most eager to pay its parting respects.

The New Orleans planning committee intended to hold Jackson's memorial service in St. Louis Cathedral, the city's grandest church. To their surprise, however, the local bishop was unwilling to accommodate them. Bishop Antoine Blanc was, by his own reckoning, "a good citizen and a better patriot still." He was also committed to strict enforcement of ecclesiastical discipline, as recently proven in a protracted struggle with the cathedral's lay trustees over the appointment of a new pastor.[2] Whatever sort of civic beatification Andrew Jackson had earned for his storied defense of New Orleans in 1815, as a lifelong Protestant he clearly did not qualify

[1] "We have said it before: the civilization of the New World is due uniquely and exclusively to Catholicism."

[2] Antoine Blanc to John Baptist Purcell, 28 June 1845, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Collection II-4-i, UNDA. The Creole *marguilliers*, or lay trustees, of St. Louis Cathedral had for decades retained control over pastoral appointments, rather than the local bishop; Blanc, bolstered by the pro-clerical and anti-Creole bent of the city's growing Irish population, was the first bishop to challenge them successfully. See Randall M. Miller, "A Church in Cultural Captivity: Some Speculations on Catholic Identity in the Old South," in *Catholics in the Old South*, ed. Miller and Jon Wakelyn (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 35–36; Patrick Carey, *People, Priests, and Prelates: Ecclesiastical Democracy and the Tensions of Trusteeism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 269–270.

for any funeral rite under Catholic auspices. When the planning committee modified its request and asked that the cathedral simply serve as a venue for a eulogy, Blanc again demurred. The most recent Provincial Council of Baltimore had made a point of excluding all non-religious functions from church buildings, citing "lay orations" in particular for disapproval.[3] Jackson's obsequies would instead take place just outside in the Place d'Armes. The iconic cathedral would serve as a backdrop for the ceremonies, but its doors would remain closed.

Blanc's refusal made him momentarily the target of extensive "noise, threats and abuses" in the local and national press.[4] The *Christian Observer* typified the reaction of many Protestant religious papers, which seized upon the occasion to vilify Catholic ingratitude and disrespect toward an American hero.[5] The *Jeffersonian*, meanwhile, disseminated rumors of dissent among the New Orleans clergy, reporting that, in spite of the bishop's position, masses were being offered for the repose of Jackson's soul throughout the city.[6] Fabricated though such intelligence might have been, Blanc certainly did not escape censure from his own flock. Armand Pilié, a "*bon catholique*" layman, questioned the bishop's judgment for declining to honor publicly the man who "saved our country from the yoke of a Protestant enemy" in the War of 1812.[7]

The Jackson funeral controversy hauled Bishop Blanc into a court of public opinion that recent advances in print communication had rendered national in jurisdiction and swift—before long, instant—in judgment. But if the new realities of the print market strengthened the plaintiffs' argument, they also aided the bishop's defense. Blanc could now rely, as he could not have a decade earlier, on a full rack of Catholic periodicals to plead his case before local critics and

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[3] See Peter Guilday, *A History of the Councils of Baltimore* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1932), 138; Guilday, ed., *The National Pastorals of the American Hierarchy (1792–1919)* (Washington: National Catholic Welfare Council, 1923), 150–161.

[4] Thus did Blanc describe the ordeal in a private letter to Bishop John Baptist Purcell of Cincinnati: Blanc to Purcell, 28 June 1845.

[5] *Christian Observer*, July 4, 1845.

[6] So reported Father James Mullon, pastor of St. Patrick's Church in New Orleans. Mullon quickly denied the allegations and pledged his full support to Blanc's prohibition of "all *religious* participation in the contemplated funeral obsequies." Mullon to Blanc, 24 June 1845, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-c, UNDA.

[7] Armand Pilié to Antoine Blanc, 18 June 1845, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-c, UNDA.

distant pundits alike. His own diocesan organ, *Le Propagateur Catholique*, was quick to justify the "painful necessity" of turning down the funeral committee's request. Cincinnati's *Catholic Telegraph* praised Blanc for refusing to violate his conscience, "even for General Jackson." In New York, the *Freeman's Journal* wondered mockingly whether Presbyterians would have agreed to "the performance of *their* funeral usages, if they have any, in memory of the late Charles Carroll," the Catholic patriot and last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, who had died in 1832. The *Catholic Advocate* of Louisville concluded that "we may honor the memory of a hero, a statesman, or a good citizen, but we have no right to act as if he had been a member of our religious communion."[8]

Even as it showcased the exclusiveness of Roman religious ritual, the New Orleans controversy also prompted Blanc's sympathizers to underscore the firmness with which Catholics stood on the "broad platform of common nationality" alongside their fellow citizens.[9] Shutting the cathedral doors did not signify a boycott of the funeral festivities. Blanc himself was pleased to report that, "to the astonishment of many," he and six other priests joined the funeral cortège, their carriage saluted by parade marshals.[10] The Washington correspondent to the *Freeman's Journal*'s proudly described the participation of Georgetown students in a similar procession at the nation's capital. The editorial in that week's issue contended that "none have shown themselves more ready" to honor Jackson's memory than "the very Catholics who have been…so profusely reviled." The *Telegraph* concurred that Catholics not only equaled but excelled other Americans in their devotion to Jackson; indeed, "no denomination stood by him with more fidelity, or voted for him with more confidence in his patriotism, than the Catholics." Where many newspaper accounts emphasized the non-partisan character of the memorial services, here were commentators who dared to suggest that Catholics, given their overwhelming support for

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[8] *Le Propagateur Catholique*, June 21, 1845; *CT*, June 24, 1845; *NYFJ*, July 5, 1845; *CA*, July 5, 1845.

[9] The phrase belongs to Father Mullon: Mullon to Blanc, 24 June 1845.

[10] Blanc to Purcell, 28 June 1845, UNDA.

the Democratic Party Jackson had refashioned in his own image, could claim greater cause to mourn his loss than many other citizens.[11]

When thrust briefly onto center stage for one of Young America's grandest public spectacles, the U.S. Catholic Church proved to be both proudly obstinate in its beliefs and oddly possessive of the national past. Andrew Jackson held no claim to Catholic sanctuary or supplication, but American Catholics fancied themselves to hold a special stake in his legacy. In New Orleans even a Whig like Armand Pillé could hail Old Hickory as "the savior of my country" from Protestant invaders. Catholic journalists in New York and Cincinnati identified him as the departed political champion of the swelling Catholic masses. Though denied a eulogy in St. Louis Cathedral, Andrew Jackson was remembered in the summer of 1845 not only as a national hero but as a *Catholic* hero.

Six years later, the terms would be reversed, when John Hughes returned from Rome an *American* hero, as well as a champion of Catholic interests. The Irish-born Bishop of New York, recently elevated to Archbishop, found letters of congratulation awaiting him from Senator Daniel Webster, General Winfield Scott, and Chief Justice Roger Taney, among other dignitaries. A largely Protestant delegation of citizens publicly thanked him for "winning esteem for the spirit and laws of our country" abroad. A banquet held in his honor on July 21, 1851 drew over 200 gentlemen in evening attire to an Astor House festooned in red, white, and blue.[12] What had Hughes done to earn such admiration? His purpose in traveling had been to receive the archbishop's *pallium* directly from Pope Pius IX, a sign of personal solidarity with the pontiff and the embattled mode of Catholicism he was beginning to embody. One might suppose that such a gesture of papal fealty would have instilled suspicion rather than esteem among nineteenth-century Americans, especially coming from a controversialist like Hughes, who at times appeared

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[11] *NYFJ*, July 5, 1845; *CT*, June 24, 1845. The Pittsburgh *Catholic* clearly borrowed its editorial opinion on this matter from the *Freeman's Journal*, though with slightly altered wording: "No persons have been more anxious to show respect to the memory of the departed hero and President than the very individuals so ignorantly reviled." See *PC*, July 12, 1845.

[12] *USCM* , July 26–August 2, 1851; *NYFJ*, August 2, 1851.

to enjoy antagonizing Protestants. Yet the investiture of New York's first Archbishop was generally taken as a matter of civic pride. Indeed, hopeful rumors swirled that Hughes would soon be made a cardinal, an ambition for which U.S. diplomats lobbied in Rome.[13] Wary as they were of the Pope's spiritual jurisdiction, many Yankees still bore enough of a national inferiority complex to be flattered by any display of attention from a European monarch. For at least one evening in 1851, Pius IX's portrait hung proudly opposite George Washington's in the Astor House dining hall.[14]

Alongside Andrew Jackson's almost-Catholic funeral, John Hughes' Roman pilgrimage turned patriotic triumph suggests how firm a footing *ultramontane nationalism* had gained in the United States at mid-century. The term may at first appear oxymoronic, for ultramontanes—those Catholics who sought guidance *ultra montes*, or across the Alpine mountains in Rome—favored a *supra*national mode of Catholicism, one that took its cues from the Vatican, downplayed local customs, and subordinated national church hierarchies to papal authority. To lend this mindset a nationalist connotation may seem especially inapt in the U.S. context, where the young republic's aspirations frequently took on the tenor of Protestant eschatology. In his era-defining editorial of December 27, 1845, John L. O'Sullivan proclaimed it the United States' "manifest destiny" to cultivate the western reaches of America for the good of humanity, embracing a tradition of messianic nationhood that ultramontanes, among other skeptics, could endorse only with careful qualification.[15] Moreover, many vocal groups of citizens viewed ultramontane Catholicism—

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[13] John R.G. Hassard, *Life of the Most Reverend John Hughes, D.D., First Archbishop of New York* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1866; Arno Press, 1969), 340.

[14] *NYFJ*, August 2, 1851.

[15] The phrase "manifest destiny" appeared without much notice in the summer 1845 edition of John L. O'Sullivan's *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, coined by either O'Sullivan himself or his associate Jane McManus Storm in an anonymous article supporting the annexation of Texas. A second, more celebrated usage occurred in O'Sullivan's December 27, 1845 editorial for the New York *Morning News*, which defended the U.S. claim to Oregon by asserting that it was the nation's "manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent." From this point "manifest destiny" quickly became shorthand for the expansionist creed. Its adherents believed the United States to hold a naturally, or even divinely endowed title to America's western reaches, for the purpose of spreading democratic freedom and increasing the scale of a world-transforming model in republican government. In support of the theory that it was Storm—a Catholic convert, interestingly enough—who coined the phrase,

resurgent throughout the Atlantic world and encroaching upon U.S. shores through alarming rates of immigration—as inimical to nationalistic commitments. The "Native American" parties of the mid-1840s and the "Know-Nothings" a decade later contended that papal allegiance and national progress stood at irreconcilable odds in the United States. Such views hardly held sway throughout the country at mid-century, however. The organizers of Jackson's funeral and Hughes' festivities, Protestant and Catholic alike, did not find it unseemly to mix symbols of Roman devotion with signs of American pride. The bishops themselves—Blanc in New Orleans and Hughes in New York, both unwavering in their commitment to ultramontane discipline—did not hesitate to participate in patriotic rituals that respected the church's prerogatives.

Such displays of national pride did, to be sure, often conceal undercurrents of ambivalence. Throughout the 1840s and 50s, as territorial expansion thrust the United States toward a catastrophic identity crisis, Catholic prelates and publicists repeatedly found themselves confronting some version of the dilemma that Jackson's funeral had posed. They embraced, to an extent, all those energetic currents of the age that Andrew Jackson seemed to capture in cameo form: the wonders of transport by steamboat and locomotive, the promise of a broadened democratic franchise and an expanded consumer market, the Manifest Destiny of the west and the vast rewards awaiting Anglo-American supremacy therein. Yet there inevitably came a point at which they could not participate in the enthusiasm of post-Jacksonian nationhood without betraying their concurrent commitment to the international revival of a disciplined, assertive, and decidedly *Roman* Church. Catholic spokesmen supported the U.S. invasion of Mexico in 1846 but resented the belittlement of the Mexican faithful and the damage to church property that predictably accompanied it. They extolled the virtues—and the supposedly Catholic foundations—of their constitutional republic but deplored the republican ambitions of both transatlantic insurgents and homegrown filibusters seeking to "revolutionize" the Caribbean.

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rather than O'Sullivan, see Linda S. Hudson, *Mistress of Manifest Destiny: A Biography of Jane McManus Storm Cazneau, 1807–1878* (Austin: Texas State Historical Society, 2001), 48, 209–210.

They styled themselves champions of national unity throughout the sectional crisis, but their social and political inclinations lent them a pronounced Southern accent.

It is nonetheless striking that, when faced with these tensions between national hubris and Roman triumphalism in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Catholic thinkers in the United States did not choose to retreat from public life, walling themselves within a devotional sanctuary while hostile throngs of patriots paraded outside. Neither did they fling open the church doors and repurpose their altars for civic pieties. They instead followed Bishop Blanc's course and celebrated the national project on their own terms, rejoicing in their young republic's fortunes, respecting their ancient church's autonomy, and forging between these two loyalties a more than accidental linkage.

Historians have often given the impression that U.S. Catholics in the mid-nineteenth century were hemmed by nativist neighbors and their own reactionary clerics into positions of cultural combativeness and insularity.[16] While this "siege mentality" model helps explain many social realities, from settlement patterns to political machinery to struggles over public education, it gives only selective attention to the *mind* of mid-century Catholicism. In particular, it fails to account for the robust, confident vision of American nationhood that Catholic churchmen preached and Catholic editors promoted in the public sphere. The coterie of writers and lecturers

[16] The basic contours of this narrative were shaped by Robert D. Cross in *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958). Cross characterizes the middle decades of the nineteenth century as an era of "comprehensive hostility to America and Americans" among the nation's Catholics, most of whom remained in culturally isolated immigrant communities, fearful and disdainful of the Protestant majority and the "active, melioristic spirit of the times" (24–5). The beginnings of a "liberal" Catholic temperament—a faith marked by public engagement and democratic activism rather than clannish seclusion—become evident, in Cross's view, only with John Ireland, James Gibbons and the other "Americanists" of the late nineteenth-century, who believed in and sought to embody "the perfect compatibility of American and Catholic ideals" (38).

Though somewhat less transparent in their ideological motivations, the next generation of American Catholic historians preserved this narrative essentially intact. Jay P. Dolan, for instance, in his *In Search of An American Catholicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), identifies the church's mid-nineteenth-century tenor as one of "Romanization." The bishops of this era he depicts as authoritarian, culturally combative, and encouraging of immigrant insularity. In this, "the era of the immigrant church," a "siege mentality emerged, fostering a militant sectarian attitude that was no friend to tolerance" (54). Dolan sees this era of "Romanization" as a long hiatus between the "enlightened Catholicism" of the Federal period—which was marked by simplicity of devotion and a tolerant, accommodating attitude toward American culture—and the emergence of "Americanism" and Modernism in the late nineteenth century.

who gave the Catholic Church its public voice at mid-century forged their own account of the United States' history, identity, and future prospects. Across the "roaring forties" and the fractious fifties, while the country doubled in size and split in two, there persisted an exchange of spirited, increasingly irreconcilable conceptions of what the nation was and what it ought to be. Rather than abstain from this frenzied conversation, ultramontane writers, empowered by the advent of the steam press and the telegraph, made their own distinct contribution to the imagining of a nation whose very existence was still under negotiation.

The burden of this dissertation is to discern how the nationalistic imagination of American ultramontanes took shape between the invasion of Mexico and the outbreak of civil war. My contention is that the Catholic bishops and printers of this period crafted a vision for the expanding—and straining—United States that deliberately integrated the promise of international Catholic revival with the promise of national expansion. A secondary aim of my project is to demonstrate that this ultramontane imagining of America emerged not only in conversation with European models of Catholic identity but also with constant reference to the concurrently emerging nations of Latin America, Mexico in particular. The United States' growing pains at mid-century were, by the force of will and the accident of proximity, bound up with the larger destiny of the continent and the Caribbean. To a degree largely unappreciated, ultramontane nationalists in the U.S. were preoccupied by the manner in which their visions made sense of Catholic republics to the south, as well as how they related to the antirevolutionary struggles of Old World Catholic sovereigns across the sea.

Ultramontane Nationalism in the Atlantic World

"All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away," Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels observed in their *Manifesto* of 1848. Their famous summary of the dizzying effects of bourgeois ascendancy— "all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned"—gave voice to the feelings of fellow socialists and many others

whom the nineteenth century had left reeling.[17] By 1848, few could doubt that the Atlantic World was, for better or worse, losing its time-honored moorings. The revolutionary momentum of 1776 and 1789 had catapulted from Haiti through Mexico and South America, and eventually into the heart of Europe, challenging colonial and monarchical powers with republican models of government. The industrial revolution had likewise accelerated, sweeping millions of workers into a more efficient but less stable economic order. Yet another bequest of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment's spirit of inquiry, continued to dismantle traditional seats of authority, from the veracity of scripture to humanity's fixed place atop the unchanging hierarchy of the natural world. From one angle of vision, the nineteenth century's central motif throughout Western Europe and the Americas was the triumph of modernity: of the secular state, democratic politics, industrial capitalism, and enlightened skepticism—in a word, liberalism. But compelling counter-narratives were concurrently taking shape, Marx's the most famous among them. Arguably even more influential in the long run was a separate path to modernity, sometimes parallel to socialism but directed toward a different end: namely, the revival of an aggressive, disciplined, missionary-minded Catholicism—in a word, ultramontanism.[18] Liberals from Peru to Prussia named ultramontanism their arch-nemesis; no less starkly did ultramontanes forswear liberalism, as Pope Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* made notoriously clear in 1864.[19] Indeed, it

[17] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), 476.

[18] In a broader context, it would perhaps be best to say the revival of "ecclesial traditionalism" rather than ultramontanism, for Roman Catholics were not the only ones who adopted a robust ecclesiology in response to liberal politics and theology. The Oxford Movement in the Church of England, German Lutheran Confessionalism, and Prussian High-Orthodoxy—as well as the cognates of each that took hold in America—all placed a renewed emphasis on apostolic authority, historical continuity, and doctrinal stability. Such expressions of conservative Protestant romanticism mirrored the ultramontane revival among Roman Catholics, turning to the church as a source of social cohesion and epistemological security, and often evoking nostalgia for the political and aesthetic superiority of medieval times.

[19] The final, and most widely quoted of the errors denounced in the Syllabus is "That the Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself to, and agree with, progress, liberalism, and modern civilization." Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder, eds., *Documents of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 277. Though a moderate and in many ways an outlier among the ultramontanes, John Henry Newman portrayed liberalism as the church's great antagonist in a famous appendix to his *Apologia pro vita sua*. Newman defined liberalism as "the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it," an error equally

would not be hyperbolic to identify the central drama of the nineteenth century as the "unusually intense conflict over public space" between these two seemingly irreconcilable views of how life ought to look in the modern world.[20]

Ultramontanism describes a theological commitment, a political orientation, and a devotional aesthetic.[21] Like many religious titles, it was the invention of outsiders, and like most "isms" its precise boundaries were elusive. The term gained prominence in seventeenth-century France as a way of differentiating those who submitted to papal authority from "Gallicans" who jealously guarded the prerogatives of the French national church. By the nineteenth century it had become an epithet for Catholic obstruction to liberal statecraft, perhaps employed to greatest effect in Bismark's *Kulturkampf*. When adopted by the parties themselves in question, "ultramontane" became a proud signifier of doctrinal allegiance to Rome, anti-revolutionary politics, and a welter of devotional practices centered on the apocalyptic figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Much that has worn the label of "traditional" Catholicism since the Second Vatican Council refers not to the timeless essence of Latin Christianity but rather to relatively recent products of the ultramontane revival. This point bears not only upon liturgical and theological "traditionalists," but also upon historians who have until recently tended to portray ultramontanism as a static or retrogressive ideal against which the forward-moving currents of liberalism contended. Most ultramontanes did in fact cast their agenda in such terms, positioning themselves as defenders of unchanging truth in a world of frightening transience. But perhaps

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destructive in matters of philosophy, theology, and politics. Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. David J. DeLaura (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1968), 216–225.

[20] Austen Ivereigh, *The Politics of Religion in an Age of Revival: Studies in Nineteenth-Century Europe and Latin America* (University of London Institute of Latin American Studies, 2000), 1.

[21] For a fuller survey of what precisely characterized the ultramontane revival, see Margaret Lavinia Anderson, "The Divisions of the Pope: The Catholic Revival and Europe's Transition to Democracy," in Ivereigh, *The Politics of Religion*, 23–33. Anderson includes such phenomena as the conversion of "celebrity" intellectuals, a new wave of missions, a zeal for establishing Catholic schools, and an increase in religious vocations. Though she writes of the European context, all of these characteristics apply to the revival in the U.S. as well. With regard to missions, for instance, see Jay P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience, 1830*–1900 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977).

they gave themselves too much—or, as the case may be, too little—credit. In retrospect, the nineteenth century's Catholic apologists appear both reactionary and innovative, meeting, and in some cases anticipating, the challenges of the liberal nation-state with a creative reassessment of the church's external priorities and a refashioning of its interior focus.

Foremost among their achievements was the transformation of the papacy. In the century prior to the First Vatican Council (1870), the Roman pontiff went from being a relatively obscure Italian monarch to the infallible face of an international communion, whose written voice and pictorial likeness were, for the first time in history, known to Catholics throughout the world. Part of this change was accidental, the result of political losses that cost the Pope most of his temporal subjects and technological advances that gained him a wider audience among his spiritual subjects. Much of it, however, was the result of a robust Rome-centered ecclesiology that erected the Chair of Peter into a seat of resistance against liberal pretensions. Papal infallibility offered an epistemological safeguard against skepticism and rationalism, a doctrinal safeguard against heresy and schism. Just as importantly, it provided an institutional stronghold against liberal governments that were seeking to wrest education, property, and legal jurisdiction from the church throughout Western Europe and America. In the minds of ultramontane theorists, a confederation of national churches would too easily acquiesce to such demands. Only when unified as a supranational organization under the Pope's firm authority could the church maintain autonomy, constituting a "true society" with "true and full jurisdiction" over its members, as Clemente Munguía, Mexico's foremost clerical apologist, worded it.[22] To be ultramontane was to acknowledge Rome as the final arbiter not only in doctrinal matters but in conflicts over public space as well.

It is not surprising, therefore, that "ultramontane" came to denote opposition to any form of revolution, most especially to the movement for Italian unification. When Europe erupted in

[22] Clemente de Jésus Munguía, *Del Derecho natural in sus principios communes y en sus diversas ramificaciones, o sea, curso elemental de derecho natural y de gentes, público, politico, constitutional y principios de legislación* , 3 vols. (México: Imprenta de la Voz de la Religión, 1849), 1:189, 205.

1848, the Church stood on the side of law and order, closing ranks against republican insurgents on every front. It would be misleading to suppose that ultramontanes uniformly supported the political *status quo* or the alliance of "throne and altar." John Henry Newman and his fellow Oxford converts had first set down the road toward Rome by challenging the Erastian tendencies of the English crown; as Catholic apologists, they usually sided with the Liberal Party against aristocratic conservatism. The church had given aid to Daniel O'Connell's intensely religious campaign for Irish liberty (though not to the more radical Young Irelanders of '48 or the Fenian revolutionaries of later years). The secession of Belgium from the United Provinces of the Netherlands had largely found favor among ultramontanes. Although the Paris insurrection of 1848 gave them chills, Montalembert and Lacordaire, among other theologians, sought to balance their papal allegiance with a measure of republican politics, while most French churchmen chose at least tacitly to support Louis Napoleon's *coup d'Etat* rather than cling to dreams of a restored Bourbon monarchy. In the fledgling republics of the New World—where, save for an occasional minority of conservatives, a return to colonial rule was unthinkable—the church uneasily reconciled itself to democracy, siding with those parties most favorable to clerical interests.

Despite these indications of political flexibility, however, the church was earning its reputation as a defender of authoritarian regimes. Like the transformation of the papacy, this was a rather unpredictable development.[23] The scholastic theology that shaped the ultramontane mind had taken root among the republican city-states of medieval Italy, and its theory of limited government had unnerved many an early modern monarch. But France's Reign of Terror cast a long shadow, and the specter of further chaos caused the mid-century church to prioritize political stability. "Republican" became a dirty word in ultramontane circles—even, eventually, in the United States—due largely to its association with Garibaldi and the architects of Italian nationhood, who had made an exile and a prisoner of Pius IX, depriving him of his domains and

[23] See Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 23–24, for more on the emergence of the "authoritarian" rather than the "popular" understanding of civil power among nineteenth-century Catholics.

threatening the very center of the Catholic universe. To be ultramontane was to take the Pope's side in this archetypal showdown between Christian civilization and revolutionary republicanism, as well as in all corollary conflicts.[24]

The church's embattled mentality, emanating from Rome into numerous other theatres of discord, contributed to the emergence of a distinctively ultramontane style of devotion. The "devotional revolution" that seized Ireland and other countries in the nineteenth century was, explicitly or not, a form of counter-revolution.[25] Prompted by Pius IX's liberal granting of indulgences and guided by a proliferation of cheaply printed handbooks, laypeople stockpiled prayers of protection for their pontiff and other beleaguered Catholics across the world.[26] Older forms of devotion –Stations of the Cross, the Forty Hours, prayers to the Sacred Heart—shed their local variants and, when marshalled to the cause of the universal church, gained a new "Romanized" uniformity.[27] Ultramontane aesthetics signaled solidarity with Rome in other facets of parish life: the broadening popularity of Italian clerical garb, such as cassocks and birettas, for instance, or the worldwide adoption of the Italian title *monsignor*.[28] Such prayers and practices sustained an ultramontane ethos among peasants, laborers, and others for whom the cultured orbit of literary Catholic apologetics was either inaccessible or uninteresting.

At the center of ultramontane devotion stood the sorrowful but triumphant Mother of God. Like the pope, the Blessed Virgin Mary experienced an expansion of personality in the early nineteenth century, culminating in the authoritative acknowledgment of her Immaculate

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[24] See Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[25] Emmet Larkin coined the term "devotional revolution" in reference to Ireland and the Irish diaspora, as a way of describing the mid-nineteenth-century reforms in which "the great mass of the Irish people became practicing Catholics, which they have uniquely and essentially remained both at home and abroad down to the present day." The phrase nicely captures a similar style of revival that occurred elsewhere in the ultramontane world. See Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland: 1850–1875," in *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 57–90.

[26] Ann Taves, *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 24–28.

[27] Ibid., 102–111.

[28] See Anderson, "The Divisions of the Pope," 25.

Conception in 1854. Reinforced by three sensational, politically charged apparitions to young French girls—to Catherine Labouré in 1830, at La Salette in 1842, and at Lourdes in 1858—this papal pronouncement affirmed a dramatic shift in emphasis toward Mary's apocalyptic significance. The *Immaculata* was not merely the epitome of Christian virtue or the foremost of saintly intercessors; she was the woman of Revelation 12, who stood with the moon at her feet in defiance of a menacing dragon. For the millions of Catholics who wore Labouré's miraculous medal, made the pilgrimage to Lourdes, venerated Our Lady of Guadalupe's *tilma* in Mexico, or worshiped in the numerous U.S. churches erected at mid-century under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception, Mary offered protection from revolutionary violence and hope for the church's final vindication against the impious powers of the world.[29]

By reinforcing papal authority, erecting an anti-revolutionary front, and achieving a remarkable homogeneity of devotional practice, ultramontane Catholics mounted a formidable challenge to liberal state formation across the Atlantic World. The success of this venture largely rested in its supranational character, its appeal to an authority that lay beyond national boundaries. But it would be an incomplete portrait of the ultramontane revival that focused on its international, "Romanized" uniformity to the exclusion of its several national variants.[30] Recent studies have tendered overdue recognition to the fact that ultramontanes played a constructive as well as an obstructive role in the modernization of culture and the emergence of national consciousness. Against older currents of scholarship—Mexico's *historiografía triunfante*, for instance[31]—which assumed nineteenth-century "progress" and nation-building to be solely the

[29] The newly erected cathedrals of San Francisco, Mobile, and Norfolk, to name a few, bore the title of the Immaculate Conception. Indeed, among cathedrals raised in the United States during the 1850s, those *not* named for the Immaculate Conception constitute the exception rather than the rule.

[30] For example, Jeffrey von Arx maintains that "Ultramontanism can only be properly understood by a careful study of its place and functioning within a particular context." *Varieties of Ultramontanism* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 2.

[31] Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, *Poder, Politico y Religioso: México Siglo XIX* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autonóma de México, 2010), 11. For recent reactions against this longstanding school of interpretation, which caricatured clerical conservatism as a "fuerza reaccionaria y enemiga del progreso," extraneous or obstructive to the process of Mexican nation-building, see, among others, Erika Pani, "Una ventana sobre la sociedad decimonónica: los periódicos católicos, 1845–1857," *Secuencia* 36

preserve of liberals, a new generation of historians has portrayed the ultramontane challenge not as a negation of the modern nation-state but as a rival mode of imagining it. Although in some cases clerical apologists did object to the very notion of nationhood—particularly in Germany and Italy, where such a project required the collapse of church-controlled principalities—in many others they fashioned compelling visions of national identity rooted in the histories, customs, and sentiments of their respective peoples.

The Roman and the romantic were not mutually exclusive tendencies after all. The seeds of romantic nationalism, scattered so widely in the nineteenth-century Atlantic World, found rich soil in ultramontane minds. One could hardly imagine writers more possessed of romantic sentiment than François-René de Chateaubriand, whose *Genius of Christianity* set the tone for a century of literary clericalism in France, or Isaac Hecker, the onetime transcendentalist who dreamed of converting the United States, or José María Roa Bárcena, Mexico's lyrical champion of Catholic conservatism. For these and other ultramontane nationalists, the Church's vindication was a matter not merely of philosophy and theology but of history and culture. The early nineteenth century had witnessed an unprecedented rise in historical consciousness—including a particular fascination with medieval life— that transcended confessional and ideological bounds. Ultramontanes channeled this new historical sensibility into a series of narratives that traced the essence of their respective nations to an idealized Catholic past. Wherever contests over national identity occurred, whether in the emerging states of the New World or the realigning states of the Old, Catholic intellectuals and activists could be found construing nationhood less as an achievement in popular self-determination than as a distinct legacy of religious habits and attitudes.

In France, ultramontane nationalism found several expressions: nostalgia for an ancient succession of Catholic kings and resentment of all that the Terror of 1793 had left in ruins; a

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(1996): 67–88; Jaime Olveda, ed., *Los obispados de México frente a la Reforma liberal* (Guadalajara: El Colegio de Jalisco, 2007); *Estado, Iglesia y sociedad in México, Siglo XIX*, ed. Alvaro Matute, Evelia Trejo, and Brian Connaughton, (Mexico: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras-UNAM, 1995).

perceived mandate, sharpened by rising Protestant empires in Britain and Prussia, to reassume the Carolingian role of stabilizing Catholic power on the continent and extending protection to the Pope; even a defense of local dialects, such as Breton and Basque patois, on the grounds that *Frenchness* was a matter of religion rather than language.[32] Holding them together was the cherished epithet declaring France "the eldest daughter of the church," a nation that, since the day that Clovis united the Franks and submitted to Christian baptism, had borne an indelibly sacramental character. Ultramontane nationalists perceived their history as a dogged defense of this inseparably French and Catholic identity against a succession of threats, internal and external, from the Plantagenets to the Huguenots to the Jacobins. They found a hero in Joan of Arc, whose cause for sainthood began to gain traction only in the nineteenth century.

Perhaps nowhere was Catholic revival more closely linked to a rise in national consciousness than in Ireland. It might easily have been otherwise. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the penal laws seemed to have wrought their intended effect: Catholic practice had reached a nadir and Protestant evangelists were optimistic. But by midcentury the devotional revolution had taken hold, with effects that would be felt throughout the Irish diaspora. As Gaelic continued to give way to English, ultramontane piety provided the Irish people with a new language for resisting Anglicization. The Church situated itself as the nation's sturdiest redoubt of non-Englishness.[33] Priests and political activists alike called the Irish people to embrace their ancient allegiance to the Roman faith, which predated English Christianity and had survived centuries of English persecution. Daniel O'Connell succeeded in organizing the first mass political movement of modern times in large part by lending it the character of a religious

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[32] See Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French Forever: religious and national identity in modern France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 121–154.

[33] See Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–1875"; Stewart J. Brown, "The New Reformation Movement in the Church of Ireland, 1801 –1829," in *Piety and Power in Ireland, 1760–1960: Essays in Honor of Emmet Larkin*, ed. Stewart J. Brown and David W. Miller (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 180–208. Challenging the assumption that Ireland's enduring devotion to Catholicism was a foregone conclusion, Brown details the intense efforts toward Protestant conversion made by an unlikely alliance of establishment evangelicals and high churchmen in the years prior to emancipation.

awakening. When he died on pilgrimage in Italy in 1847, weakened after a stint in British prisons, his followers considered him a martyr—whether in the strict religious sense or in the political sense was by this point immaterial. No firmer testament to ultramontane nationalism exists than the Liberator's request that his heart be buried in Rome and his body in Ireland.

Things were somewhat different across the Atlantic, where the Catholic Church could claim roots no deeper than two or three centuries; even among conservative architects of American identity, nationhood was understood to be more a matter of invention than inheritance. But for American patriots of ultramontane proclivities, the fledgling nations of the New World were a matter of *divine* invention, creations not of novel ideology or experimental politics but of a solemn covenant mediated through the church. Nowhere was this clearer in the nineteenth century than in Mexico, America's foremost example of a national identity indecipherable apart from Catholic theology—or at least Catholic iconography. Mexican patriots of many political persuasions, from *puro* liberals to clerical conservatives, looked to *la Guadalupana*—the sixteenth-century apparition of the Virgin Mary to a Nahua convert at the hill of Tepeyac—as the wellspring of Mexican nationhood. *Guadalupanismo* affirmed that God had commissioned a new people, Indian and Spanish alike, for a special mission in the world. According to one line of interpretation, it was this notion of providential election—epitomized in the biblical motto *non fecit taliter omni natione*, "He has not dealt thus with every nation"—that animated Mexico's creole leaders to assert their separateness from Spain.[34]

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[34] D.A. Brading traces the rise of "creole patriotism" and a nationalistic consciousness to the development of the Guadalupan cult. See Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State, 1492–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 343–361; *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition Across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

For related but varying perspectives on the religious motivations behind Mexican independence, see Brian Connaughton, "Conjuring the Body Politic from the Corpus Mysticum: The Post-Independent Pursuit of Public Opinion in Mexico, 1821-1854," *The Americas* 55:3 (Jan., 1999): 459–479; Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810 –1821* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001). Connaughton draws upon more popular sources than does Brading, tracing the push for independence to a tendency among Mexican villagers "to think of themselves as the guardians of a more pure and unblemished faith." Van Young gives an even more in depth account of popular support for the rebellion, particularly among Indian villagers, many of

However broadly shared such religious sentiments may have been, divisions ran deep over the church's proper role in public life—whether it advanced or obstructed the formation of a genuine nation from Mexico's incredible variety of ethnicities, languages, and local loyalties. Even prior to independence, the church had long contested governmental attempts to centralize authority by curtailing clerical privileges. Indeed, the roots of Mexico's frequent church-related conflicts extend all the way back to the initial period of evangelization typified in the story of Guadalupe. The first Spanish friars enjoyed extraordinary powers within their *doctrinas,* or missions, which allowed them to isolate native villagers from the harmful influence of worldly Spaniards. The Indians, for their part, often found alliance with the friars beneficial to the maintenance of their local languages and customs, against the Hispanicizing imperatives of the crown. It did not take long for such preserves of religious autonomy, governed by apocalyptic mendicants preaching in Indian languages, to arouse suspicion. Even in the early colonial heyday of crown-and-clergy cooperation, religious orders were sometimes suspected of preventing Indian villagers from becoming fully productive members of the imperial domain.

Such sentiments led to scattered attempts to secularize missions—that is, remove them from the control of religious orders—in the seventeenth century, followed by a large-scale push for secularization under the Bourbon monarchs of the later 1700s. In the eyes of King Charles III and his advisors, who aspired to fashion an absolute, efficient, enlightened monarchy, the existence of an autonomous ecclesiastical sphere impeded social and economic modernization. The Bourbon reformers eliminated *doctrinas*, mandated the use of Spanish, and placed university studies under the supervision of the crown. They banished the Jesuits, expropriated certain church landholdings, and abolished the clergy's prized legal immunity from civil and criminal jurisdiction. The alienation of Mexico's clergy during the Bourbon period served as one of the primary causes for the war of independence. It fed an existing sense of anti-Spanish resentment

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whom were inspired by their own distinct apocalyptic interpretations of political events in Europe and America. Such localized manifestations of a messianic consciousness in Mexico were intertwined with, but by no means reducible to, the nationalist traditions and aspirations described by Brading.

within the Creole population and it deepened among many Indians, whose interests remained highly localized, a longstanding suspicion of centralized oversight in church affairs.[35]

During the decade-long struggle for independence (1810–1821), Mexicans united under the Virgin's banner—led, in some cases, by militant clerics such as Miguel Hidalgo—and espoused a variety of religious motivations for their cause, sustained by that broadly shared but differently interpreted sense of divine commissioning. Once removed from the Spanish domain, Mexico's unsettled question of national identity, and the church's role in defining it, became more urgent matters. Some fashioners of the new Mexican state framed their national mission in progressive terms, seeking to join the U.S. at the vanguard of a new republican order sustained by *piedad ilustrada* ("enlightened piety") rather than clerical religion.[36] Others hoped that, by establishing a state respectful of church prerogatives, Mexico might offer a model of faithful nationhood in juxtaposition to Europe's revolutionary turmoil.[37] After the *norteamericano* invasion of 1847, an emerging party of ultramontanes redoubled their efforts to cast the church as Mexico's one remaining source of unity and purpose; a resolute party of reformers, meanwhile, took the nation's defeat as a desperate call to continue the anticlerical path toward modernization first charted by the Bourbons. The intensity of the conflicts that followed—climaxing in the three-year war over the Reform of 1857—derived just as much from the potency of ultramontane nationalism as from the tenacity of liberal statecraft. When reformers pushed for policies such as religious tolerance, the response was swift from bishops, journalists, and rural villagers alike: the very idea of *Mexico*, in their eyes, held no substance apart from Catholic faith.

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[35] For more on the religious conflicts and transformations on the Bourbon period—and how they set the stage for Mexican independence—see Nancy Farriss, *Crown and Clergy in Colonial Mexico, 1759–1821: The Crisis of Ecclesiastical Privilege* (London: Athlone, 1968); Margaret Chowning, *Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752–1863* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Brading, *Church and State in Bourbon Mexico: The Diocese of Michoacán, 1749–1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[36] The classic study of Mexican liberalism in the early republic is Charles Hale, *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 1821–1853* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); for more on *piedad ilustrada* and its influence on early republican politics, see Pamela Voekel, *Alone Before God: The Religious Origins of Modernity in Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

[37] See Connaughton, "Conjuring the Body Politic"; Brading, *The Origins of Mexican Nationalism* (Cambridge: Centre of Latin American Studies, 1973).

Similar but distinct models of ultramontane nationalism took root in Spain, Colombia, Belgium, Chile, and other countries where liberal models of governance vied for social control with an entrenched Catholic infrastructure. If modern nations are indeed "imagined communities" rather than ethnically or linguistically distinct populations, then ultramontane thinkers may be regarded as some of the most creative nationalists of the nineteenth-century Atlantic World.[38] Liberals imagined their prospective nation-states through narratives of human progress, allegiance to written constitutions, lists of universal rights, and devotion to abstract symbols such as national flags or feminized personifications of Liberty. Ultramontanes meanwhile fashioned a national imagination rooted in religious narrative, holy places, and sacred symbols.[39] Their vision proved a compelling, if ultimately unsustainable, alternative to liberal nation-building throughout the traditionally Catholic territories of Europe and America. But does this model of ultramontane nationalism translate to the mid nineteenth-century United States, where Catholics formed a slight minority of the population, Catholic institutions had shallow roots, and the disestablishment of religion was already a settled fact?[40] I contend that it does—indeed, that the U.S. Catholic mind remains inadequately understood when isolated from it.

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[38] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 6, 47-66. For more on ethnic plurality and the pan-American re-conception of nationalism, see the introduction to Don H. Doyle and Marco Antonio Pamplona, eds., *Nationalism in the New World* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 1–15.

[39] This is not to suggest a complete lack of overlap between the nationalistic *imaginaires* of liberals and ultramontanes. One of my goals is to point out such areas of symbolic integration in the U.S. context. For an introductory glimpse at how U.S. Catholics wove together republican and religious symbols during the nineteenth century, see Diana Walsh Pasulka, "The Eagle and the Dove: Constructing Catholic Identity Through Word and Image in the Nineteenth-Century United States," *Material Religion* 4:3 (Nov. 2008): 306–324.

[40] It is important, to bear in mind that full disestablishment was only a *recent* reality for mid nineteenth-century Americans— Connecticut had a state church until 1818, Massachusetts until 1834—a reality still accepted with reluctance in some quarters. According to one line of interpretation, the formal establishment of religion quickly gave way to a "functional equivalent of an established church" in the northern states, where evangelicals exercised a substantial degree of political and cultural influence. See Daniel Walker Howe, "Religion and Politics in the Antebellum North," in Mark Noll, ed., *Religion and American Politics from the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Ultramontane Nationalism in Young America

By mid-century, the ultramontane revival had definitively altered the U.S. Catholic landscape. On this historians seem to agree. An older generation of culturally acclimated, reasonably prosperous Catholics—sparsely scattered among the English pioneers of Maryland and Kentucky and the French settlers of the Mississippi Valley—had given way to a flood of culturally incongruous laborers from Ireland and Germany.[41] The face of the Church's hierarchy was no longer the gentlemanly creole John Carroll, the first Archbishop of Baltimore, but the hard-nosed immigrant John Hughes, the first Archbishop of New York. Early attempts to grant lay trustees some measure of control over parish life—experiments in "ecclesiastical democracy"—had been dissolved by forceful assertions of Roman discipline and episcopal control.[42] The market for spiritual writings of the Catholic Enlightenment collapsed under demand for ultramontane devotionals.

Whether construed as a shift from an "independent American" to a European model of Catholic practice, from a "liberal" and "enlightened" religion to a reactionary faith, or from a democratic to an "authoritarian" mode of church governance, this transition into an ultramontane and "immigrant church" has typically borne negative connotations in the historical literature. It was during this period of *Romanization*, according to the prevalent theory, that U.S. Catholics became characterized by "defensiveness, parochialism and inflexibility," adopting a mode of "cultural isolationism" drilled into them by the "shock troops of Catholic revival." Such attitudes resulted, we are told, in a posture of indifference toward questions of national identity and expansion. Thus depicted, the ultramontane revival in the United States becomes an eremitic interlude between the "enlightened Catholicism" of early republican patriots such as Carroll and

[41] For a classic treatment of this transition, see Thomas T. McAvoy, "The Formation of the Catholic Minority in the United States, 1820–1860," *The Review of Politics* 10 (1948): 13–34.

[42] The phrase belongs to Patrick Carey, *People, Priests, and Prelates: Ecclesiastical Democracy and the Tensions of Trusteeism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987).

the heightened sense of national mission promoted by "Americanist" bishops in the late nineteenth century. [43]

Without doubt, the middle decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a momentous change in the appearance and the attitude of the Catholic Church in the United States. It did become largely a church of immigrants—even if not to the degree sometimes supposed.[44] And it was unquestionably a church ultramontane in character by the end of the 1850s—the bishops were not without cause for boasting that the American hierarchy was "Roman to the heart."[45] Though less favorably disposed to a decree of papal infallibility than many of their international colleagues, Yankee clerics did their part to expand the authority and personality of the Roman pontiff. Despite celebrating the Fourth of July with unreserved patriotism, they supported the Pope's hard stance against the revolutions of 1848 and all secondary tremors of unrest. They stood at the vanguard of Marian apocalypticism, petitioning for the United States to be placed under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception in 1846, eight years before the papal pronouncement of that dogma. They traded their cravats for Roman collars and their top hats for birettas, even as their architects dropped Greek revival for Gothic designs and parishioners set aside Challoner's meditative *Garden of the Soul* for the devotional pamphlet *Ave Maria*.

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[43] Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present (*Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972); Edward Wakin and Joseph F. Scheuer, *The De-Romanization of the American Catholic Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 31; Patrick Carey, *The Roman Catholics in America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 29; John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: Norton, 2003), 26–31. For another influential history that follows the same basic template, casting the mid nineteenth-century as an era of uniform Romanization that betrayed "the older independent American style," see James J. Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Within this generation historians, Carey offers the most nuanced overview of nineteenth century Catholicism, dividing the U.S. Church between "Immigrant" and "Romantic" proclivities. Only the former chose a path of "cultural isolationism" and "an aggressive minority consciousness" (29). The latter, meanwhile, urged Catholics "not simply to preserve Catholicism in its ethnic enclaves but to make American itself Catholic" (30). It is this latter strain of midcentury Catholic attitudes, more pervasive and influential than the leading survey histories would lead one to believe, that I take as my subject of inquiry.

[44] As I will discuss further in chapter three, historians and demographers have frequently overestimated the number of Catholics who immigrated to the United States in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

[45] Thus did Archbishop Martin J. Spalding characterize his colleagues prior to the Vatican Council of 1870; cited in McGreevy, 26–27.

Ultramontanism was the regnant ethos of the Roman Church in Abraham Lincoln's America, if not already in John Tyler's. Yet it would be no more accurate in the United States than elsewhere in the Atlantic World to suggest that ultramontane revival occasioned a disengaged or unconstructive attitude toward the pressing issues of a nation in formation. The standard narrative of nineteenth-century "Romanization" overreaches when it suggests a loss of American identity or a weakened sense of investment in the national experiment. In fact, the ultramontane architects of U.S. Catholic thought at midcentury took a profound interest in shaping the nationalistic imagination of their audience.

My project seeks to attend more accurately to this nationalistic imagination by correcting—and perhaps, I admit, overcorrecting—three common historiographical distortions. First, I eschew the premise that *anti*-Catholicism was the anvil against which U.S. Catholic identity took shape at midcentury. This is not to deny that a mistrust of Catholics, deep-seated in the American Protestant psyche, erupted with unusual ferocity at several moments of this era. Native Americans and Know-Nothings rise to the foreground of my narrative at certain junctures, for their political gains in the mid-forties and mid-fifties, although fleeting, did greatly preoccupy the Catholic press. Even in calmer times, the specter of religious prejudice and anticlerical violence was never far from minds of Catholic apologists. The charred ruins of the Charlestown convent, torched by a mob of Bostonians in 1833, cast a long shadow, as did the churches destroyed in the Philadelphia riots of 1844, providing U.S. ultramontanes with their own tropic equivalent of the French Reign of Terror.[46] Still, it would be a mistake to accept the terms of anti-

[46] Neither, in fairness, was violence far from the minds of ultramontanes elsewhere. There was far more anti-Catholic violence in mid-nineteenth-century France or Mexico than there was in the United States. Such animosity tends to be labeled as "anticlerical," rather than "anti-Catholic," in countries where the church held extensive institutional roots and pervasive cultural influence. But the anticlerical agenda pursued by liberals in countries like Italy, Spain, France Colombia, and Mexico bore a strong resemblance to the anti-Catholic agenda advanced by some Protestant activists in the U.S. Behind all these variants of anti-Catholic politics stood similar anxieties about the church's supposedly retrograde educational system, its vast property holdings, the non-democratic logic of its hierarchical structure, the economic inefficiency of its liturgical habits, and the decidedly illiberal form of citizenship embodied by its professed religious. Though rooted in different cultural assumptions and theological conceptions, the Catholic Church's opponents in the U.S. shared a broad platform of attack with their liberal counterparts elsewhere, making it

Catholic discourse as a reliable clue to Catholic self-understanding. To portray U.S. Catholics at midcentury as a persecuted minority—to trap them within that "siege mentality"— is to tender the Native Americans and Know-Nothings undue flattery. Catholics papers of this period read less as litanies of travail than as chronicles of triumph; they devoted a great deal of type to discrediting political adversaries and challenging religious misconceptions, but they also filled columns charting the church's extraordinary growth and praising the U.S. as an exceptionally hospitable environment for missionary labors. In the United States, as elsewhere, the ultramontane mindset was one of embattlement but also of unsettling confidence. Outsiders viewed Catholics with suspicion and bewilderment but also with enchantment, envy, and awe.[47] The Jackson funeral controversy in New Orleans, sparked over a civic attempt to showcase rather than conceal the city's Catholic heritage, signals my basic presupposition: even in the 1840s, Catholics were proudly dictating the terms of their place within the U.S. public sphere.

The tendency to exaggerate Catholic internalization of the "Protestant Crusade"—to annex the study of Catholicism into the study of anti-Catholicism—stems in part from a second distortion, namely the tendency to focus unduly on the northeastern United States, where such conflicts tended to be fiercer. It is true that by midcentury the Catholic center of gravity had shifted decisively northwards. In population and resources—if not, significantly, in mentality—the U.S. Church was no longer the predominantly Southern and Western institution that it had been throughout the early national period. The emerging ecclesiastical rivalry between the old seat of Catholic power in Baltimore and the new Catholic metropolis of New York epitomizes this transition.[48] Yet to make New York or Boston representative of the Catholic experience at

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imprudent to isolate their form of anti-Catholicism from the broader context of opposition to the ultramontane revival.

[47] See Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), xxii, 197–203.

[48] See Robert Emmett Curran, *Shaping American Catholicism: Maryland and New York, 1805 – 1915* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

midcentury would be to read history backwards, sweeping the antebellum decades into a larger narrative about "the immigrant church" that climaxes in the Progressive Era.

The engines of ultramontane thought in the 1840s were largely concentrated along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and took their cues from Charleston, the country's first hub of Catholic journalism.[49] When contemplating the future of the expanding republic, and the Church's place within it, ultramontane imaginations turned to the promising fields of the Old Northwest, which they hoped would beckon immigrants to a holy rural lifestyle; to the newly conquered landscapes of California, where Catholic settlers might breathe new life into the old Franciscan missions; to the more traditional societies of the Deep South, which offered a refreshing if imperfect contrast to the encroaching evils of industrial capitalism. As central as the urban Northeast would become to the ultramontane project of later decades, it is important to remember that in the years prior to the Civil War, Catholic dreams often played out against a Western backdrop and Catholic opinions at every latitude were still quite Southern. This chapter's opening scene—set in that liminal city which served as metropolis of the South, threshold of the West, and gateway to Latin America—once again foreshadows my intent: to adopt, in keeping with recent scholarly trends, a broader geographic scope that will allow a fuller account of the antebellum Catholic experience.[50]

Venturing even farther south and west, beyond national boundaries, I hope that by placing U.S. ultramontanes in conversation with their counterparts elsewhere—Mexico, in

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[49] McAvoy rightly recognized that "for Catholic opinions on the great national problems of the day even the immigrants took their leadership from these border states [Maryland and Kentucky]" in the mid nineteenth century. "The oratory and the Catholic press of the eastern cities were on a much lower cultural plane and were devoted to political rather than cultural pursuits." McAvoy, 24.

[50] Examples include Andrew H.M. Stern, *Southern Cross, Southern Crucifix: Catholic-Protestant Relations in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012); Michael Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier: French Missionaries and the Roman Catholic Priesthood in the United States, 1789–1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Pasquier's book follows a succession of frontier studies that indicate the field's recent regional shift, including Margaret C. DePalma, *Dialogue on the Frontier: Catholic and Protestant Relations, 1793–1883* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2004); and John R. Dichtl, *Frontiers of Faith: Bringing Catholicism to the West in the Early Republic* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2008); Anne M. Butler, *Across God's Frontiers: Catholic Sisters in the American West, 1850–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

particular—my project might correct some of the distortions wrought by an isolationist approach to the question of Catholic identity.[51] The theme of conflict between an ancient Roman Church and a young American republic forms, in its various renditions, the *Leitmotif* of U.S. Catholic studies. When applied to the mid nineteenth-century, this perennial quandary usually takes the form of a question about assimilation. Could an immigrant and ultramontane religion reconcile itself to a new American democracy? When posited in isolation from other contemporary ultramontane-liberal conflicts, this question tends toward two fallacious assumptions: first, that the tension between ultramontane culture and republican culture in the United States was unique; second, that the United States already possessed a fixed national identity with which the ultramontanes clashed.

But similar struggles over public space were raging throughout the Atlantic world, including other newly independent American republics. The United States serves as an exceptional stage for this conflict in several respects, including its history as an isolated Catholic mission territory, its relatively uncontroversial adoption of a secular constitution, and its experience of an extraordinary Protestant revival concurrent with the ultramontane revival. These considerations are sufficient to place the U.S. Catholic experience in a separate species but not, in my opinion, to remove it entirely from the genus of ultramontane-liberal conflict. As to the second fallacy, I adhere to the commonplace though not uncontested argument that the United States acquired an enduring national identity only in the wake of civil war.[52] U.S. ultramontanes

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[51] Several works have examined the relationship between Catholic participation in the Mexican invasion and nativist politics on the home front, most recently Tyler V. Johnson, *Devotion to the Adopted Country: U.S. Immigrant Volunteers in the Mexican War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012). No one has yet examined at length the conflicted attitudes of U.S. Catholics toward Mexico or other Catholic nations within the path of expansionist ambitions.

[52] James M. McPherson is among the foremost proponents of the view that it was the Civil War, more than the War for Independence, that gave the United States a national identity, an argument stated most succinctly in *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); one could make a similar, if more modest claim for the War of 1812, as does Gordon S. Wood in *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789 –1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 699 –700.

Franchot speaks of the "still provisional" sense of nationality that underlay the attempts of many Protestants to define the character of the early republic in opposition to Catholicism. My argument on this

were no more contesting a settled concept of their nation in the 1850s than were their contemporaries in Mexico or France.

The antebellum decades thrust U.S. Catholics into newly intensified debates not only about the compatibility of their religion with the national experiment but also about what precisely that experiment entailed and what sort of social order it required. The years prior to the Civil War witnessed the calcification of several competing and ultimately irreconcilable visions of American nationhood. When ultramontane commentators articulated their own understanding of the republic's origins, essence, and future course, they cast their voice into a public conversation that was anything but settled. The invasion of Mexico and its aftermath brought unresolved questions of national identity into bold relief. Did the United States indeed hold a "true title" to the entire continent, or the entire Caribbean basin, or even the entire hemisphere, as various schools of expansionism claimed? Was the republic destined to become an empire? Would its political system remain practicable across a vaster expanse of territory? Could an exotic array of peoples—many indigenous or mixed in race, many Catholic or indigenous or syncretic in religion—be absorbed without difficulty into the nation's population? If so, what sort of social stratification and racial hierarchy would be appropriate for such a heterogeneous population? Underlying all other concerns was the question of whether the Federal government could, from either a moral or a pragmatic standpoint, continue to sustain the South's "peculiar institution," which strained political consensus as it pushed westward. Like nativists and Know-Nothings, free-soilers and fire-eaters, evangelical reformers and Latter-day Saints, ultramontanes cast their own responses to these questions into an increasingly cacophonous public sphere, seeking to fulfill the demands of both ultramontane piety and expansionist republican politics.

The questions posed by national expansion, combined with the exigencies of a surging Catholic population and new platforms for mass communication, pressed clerics and lay

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point is the flip side of hers: it was this very same sense of provisional identity that animated ultramontane apologists in their parallel effort to imagine the United States as a nation favorable to Catholic interests.

commentators to formulate a coherent "myth" or "counternarrative" of American identity during this period. This narrative offered a rebuttal to the oft-repeated premise that the United States was a "Protestant country" by drawing attention to Catholic colonial history and to medieval precedents for republican government.[53] To counter the common exaltation of America's Puritan heritage—itself a mythos of recent development—ultramontane apologists developed a national origins story centered on the Catholic settlement of Maryland. To challenge the widespread assumption that Protestant notions of liberty stood behind the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, they cast the separation of 1776 as part of a broader Catholic struggle against English Protestant tyranny and the accomplishment of 1787 as a return to scholastic notions of sovereignty. This distinctly Catholic rendition of America, an invention of the midcentury press and lecture-circuit, helped ultramontane *yanquis* navigate the dilemmas of conscience posed by national advancement at the expense of their Latin American neighbors and coreligionists. If the United States were, in some sense, a Catholic country, and southwestern expansion would only make it *more* Catholic, then it was possible that the conquest of Mexico—and perhaps of other, lesser Catholic nations—could ultimately work to the Church's greater good, even if accomplished by means that the faithful could not fully endorse.

Though the content of the ultramontane narrative was not, in many cases, new—arguments showing medieval precedent for the U.S. constitution had already arisen in the early national period—only at midcentury did it acquire a form that was capable of challenging the dominant Protestant mythos and responding to the contentious political events of the day. Only in the 1840s did a coterie of public thinkers coalesce in the United States that were recognizably ultramontane nationalists, and only then did they delineate the boundaries of their imagined community in a shape that was recognizably a Catholic version of America. As with clerical intellectuals throughout the Atlantic world, it was because of—rather than in spite of—their

[53] See for example, *CTA*, June 26, 1858, which issued an explicit call for the Catholic press to rewrite "the Protestantism of history."

ultramontane commitments that they entered the contentious process of nation-building at midcentury, in hopes that a country recognizably Catholic in some sense would be the lasting result: a country that might, indeed, rise to the fore of a reinvigorated Catholic hemisphere.[54]

Ultramontane Nationalists in the Public Sphere

Only thirty-five years old in the winter of 1846, Martin John Spalding of Louisville already possessed arguably the keenest mind and sharpest pen of any Catholic cleric in the U.S. Kentucky-born and schooled in Rome, he gave brilliant expression to the ultramontane nationalist paradigm through his editorial duties for Louisville's *Catholic Advocate* and the *United States Catholic Magazine*, as well as his frequent appearances on the lecture circuit. He was well positioned, at the outset of 1846, to make a considered proposal to the U.S. hierarchy: namely, the formation of a national "Catholic Institute," headquartered in Baltimore, with branch offices in every diocese across the country. The purpose of this institute would be "to publish and circulate cheap books, tracts, school books, etc.," for purchase by Catholics and free distribution among non-Catholics; to give "more ample support" to the Catholic periodical press; and "to found libraries (circulatory) in every city and parish in the land."[55]

While the centralized superstructure that Spalding envisioned never quite materialized, energetic bishops and lay entrepreneurs would work diligently over the next decade to continue building a Catholic literary culture that could meet the aims proposed. Catholic Institutes sprang up in almost every major city, and several smaller towns as well, for the purpose of hosting religious lectures, housing Catholic literature, and providing local men with wholesome venues

[54] In describing the Catholic America that these writers imagined, my project follows closely upon the work of the late Jon Gjerde, who masterfully recapitulated the Catholic "myth" or "counternarrative" of American identity that emerged in this period. See Gjerde, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*, edited by S. Deborah Kang (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 67-82.

[55] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, 30 January 1846, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Collection II-4-j, UNDA.

for evening camaraderie.[56] Catholic colleges, now proliferating in number, trained youth in the forensic and oratory arts. An expanding Catholic press churned out weekly newspapers, monthly journals, and quarterly reviews to keep clergy and educated laity appraised of news and debate from a Catholic perspective. Like other nineteenth-century Americans, Catholics cultivated a "culture of eloquence" that they deemed essential both to good citizenship and to effective evangelization.[57]

The ultramontane nationalists who command my attention belonged to this Catholic literary subculture. As a group, they were usually, though not exclusively, connected to the diocesan newspapers and other publications approved by local church authorities. Their ranks included the bishops themselves, who were almost to a man skilled orators and writers, many of them directly involved with the press; the editors and journalists, both clerical and lay, who ran the ultramontane periodicals; the professors, tutors, and freelance intellectuals whose works circulated in the Catholic papers and Catholic lecture-halls; as well as auxiliary contributors and correspondents of various vocations, from physicians and bureaucrats to army officers and

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[56] The published aims of Buffalo's Catholic Institute were typical: see *American Celt*, November 13, 1852; also May 28, 1853, wherein Thomas D'Arcy McGee identifies the Catholic Institute as a "depot of Catholic intelligence" and a "source of Catholic public opinion." A similar statement of purpose guided the Charleston Catholic Institute: see *USCM*, February 17, 1855.

When soliciting donations to the St. Louis Catholic Institute, J.V. Huntingdon described it as the city's "chief lay institution…which concerns the intelligence, the influence, the social standing, and indirectly the political power of the vast Catholic community." The St. Louis Institute hosted an annual series of lectures, housed 1500 volumes in its library, and kept open from 7:00 to 10:00 each evening a reading room stocked with "all the chief Catholic journals published in the English language." St. Louis *Leader*, February 2, 1856.

The libraries of the institutes were stocked with books suited to the shaping of national as well as religious identity. One set of donations to Buffalo's Institute, for instance, included biographies of George Washington, Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor, and Francis Marion, and a history of the Mexican War, in addition to church histories and various devotional works and Catholic novels. *American Celt*, April 23, 1853.

[57] James Perrin Warren, *Culture of Eloquence: Oratory and Reform in Antebellum America* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999). Churchly participants in this "culture of eloquence" honed their rhetorical and dialectical talents in hopes of demonstrating the reasonableness and respectability of Christian faith. In this effort Catholics and Protestants followed parallel courses; indeed, "the Catholic clergy were fully committed to a pattern of argument analogous to the logic of Protestant rational orthodoxy." E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentleman Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795–1860* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978), 101–109.

engineers. What bound them together was a shared intention, through lectures and periodicals, to seek the Church's interests and advance the Church's vision in the public sphere.

It is important to bear in mind that my subjects form a select group, distinguished by their ultramontane perspective and their literary bent. I do not pretend that they spoke for all Catholics in the United States—as if that were possible—or for the many public figures who happened to be Catholic but considered their religious identity secondary to other considerations such as ethnicity or political party.[58] Neither do they hold a truer claim to the term "ultramontane" than do non-literary contributors to the Catholic revival, whether working-class partisans of the "devotional revolution" in the Irish wards of Buffalo or *tejanos* lobbying for the restoration of church property in newly annexed San Antonio. I gravitate toward this circle of thinkers because they left behind a discrete and coherent record of ultramontane opinions and attitudes, the best available clue into the U.S. Catholic *mind* at midcentury. Outsiders understood them on such terms, turning to their writings and speeches for the *Catholic* opinion on matters of public concern. Though hardly monotone in voice or uniform in content, together they spoke for the church, often under its explicit auspices. They formed a cohesive network, whose boundaries were fluid but whose core was readily discernible. Their interactions, both published and private, reveal a sustained

[58] Thus John L. O'Sullivan of the *Democratic Review*, the wordsmith forever associated with the term "Manifest Destiny," warrants no consideration here; whatever associations his surname might elicit, his own religious affiliations— if he had any—were well hidden. James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Herald* was known to be a Catholic by birth but an agnostic in the public sphere; Laurent Sigur of the New Orleans *Delta* may have boasted a Catholic heritage but considered himself foremost a booster for the Democratic Party and the cause of Southern nationalism.

A similar logic excludes the many Irish-American newspapers that at times offered religious commentary but remained primarily focused on Irish politics and ethnic solidarity rather than church affairs. Among these sheets, the one that came closest to resembling an ultramontane paper was the Boston *Pilot*, which from 1850 took a more pious tone under the editorship of Father John T. Roddan. But the *Pilot*'s entrepreneurial publisher, Patrick Donahoe, always considered the paper a business rather than a mission and managed it accordingly. The *Pilot*'s 100,000 subscribers remained the envy of ultramontane editors, even though they never quite considered the paper one of their own.

The instinct to consider "Catholic" anything of an Irish character in nineteenth-century America has at times created distortions in the historical imagination, among compilers of census tables and immigration records as well as readers of urban newspapers. We do well to heed David A. Wilson's reminder that "most people of Irish ethnicity in the United States were (and remain) Protestant." Wilson, *Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Volume 1: Passion, Reason, and Politics, 1825 –1857* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2008), 60.

sense of partnership and a shared purpose—nothing less than the vindication of Catholic faith in the United States and, beyond that, "the Common Cause of the Catholic World."[59]

For the furtherance of this cause, ultramontane minds leaned heavily upon two cultural mainstays, both near the zenith of their antebellum influence: the public lecture and the press. The national mania for public or "popular" lectures in the 1840s had its roots in the American Lyceum movement, which had taken hold in New England a generation prior. The Lyceum was a local institution, often started by mutual-aid societies such as mercantile or mechanical associations, that sought to promote "useful science" by hosting lectures and maintaining libraries.[60] The Catholic Institutes at midcentury clearly patterned themselves after the Lyceum model—indeed, they referred to local Mercantile Libraries as "sister institutions."[61] By the time they arose in the forties, however, the more intimate "mutual education" lectures of the early Lyceum movement had given way to a new form of public entertainment. Like debates, lectures had become a means of amusement as well as edification.[62] Lecture-halls beckoned touring speakers of regional or national reputation to capture the minds of a paying audience for two hours on a given evening, or—for the most popular and well-paid orators—to hold a course of weekly lectures for a month or more. The Catholic Institutes did their part to supply such recreation for curious urbanites, hosting hundreds of the many thousands of lecture courses advertised between 1840 and 1860.[63]

Held during the winter months, when demand for indoor entertainment was highest, Catholic lectures attracted hundreds of citizens—up to 2,000 on some occasions—to hear about a variety of topics, from the "growing tobacco evil" to "a vindication of that illustrious and much

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[59] *American Celt*, November 13, 1852.

[60] See Warren, *Culture of Eloquence*, 11–12; Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum: Town Meeting of the Mind* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1956); Angela G. Ray, *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005). For the transition from "Mutual Education to Celebrity Entertainment," see Ray, 13–47.

[61] See *Leader*, February 2, 1856.

[62] On public debates, see Holifield, "Theology as Entertainment: Oral Debate in American Religion," *Church History* 67:3 (Sept. 1998): 499–520.

[63] Donald M. Scott, "The Popular Lecture and the Creation of a Public in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of American History* 66 (March 1980): 791.

abused Queen, Mary I of England."[64] The era's best-known Catholic journalists and intellectuals, such as Orestes Brownson, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, James McMaster, and Martin Spalding, were summoned to half a dozen or more cities in a single season; Spalding, exhausted by such travels, came to consider the lecture circuit "pretty much of a bore."[65] Ultramontane speakers also made appearances in non-Catholic forums—the New York Mercantile Library Association hosted Georgetown president James Ryder and the dramatist convert George Henry Miles in the winter of 1850[66]—just as Catholic observers took interest in lectures hosted by other institutes.[67] Religiously mixed audiences enjoyed Catholic Institute lectures, though local parishioners usually predominated, which by some estimates made for a better mannered crowd ("Who ever saw a Catholic audience munching pea-nuts, or listlessly looking about, while any decent lecture was going on?" the *Freeman's Journal* observed).[68] Ultramontane nationalists did not lack a hospitable forum for their arguments in the 1850s. Even the Mardi Gras revelers of Mobile preferred a public lecture to a party, according to their vicar-general.[69] This midcentury "mania for lectures"—evident not only at Institute events, but also at holiday gatherings, charitable dinners, and other occasions for eloquent speech—allowed Catholic apologists a perfect means of broadcasting their counter-narrative of American nationhood.[70] While not all lectures addressed this subject directly, many of the most memorable did: Bishop Hughes' "The Catholic Chapter in the History of the United States," for instance, or McGee's series on "The Catholic History of North America," or McMaster's "On the Future of the United States." Form and content worked

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[64] Thomas D'Arcy McGee attracted 2000 spectators for his St. Patrick's Day lecture in Pittsburgh in 1854 (*PC*, March 25, 1854); *PC*, August 7, 1852; *USCM*, December 1, 1855.

[65] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, 18 October 1855, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Collection II-4-m, UNDA; McGee's itinerary in the winter of 1852 included lectures in Boston , New York, Cincinnati, Montreal, Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee (*American Celt*, September 11, 1852).

[66] Bode, 144; *USCM*, April 28, 1855.

[67] Herman Melville's thoughts on "The Statues of Rome" before the Cincinnati Mercantile Library Association prompted one correspondent to *The Catholic Telegraph* to entertain hopes for the novelist's conversion (*CTA*, February 6, 1858).

[68] *NYFJ*, March 15, 1856.

[69] Gabriel Chalon to Antoine Blanc, 12 March 1857, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection VI-1-l, UNDA.

[70] The phrase belongs to Father Jeremiah Cummings, himself a regular on the lecture circuit. Jeremiah Cummings to Orestes A. Brownson, 31 September 1850, Brownson Papers I-3-j, UNDA.

together in these discourses: by mastering a ritual that itself helped to create a national culture and a public sphere in the United States, ultramontane orators reinforced the argument that America was, to an unappreciated degree, a Catholic invention.[71]

Though women too attended popular lectures—indeed, their presence was at times advertised in hopes of attracting more young bachelors—the Catholic Institutes limited membership to men, reflecting a broader cultural consensus about the masculine quality of public speech. Although women consecrated to the religious life continued to befuddle many common notions of a properly gendered division of labor, Catholics in general followed the mid-nineteenth-century's partition of a masculine public sphere from a feminine domestic sphere. Boys at Catholic colleges trained for public debate and oratory; girls at convent schools and female academies gained skills better suited to the middle-class home, such as musical and poetic recitation. The Catholic lecture circuit and editorial pages featured male voices exclusively at midcentury. When women did gain prominence in print, it was usually through novels, a mode of literature that was acquiring, in the Catholic as well as the Protestant world, a "feminized" quality.[72] Novelists such as Anna Dorsey, the Washingtonian convert, and Mary Anne Sadlier, the Irish-born wife of a devotional publishing magnate, penned immensely popular tales of worldly youth finding their way to the true faith and devout immigrants struggling to maintain that faith amid difficult circumstances. Moralistic and sentimental, accessible and engaging, such works reveal a different, arguably more influential side of the ultramontane imagination in the United States; if they make little contribution to public debates or the process of nation-building, it is because the authors were expected to leave such matters aside. Their novels often appeared, in

[71] On the public lecture as "one of the central institutions within which and by which the public had its existence" in the 1850s, see Scott, 808–809.

[72] See Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977).

serial form, on the front pages of Catholic periodicals, in hopes of attracting readers, but commentary below the masthead remained the preserve of priests and lay*men*.[73]

The periodical press, which shared with the popular lecture the primary burden of bearing Catholic opinion into the public sphere, enjoyed an almost obsessive degree of attention from American ultramontanes. Bishop John-Baptist Purcell of Cincinnati was not alone in his belief that the circulation of a Catholic newspaper was a prelate's most urgent priority beyond the administration of the sacraments.[74] By the outbreak of war with Mexico, Catholics were determined to match the Protestant zeal for religious publishing that had created the first true mass medium in U.S. history.[75] Midcentury Americans were undergoing a "sea change" in reading habits, prompted by the increasing abundance and availability of printed material.[76] Now printed by steam power and informed by telegraph, newspapers circulated at an annual rate of 28.2 copies per capita in1860, up from 10.9 per capita in 1840.[77] In this climate of cheap and accessible print, periodicals became indispensable to the articulation of causes and the promotion of political interests. It is impossible to imagine abolitionism without *The Liberator* or Southern nationalism without *DeBow's Review*; it is equally impossible to conceive of American ultramontanism apart from the *Freeman's Journal* or the *Catholic Telegraph*. Like their counterparts throughout the Atlantic World, ultramontane bishops in the United States kept a firm hand on the levers of the press. John Hughes and Martin Spalding earned miters largely through editorial labors, as did all of the early bishops of Charleston; Purcell, meanwhile, kept his *Catholic Telegraph* close to home by placing it under his brother's custody. Many prelates

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[73] Though *The Student of Blenheim Forest* does capture, according to Thorp, "the fervent Americanism of Catholic society in Baltimore." (88) For more on Dorsey and Sadlier, see Willard Thorp, "Catholic Novelists in Defense of their Faith, 1829–1865," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 78 (1968): 86–110; Colleen MacDannell, "Catholic Women Fiction Writers, 1840-1920," *Women's Studies* 19 (1991): 385–405.

[74] Paul J. Foik, *Pioneer Catholic Journalism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1930), 164.

[75] David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5.

[76] See Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 117.

[77] Lorman A. Ratner and Dwight L. Teeter Jr., *Fanatics and Fire-eaters: Newspapers and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 9.

entrusted their publishing concerns to young media-savvy priests or laymen, who shared an ambition to replicate at home the success of ultramontane organs across the sea. James McMaster took his cues from Louis Veuillot, the fiery legitimist who made *L'Univers* the flagship periodical of French clericalism. Others modeled themselves after Nicholas Wiseman's *Dublin Review*, which had co-opted the talents of the Oxford converts and become the leading English-language source of ultramontane opinion. The effort seemed to be bearing fruit. By 1854, one commentator was confident that "that there is more labor given, more zeal exercised, as excellent talents employed…by the Catholic Press of this country, than by the Press of any country in Europe."[78]

Even so, it proved difficult for many Catholic periodicals to stay afloat. Some editors had to face the fact that their fellow churchgoers were "not a reading people," or at least not a people inclined to read at the standards of style and content that ultramontane literati sought to maintain.[79] Despite issuing exhortations that fell just sort of excommunication threats— "Let every Catholic, especially let every father of a family, deem it a sacred duty to patronize Catholic literature," Louisville's *Catholic Advocate* pronounced[80]—most diocesan weeklies struggled to keep several hundred paying subscribers. The *Freeman's Journal*, which boasted 10,000 readers by the end of the1850s, was an outlier, and even its enviable subscription list paled in comparison to other New York papers'. Ultramontane publicists knew they could not compete with the daily sensations of the penny press or the more accessible format of Irish papers such as the Boston *Pilot*, which at times featured Catholic commentary but appealed to much broader interests within the immigrant community. The dream of a Catholic daily was often floated but never fulfilled. Though the realities of the bottom line sometimes proved vexing, however, the ultramontane press generally did not measure its success in numbers. Its goals, as summarized by one editor, were "to obtain publicity…of matters concerning Catholic interests or feelings" and to elevate "the social standing of the whole Catholic community…to represent their taste, their intelligence,

[78] *PC*, July 29, 1854.
[79] J.F. Kirby to Ignatius Reynolds, 30 June 1847, CDCA 5M5.
[80] *CA*, April 18, 1846.

and their principles."[81] These aims the ultramontane press managed in large measure to fulfill, creating space within the American public sphere for a learned and coherent articulation of a Catholic vision. Its readership, though relatively small, was educated, cosmopolitan, and influential. Because most Catholic papers circulated nationally—through widely scattered subscription agents and well-stocked reading rooms in Catholic Institutes—their editors and readers were also tightly connected, capable of sustaining a productive conversation with one another and to speak, when necessary, with a unified voice on matters of national importance.

While my focus will rest primarily upon English-language papers, it is important not to overlook the fact that ultramontane journalism was a polyglot endeavor in the United States at midcentury. We have already encountered *Le Propagateur Catolique*, Bishop Blanc's weekly organ in New Orleans, which was skillfully managed by Napoleon Joseph Perché, an erudite French-born cleric widely revered in the U.S. Catholic press. Because most bishops and lay editors worked capably in French, Perché's opinions entered the mainstream of Catholic thought with little difficulty. This was less true of German-language commentary. Several German ultramontane sheets gained a steady readership in the antebellum decades, led by the *Der Wahrheitsfreund* of Cincinnati and Baltimore's *Katholische Kirchen-Zeitung*. Such papers took a special interest competing in challenging the liberal opinions disseminated by German-speaking "forty-eighters," partisans of the 1848 revolutions now exiled in the United States. Though largely isolated within German communities, these papers were known to be among the most faithful and successful of Catholic periodicals—indeed, it was *Der Wahrheitsfreund* that rescued the *Catholic Telegraph* from financial ruin during the Civil War.[82] Such significant auxiliaries to ultramontane opinion are worthy of further study, as are upstart Catholic papers that were arising

[81] *Leader*, January 5, 1856.
[82] See Foik, 168.

in boomtowns such Detroit, Galveston, and San Francisco.[83] The sources that will occupy my attention, however, are the better established English-language papers printed in the river-ports of the west and cities along the Atlantic seaboard.

Charleston held a certain pride of place among the ultramontane literati, for there rested the mantle of the late John England (d. 1842), the city's first bishop and the example *par excellence* of Catholic eloquence in the public sphere. Drawing upon his experience as a newspaper editor in Cork, England had established the *United States Catholic Miscellany,* the country's first viable Catholic weekly, in 1822. The *Miscellany* remained the archetype for diocesan newspapers around the U.S. through the 1840s, even as England's successors struggled mightily to make ends meet.[84] Editorial duties in the late-forties belonged to Patrick Lynch—a bright local boy destined to become the *de facto* patriarch of the Confederacy—before passing on to James Corcoran, a Carolina-born priest who possessed an incisive pen and an alienating personality. Corcoran later gained fame as a theological adviser to the Vatican Council who formulated an attempt at compromise in the definition of papal infallibility.

Closely connected to Charleston, both temperamentally and personally, was the journalistic enterprise born in Bardstown, Kentucky, the cradle of Catholic culture in the trans-Appalachian West. With the assistance of Ignatius Reynolds—who was soon to succeed England as Bishop of Charleston and proprietor of the *Miscellany*—a skilled lay editor named Benedict Webb established the *Catholic Advocate* there in 1836, before moving its offices to Louisville a few years later. Due largely to the contributions of a young Martin Spalding, the *Advocate* gained a national reputation. Unpaid subscriptions, however, forced a merger in 1850 with Cincinnati's *Catholic Telegraph*, which was edited over the next decade by the priests Edward Purcell—

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[83] William B. Kurtz has fruitfully incorporated the German papers into his recent study of Catholics in the Union states, *Excommunicated from the Union: How the Civil War Created a Separate Catholic America* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).

[84] Bishop Ignatius Reynolds published a handsome edition of England's collected works in hopes of raising money for the struggling paper, as well as for a new cathedral. In the end, the project only landed him deeper in debt. See Foik, 93.

Archbishop Purcell's brother—and Sylvester Rosecrans. A tepid Episcopalian as a student at Kenyon College, Rosecrans had followed his older brother William, the future Union army commander, into the Catholic Church in 1846, at least partly prompted by reading Spalding's *History of the Protestant Reformation*.[85] The *Catholic Telegraph and Advocate* became a strained partnership later in the fifties, as sectional fissures started to appear between the Louisville clique and the Cincinnati clique, who would later make the *Telegraph* the first and only Catholic paper to endorse outright abolition. Webb and Spalding—who was by this time Bishop of Louisville—struck out on their own again in 1858, forming the Louisville *Guardian* to offer Kentuckians an ultramontane paper more Southern in tone.[86]

Further downriver, St. Louis boasted an exceptionally prominent Catholic population and a thriving Catholic Institute but only a spotty succession of ultramontane papers. The *Catholic News-Letter*, edited by "an association of gentlemen," promised literary refinement as well as timely news but folded within a few years. In the mid-fifties, the *Leader* appeared as the experimental venture of Jedidiah V. Huntingdon, a moderately famous man of letters and onetime Episcopal minister who had become a leading lay exponent of Catholic principles, primarily through novels and verse. The paper met immediate success, reaching a circulation of 2,000 in 1855, but Huntingdon found life out west too unrefined for his liking and soon returned to writing fiction in New York.[87]

Baltimore, the one eastern city with a Catholic infrastructure comparable to that of St. Louis or New Orleans, sustained several publishing ventures, most of them overseen to some extent by Father Charles Ignatius White, a native Marylander who drew upon his connections at the faculties of Mt. St. Mary's and St. Mary's College to solicit articles. From 1843 to 1847, White edited the *United States Catholic Magazine*, a monthly literature review in which Spalding

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[85] See Max Longley, *For the Union and the Catholic Church: Four Converts in the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), 28–29.

[86] The *Telegraph* still serves as the diocesan news source for Cincinnati, making it the oldest Catholic paper in the United States.

[87] See Thorp, 73.

also had a hand. In 1850, he assumed responsibility for the *Catholic Mirror*, the new weekly organ of the Archdiocese. He also directed publication of the *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac*, the annual fact-book printed by John Murphy & Co., the country's leading distributor of Catholic prayer-books, textbooks, pamphlets, lectures, and religious novels. Another monthly review, *The Metropolitan*, circulated intermittently under the editorial guidance of White, J.V. Huntingdon, and the local freelance intellectual Martin J. Kerney. Such ventures reflected an older model of cultural influence, slower of production and more discriminating in taste, which by midcentury was giving way, even among ultramontanes, to the fast-paced, news-driven style of the daily and weekly papers.

A half-day's train ride away in Philadelphia, the *Catholic Herald* proved a steady if unremarkable presence in the slate of ultramontane sheets. The *Herald*'s founding editor had been John Hughes, then a diocesan priest with a penchant for debate. Later personalities associated with the paper included Henry Major, yet another Episcopal minister turned lay Catholic apologist; Joseph R. Chandler, a lay journalist, prison reformer, and three-term congressman; and John Duffy, a colorful army veteran whose Southern sympathies would cause trouble in 1860.[88] Pennsylvania's most impressive ultramontane periodical was the Pittsburgh *Catholic*, established in 1844 under the close supervision of Bishop Michael O'Connor, an Irish-born prelate of an especially intellectual bent, who maintained deeper connections in Rome than did most of his colleagues.[89] O'Connor later entrusted the *Catholic* to James Keogh, a local prodigy who had completed his examinations in Rome by age twenty-one and returned home to the career of a scholar-priest.

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[88] See Foik, 130–139; Joseph George, Jr., "Philadelphia's Catholic Herald: The Civil War Years," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 103 (1979): 196–221.

[89] Still running today, the Pittsburgh *Catholic* claims to be the oldest *continuously operating* Catholic news organ in the country.

O'Connor's close relationship to Pope Gregory XVI, whose bull *In Supremo* had anathematized the slave-trade and scandalized the U.S. clergy, might explain why the Pittsburgh *Catholic*, though hardly abolitionist, was noticeably less comfortable with the "peculiar institution" than other diocesan papers.

Buffalo was a city comparable to Pittsburgh at midcentury, a picturesque hamlet rapidly transforming into a smoky industrial center. Like Pittsburgh, it had a dense population of immigrants, an energetic bishop committed to meeting their religious needs, and an active Catholic Institute. From 1852 through 1854, it also had a Catholic paper that could rival any other, thanks to the unique insight of Thomas D'Arcy McGee. Even in an epoch full of transnational poets and romantic politicians, McGee cuts a memorable figure. He gained notoriety in the mid-forties as a poet and journalist on both sides of the Atlantic, first for the Boston *Pilot* and then for the Dublin *Nation*. His support of the radical Young Ireland party set him at odds with the clergy in both countries. Exiled permanently to America after the 1848 uprising, he founded *The American Celt* in New York and earned the repeated censure of Bishop Hughes before undergoing a conversion to ultramontane piety in 1851. From that point, he devoted his considerable literary talents to the "Common Cause of the Catholic World," accepting Bishop John Timon's invitation to move the *Celt* to Buffalo, transform it into a diocesan organ, and use it to strengthen the local Catholic Institute. As he traveled the lecture circuit, however, McGee grew disillusioned with the United States—its "rampant materialism, excessive individualism, loose moral standards, violent crime, and urban degradation."[90] Convinced that the more traditional cultures of Quebec or Mexico held greater promise for Catholic Americans, he repaired to Montreal and became one of the leading architects of the Canadian Confederation before a Fenian assassin felled him in 1867. Though he ultimately gave up on the United States, McGee left his fingerprint on the ultramontane nationalism developing therein. Few minds ever wrestled so persistently with the question of what it meant to be Catholic and American.

Within this generation of gifted intellectuals who kept the ultramontane presses humming, none translated his theological convictions into a compelling editorial personality as successfully as James McMaster, who took charge of New York's diocesan paper, the *Freeman's Journal*, in 1848. Raised in a strict Presbyterian home, McMaster had turned Episcopalian as a

[90] Wilson, 11.

young man and affiliated himself with the high-church party at General Theological Seminary, headquarters for the American wing of the Oxford Movement. He had followed the tractarian exodus into the Roman Church in 1845 and sought a vocation in the Redemptorist order; when turned away, he decided to serve the church through journalism, hoping to start an independent semi-weekly called "The New York Times."[91] Not desiring a competitor to his own organ, and having failed to convince Orestes Brownson to take it over, Bishop Hughes reluctantly offered the *Freeman* to McMaster, beginning a decade-long relationship of mutual suspicion and mutual benefit.[92] Hughes was not the only one to find McMaster's acerbic style at once offensive and effective. Many fellow ultramontanes recognized him as the best editor in their ranks, even if they wished "he would drop a little of the milk of human kindness into his ink."[93] It was often said—and he never tired of hearing it—that McMaster had indeed become America's Veuillot. But it would be no less accurate to say that he was the Catholic Church's Horace Greeley or Henry Jarvis Raymond, a fixture among Gotham's journalistic giants, who had built a nationally influential newspaper around his own singular, uncompromising voice.

McMaster's circle in mid-fifties Manhattan offered the closest U.S. approximation to those potent concentrations of ultramontane intellect found elsewhere in the Atlantic World: at Madame Sophie Swetchine's Paris salon, for instance, where Montalembert, Lacordaire, Dupanloup, and Cocin discussed the religious revitalization of France; or in José Maria Andrade's *libreria* in Mexico City, where the poets Roa Bárcena, Pesado, and Carpio conspired with the exiled bishop Munguía about their ongoing literary crusade. By 1856, Orestes Brownson had moved from Boston to New York, bringing his influential *Quarterly Review* with him. A philosophical omnivore who had at various times fallen under the sway of Calvinism,

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[91] James A. McMaster to Orestes A. Brownson, 12 June 1848, Brownson Papers I-3-i, UNDA. Needless to say, McMaster did not apply for a copyright on the name.

[92] "I shall never trust him, never directly oppose him, and never suffer him to cease fearing me," McMaster wrote of Hughes at the beginning of their working relationship. McMaster to Brownson, 9 September 1848, Brownson Papers I-3-i, UNDA.

[93] *PC*, June 11, 1853.

Universalism, Unitarianism, Transcendentalism, Robert Owen's utopianism, Saint-Simonism, and other early variants of socialism—one biographer dubs him the "American religious weathervane"—Brownson had been, since his conversion in 1844, the only ultramontane journalist who inarguably qualified as a national celebrity. Also residing in New York for a time was Brownson's friend and fellow pilgrim Isaac Hecker, now a Redemptorist missionary hoping to found a new religious order whose special charism would be to evangelize the United States. Other writers and lecturers of note, including J.V. Huntingdon, Levi S. Ives, and Father Jeremiah Cummings also shared close ties to McMaster, Brownson, and Hecker in New York.[94]

What bound this circle of converts together in the mid-to-late fifties was a shared conviction that it was the United States' destiny to become a Catholic nation. "The conversion of our country," Hecker had proposed to McMaster in 1855—"let this idea predominate in the *Freeman*'s columns."[95] With the sectional crisis deepening, McMaster readily obliged. Only "Catholicity," he argued in dozens of editorials, offered the nation hope for enduring union and political stability. Hecker would soon be in Rome petitioning for the formation of his American apostolate, writing articles for *La Civilta Cattolica* to convince European ultramontanes that his fellow Yankees were a people favorably disposed to conversion. Brownson was meanwhile convincing lecture audiences that "the salvation of the country and its future glory depend on Catholics," who alone could help the troubled republic to establish "a higher order of civilization" in the world.[96] This last remark famously earned a rebuke from Hughes, but not because the Archbishop refused to entertain hopes for a Catholicized United States. Hughes wanted to avoid the implication that Catholic faith was "especially adapted to the genius of the American people as such;" he had no qualms, however, with the notion that the American people might be readily adapted to the genius of Catholicism. National conversion had been a trope in one of his most

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[94] See Joseph F. Gower and Richard M. Leliaert, introduction to *The Brownson-Hecker Correspondence* (Notre Dame, 1979), 26–27.

[95] Isaac Hecker to James A. McMaster, 23 November 1855, McMaster Papers I-1-m, UNDA.

[96] Brownson, "Mission of America," *BQR* 1:4 (October, 1856): 416.

popular lectures as well.[97] The New York converts were ultramontane nationalists of an unusually dramatic stripe, but it would be mistaken to view them as proto-liberals or early "Americanists" out of step with the midcentury hierarchy and the larger Catholic world. They simply expressed in more urgent, perhaps inflated, terms a dream shared by colleagues across the country and throughout the transatlantic revival. Pope Pius IX did, after all, give his stamp of approval to Hecker's ambitions.

Conclusion: The Caudillo *and the Cathedral*

Such dreams of national conversion, which first found confident expression in the 1850s, drew upon two separate streams of triumphalistic imagery. The first was a bequest of Andrew Jackson's America: *America invictus*, a people prosperous and on the move, skilled in war and commerce, destined to cultivate the far reaches of the continent and improve the lot of humanity. The second emanates from St. Louis Cathedral, an aged fortress of the indomitable faith, autonomous in the civil sphere and a vassal of Rome in the religious. Since 1856, when a bronze sculpture of General Jackson arose in the New Orleans plaza now bearing his name, countless photographers have captured these two currents of nineteenth-century militancy in a single shot—a shot that frames a fitting emblem for the nationalistic imagination of U.S. ultramontanes during the expansionist era [figure 1]. Swept into the forward momentum of both an advancing country and a revitalizing church, they made it their mission to attain, in James McMaster's words, "a fuller appreciation of how all that is truly American is at the same time truly favorable for the very highest development of Catholic activity and of Catholic interests."[98]

In the chapters that follow, I will explore how this adaptation of "Manifest Destiny" toward ultramontane ends helped U.S. Catholics come to terms with the morally problematic

[97] John Hughes to Brownson, 29 August 1856, Brownson Papers I-3-m, UNDA. For more on the overblown history of this minor spat between Hughes and Brownson, which belies their "fundamental agreement on many points," including "the special characteristics of the United States," see Gjerde, 87.

[98] *NYFJ*, August 4, 1855.

invasion of Mexico; how it informed their efforts to re-envision America's geography and retell its history; how it sought to correct the filibustering excesses of expansionist culture during the 1850s; and how it finally collapsed in the crisis of 1861, having only exacerbated the social wounds that it hoped to cure.

In each of these episodes, I draw special attention to the manner in which Mexico and other portions of Latin America weighed upon the U.S. Catholic mind. Throughout their reflections on national expansion and its effects, U.S. ultramontanes maintained a hemispheric perspective, looking southward for solidarity and inspiration, as well as caution and counter-example. To help judge the degree to which they spoke for Catholic *America*, in the broader sense, I reserve my final chapter for the voices of Mexico's ultramontane literati, who were concurrently constructing their own alternative model of Catholic nationhood. This vision of America's Catholic roots and current prospects, which took shape in Mexico City's religious presses and conservative literary salons, revealed many basic sympathies with that crafted by their *yanqui* contemporaries but also some damning points of divergence.

From one angle, the profile cast against St. Louis Cathedral by a uniformed Andrew Jackson—the iconic depiction of that great Yankee *caudillo*—suggests the struggles shared by new American republics on their difficult paths to nationhood: their respective experiences of taming frontiers, balancing local and central powers of government, pitting popular heroes against elite politicians, and making democratic politics a matter of military triumph. From another angle, however, Jackson evokes a fierce sense of U.S. superiority and aloofness from the rest of the hemisphere. Filibuster to the Spanish Floridas and Morning-Star of Manifest Destiny, Jackson cannot but bring to mind the anti-Hispanic animus attendant to U.S. expansion. St. Louis Cathedral's Spanish colonial façade, meanwhile, reminds us that, for many midcentury Americans and Catholics most especially, Hispanic culture enjoyed a certain prestige and prominence. The funeral controversy that played out in the Place d'Armes in 1845 was a rehearsal for dramas yet to debut. U.S. Catholics would soon be at even greater pains to uphold

both the cathedral's transnational integrity and the caudillo's legacy of Anglo-American aggression. Less than a year after Jackson's funeral cortège processed through, volunteer companies bound for Mexico would be drilling in the church's shadows.

Chapter Two

REFUTING THE BLACK LEGEND, ADVANCING THE WHITE REPUBLIC

No respondremos aquí la justicia de nuestra causa: nadie duda de ella: el mundo civilizado la ha reconocido; y hasta del seno de la nacion misma que nos invade y avasalla, se han alzado mil y mil voces que la han proclamado.[1]

—*El Observador Católico*, Mexico City, April 29, 1848

The entrance of two Mexican warships into Charleston harbor on June 5, 1844 was deemed by the city's daily presses to be barely newsworthy. The *Charleston Mercury* and *The Southern Patriot* each spared four lines to announce the arrival of the steamers *Guadalupe* and *Montezuma*, which had anchored to refuel on their way to New York for repairs. One Charleston weekly, however, found the event considerably more interesting. *The United States Catholic Miscellany*—which, due to a recent episcopal transition and accompanying editorial turnover, had published little original commentary in months—devoted a column to thoughts inspired by the Mexican presence in port.

Particularly striking to the *Miscellany* was the prominence of indigenous Americans aboard the vessels, an "ocular demonstration that, much as we may boast of Anglo Saxon civilization and decry Spanish cruelty, the Spaniards have effected what we have ever failed in—the civilization of the Indians." Unlike the native peoples of North America, who had met either extermination or exile, Mexico's Indians had found their way into not only the navy but also the ranks of lawyers, clergymen, and even government officials. The explanation for such an admirable social achievement presented itself to the *Miscellany* columnist during the Mexicans' Sunday in port, when mass was celebrated aboard the *Guadalupe* on a makeshift altar draped with

[1] "We will not here address the justice of our cause—no one doubts it. The civilized world has recognized it, and from the bosom of the very nation that invades and humiliates us, thousands upon thousands of voices have arisen and proclaimed it."

"the National Flag," around which "the sons of Europe, of America, and of Africa" knelt together and prayed in the universal language of the Catholic Church.[2]

However much this sacramentally grounded approach to New World nationhood may have impressed the *Miscellany* columnist, that week's paper also featured intimations that it would soon be impossible for even Catholic Yankees to write about the Mexican military in such casual terms. The U.S. Senate was debating the annexation of Texas, a measure the Mexican government was known to consider a *casus belli*. Within a year, the Senate, spurred by James K. Polk's election to the presidency on an expansionist platform, would approve the admission of Texas as the Union's 28th state. Within two years, war would erupt and the *Miscellany* would join other Catholic periodicals in supporting hostilities against a country whose armed forces it had once greeted as an alternative—and perhaps superior—model in the construction of American identity, a multiracial people civilized and unified by Catholic devotion. Editors who had grown accustomed to defending Mexican culture against the condescending remarks of Protestant commentators would find themselves backing an invasion of the "sister republic" that was animated in many quarters by notions of racial and religious superiority.

War with Mexico forced the burgeoning ultramontane press to choose between defending the worldwide cause of Catholic civilization and rallying Catholic support for the questionable ambitions of the United States government. Its initial decision to prioritize the latter concern appeared surprising at the time as well as in retrospect. "It is not a little remarkable," reflected the New York *Freeman's Journal* a few months into the conflict, that "the Catholic religious press have stood firmly by *this* country, against a foreign *Catholic* nation" while other sectors of the press leaned in the opposite direction.[3]

The U.S. Catholic press did not, however, support the war without reservation, nor did it abandon its transnational sensitivities during the conflict. Keenly aware of the potential tension

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[2] *Charleston Mercury*, June 6, 1844; *The Southern Patriot*, June 6, 1844; *USCM*, June 15, 1844.
[3] *NYFJ*, August 8, 1846.

between its two apologetic goals, it sought to turn war coverage into both a proving ground for U.S. Catholic patriotism and a venue for instruction in the virtues of a Catholic country. "Whilst we have national rights to maintain, we also have Christian duties to fulfill," the *Catholic News-Letter* of St. Louis reminded its readers in a widely reprinted column shortly after the war's outbreak.[4] Those duties included a renewed appreciation, despite bellicose rhetoric to the contrary, of the "high degree of civilization and Christian virtue" that Mexico had attained. As "impressions" and "sketches" from occupied territory flooded the U.S. print market, Catholic writers consistently responded with a sense of defensiveness on Mexico's behalf, correcting what they perceived to be the colorings of Protestant prejudice and highlighting nobler aspects of the enemy's character.

But if "Christian duties" required a charitable and even admiring view of Mexico, they by no means precluded patriotic enthusiasm and support for the U.S. war effort. The "national rights" and interests asserted in the conflict were not, by definition, Protestant rights and interests—to admit that they were would be to admit that the United States was a Protestant country, an assertion the Catholic press never tired of contesting.[5] Despite the provocations of certain evangelical preachers—as well as the warnings of anti-war Whigs in search of political allies—the ultramontane literati did not, for all their vigilance against anti-Catholic animus of any sort, view the war as a "Protestant crusade," at least at the outset.[6] They did fear, in its latter stages, that the invasion of Mexico had degenerated into a religious conflict and this suspicion engendered a degree of disillusionment about the original motives and justifications for the war. In the end, however, they remained optimistic that U.S. victory would prove a boon to the church on both sides of the Rio Grande.

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[4] *Catholic News-Letter*, June 6, 1846.

[5] On April 4, 1846, when war was imminent, the *Catholic News-Letter* ran a lengthy editorial seeking to prove, by both precedent of settlement and actual practice of professed faith, that any reasonable person must "deny that [the United States] can in any sense be truly called a Protestant country."

[6] See Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 144–5.

By drawing attention to the prominence of U.S. Catholics in the war and entertaining speculations about the bright prospects of Catholicism in annexed territory, they imagined the conquest of Mexico as a rejuvenation of past Catholic glories at the hands of a nation that was, if not on its way to being a future Catholic empire, at least providentially conducive to the flourishing of the church. Such an interpretation allowed certain expressions of national hubris—suggestions of racial and cultural superiority indicative of the "Manifest Destiny" mindset—to coexist, in tempered form, with an ultramontane concern for the international advancement of Catholic civilization.

"The Mexicans, it is Known on All Hands, are Our Brethren": The U.S. Catholic Press Comes to Mexico's Defense

Defending Mexico in the Pre-War Literary Market

By the time war erupted on the disputed Texas border in April 1846, U.S. Catholic editors had become well practiced in correcting the misconceptions of Mexican history and culture that they encountered in the literary marketplace. The years prior to the war had witnessed a boom in books on Mexico, as romantic literary aspirations and pressing political questions turned readers' attentions toward exotic lands to the south and west. Many soldiers who marched into Mexico carried with them impressions of the country that had been shaped by the bestselling memoirs of previous Anglophone travelers, especially Fanny Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico* (1843), Brantz Mayer's *Mexico as it Was and as it Is* (1844), Albert Gilliam's *Travels in Mexico* (1846) and Waddy Thompson's *Recollections of Mexico* (1846).[7] The popularity of these accounts gave the Catholic press pause, for fascinating as they undeniably were—Catholic newspapers, like others, reprinted vignettes from their pages throughout the war—they also bore the taint of religious prejudice and cultural haughtiness. It was in response to these influential travelogues

[7] Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 147–8.

that the Catholic press assumed the stance of protectiveness toward Mexico that it would continue to hold, with some degree of strain, throughout the invasion and occupation of the country.

The book that formed the U.S. wartime imagination more than any other was not a travelogue but William H. Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, published in the fall of 1843. Blinded in his left eye during a food-fight at Harvard and in his right by the later onset of rheumatism, Prescott wrote the monumental work on a noctograph, a metal stylus-and-tablet system designed for vision-impaired. Fastidious in his research, he had collected thousands of manuscript sources from Spanish and Mexican repositories, substantial portions of which he memorized after hearing them read aloud by his secretaries.[8] So dazzling was his knack for conjuring the past that a fellow Unitarian, Theodore Parker, expressed concern that Prescott had not allowed himself enough authorial distance from the sixteenth century to render impartial judgments on the morality of its inhabitants.[9] While Prescott's historical erudition earned him the admiration of other Boston Brahmins, his gifts as a storyteller commended the book to a much broader audience.

The popularity of Prescott's *History* may well have boosted volunteer enlistments during the war with Mexico. Inspired by a saga that they fancied themselves to be re-enacting, soldiers carried the history with them as a "guidebook" to the Mexican terrain and even sought it out in translation to serve as a Spanish primer.[10] Such translations proved easy to acquire, for Prescott's popularity was not limited to the *norteamericano* conquistadors. Mexican readers had devoured the first English run of the *History* and demanded a Spanish edition, which publishers rushed to provide. Prescott's account of the conquest drew wide acclaim in the Mexican press, despite

[8] See Donald G. Darnell, *William Hickling Prescott* (Boston: Twayne, 1975); William H. Prescott, preface to *History of the Conquest of Mexico and History of the Conquest of Peru* (New York: Modern Library, 1939).

[9] See Eileen Ka-May Cheng, *The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth: Nationalism and Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784–1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 73–4.

[10] Johannsen, 245–6; Franchot, 39.

occasional errors "arising from his religious opinions" that would require correctional footnotes in the Spanish translation.[11]

Like their Mexican counterparts, U.S. Catholics gave a largely favorable opinion of the *History of the Conquest* but also expressed some reservations. James Healy, the future bishop of Augusta, Maine, read Prescott as a student at Holy Cross College and found him "by far more unprejudiced" than most non-Catholic writers.[12] During the war, Catholic journalists would, like their non-Catholic colleagues, turn to Prescott for help in visualizing the exotic landscapes depicted only haltingly over the newswires. But despite generally trusting his expertise on Mexican history and geography, Catholic readers had been warned against Prescott's occasional lapses in impartiality. Martin Spalding had made it his business, in the summer of 1844, to chronicle and contest these biases, lest the literary faithful be drawn astray by a bestselling distortion of America's colonial past.

Writing for the *United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review*—the Baltimore periodical which he co-edited from Kentucky—Spalding devoted two lengthy articles to Prescott's *History* and the religious preconceptions that, in his opinion, warped it at certain points. His review was widely reprinted, appearing in the *Miscellany* only a month after Mexican warships had caused Charleston's Catholics to contemplate up close the legacy of Spanish colonization.[13] Spalding began his two-part essay by acknowledging Prescott's brilliance and commending the book's style. He expressed regret, however, that the author's "prejudices

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[11] Michael P. Costeloe, "Prescott's *History of the Conquest* and Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico*: Mexican Reaction, 1843–44," *The Americas* 47:3 (Jan. 1991), 337–342. The quotation comes from Vicente García Torres, the publisher who oversaw the first Spanish edition. Lucas Alamán, the prominent conservative politician and intellectual, agreed to write the *corrigenda*. Alamán, whom Prescott thanks in his preface for assistance in procuring documents, shared the favorable opinion of the work first promulgated by more liberal newspapers such as *El Siglo XIX*.

[12] Quoted in O'Toole, *Passing for White: Race, Religion and the Healy Family, 1820–1920* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 29.

[13] *United States Catholic Miscellany*, July 27, August 10, 17, 24, 1844. It made the front page of the July 20 and August 24 issues of the Pittsburgh *Catholic*.

against every person and thing Catholic…overwhelm at times his clear intellect," thus blighting an otherwise praiseworthy work.[14]

Spalding found Prescott, like many other Protestant historians, to be "terribly haunted by the ghost of the defunct Spanish inquisition," even going so far as to suggest a certain symmetry between the cult of human sacrifice that structured Mexican life under the Aztecs and the bloody Spanish regime that succeeded it under the auspices of the Holy Office. Believing such an implication to be unworthy of response, Spalding simply charged Prescott with irrelevance on the issue, arguing that the Inquisition—established in Mexico only in 1570—did not properly fall under the purview of a *History of the Conquest*.[15] He detected two other infuriating suggestions in Prescott's account: first, that Spanish priests simply displaced existing pagan rites with their own brand of idolatry; and second, that the conquistadors were motivated by greed and subservience to the pope's arbitrary will, rather than by the "natural rights and demands of civilization," the advance of which could be the sole justification for their violent deeds.[16] These insinuations followed the basic contours of what historians would later label the "Black Legend," a Protestant literary convention that depicted Spain's American Empire as a theater of horrors, a barbaric contrast to the more enlightened colonial projects of the Dutch and especially the English.[17] One implication of this narrative was that the Mexican nation, conceived in Castilian avarice and

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[14] Martin J. Spalding, "Prescott's Conquest of Mexico: Article I," *United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review* 3:7 (July, 1844): 412.

[15] Spalding, 412.

[16] Ibid., 421.

[17] The origin of the black legend is often attributed not to any Protestant historian but to the Dominican priest and Indian advocate Bartolomé de las Casas, whose *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, published in 1552, became a sensation among Spain's antagonists in England and the United Provinces of the Netherlands. For a concise introduction to the Black Legend, see William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: the development of anti-Spanish sentiment, 1558-1660* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1971), 3–6. The life of the term itself dates to 1914, when the Spanish journalist Julián Juderías published his seminal article, "La leyenda negra." See Miguel Molina Martinez, *La leyenda negra* (Madrid: NEREA, 1991), 13. For examples of the Black Legend in antebellum American literature, see María DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 1–68. Though admittedly anachronistic when applied to the nineteenth century—or, for that matter, to the sixteenth—the term "Black Legend" is often applied retrospectively as a convenient label for this simplistic and generally discredited mode of characterizing Spanish colonization.

idolatry, was uncivilized from its inception, a conclusion supporting the rhetoric of Mexican "barbarism" that was gaining traction in the 1840s.[18] By exposing Prescott's subtle adherence to the Black Legend, Spalding sought to undercut one historical justification for the spreading perception that Mexico did not belong among the ranks of civilized nations.

Against Prescott's suggestions, Spalding portrayed the conquest as a noble-minded mission for the sake of "Christian civilization." Hernando Cortés did not come to Mexico as an aggressor but rather overthrew the Aztec empire in order to defend the rights of tribes long suppressed under the "odious tyranny" of an "inhuman despot." To a land once enslaved to "barbarous" and bloody customs, he brought liberation and "purer worship."[19] The atrocity of human sacrifice justified the conquistadors' military exploits, which were at any rate marked by "more moderation and discretion" than any comparable attempt "to check violence and to stay cruelty" in human history.[20] In Spalding's estimation, the Spanish conquest of Mexico was far more "civilized" than the recent subjugation of India by "enlightened" British Protestants; and yet, despite their excess of brutality, the British had failed to rid India of the Juggernaut—the temple car that supposedly crushed its Hindu devotees to death—and other "fanatical" practices of cultic violence.[21] "Had the English, instead of the Spaniards, conquered Mexico," Spalding concluded, "the horrid human sacrifices would in all probability still be offered up."[22] In casting England as a cruel and uncivilized colonizer, Spalding sought not simply to correct the Black Legend but to reverse its premises completely.

Unafraid to extend this reversal into the most sacred corner of North America's colonial past, Spalding styled the Puritan settlers of New England as land-thieves indifferent to the

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[18] For examples of such rhetoric, see Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 208–228; also Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 168.

[19] Spalding, 420–1.

[20] Ibid., 423.

[21] Ibid., 425.

[22] Ibid., "Prescott's Conquest of Mexico: Article II," *United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review* 3:8 (August, 1844): 485.

natives' spiritual welfare. In contrast to Prescott, whom he accused of juxtaposing a false vision of Puritan "immaculateness" with the violence of the Spanish conquest, Spalding charged the first New Englanders with "continued and cold-blooded and systematic cruelty" toward the Indians.[23] Compared with the "exalted motives" of the Spanish, who made evangelization their first priority, the business-minded Puritans exhibited "mere carnal motives," eventually all but exterminating the region's indigenous peoples, having failed to care for their souls, or even—in stark contrast to the Spanish friars—to preserve their languages and antiquities.[24] Spalding would return to this contrast at several points in his public career, as would many other Catholic apologists in the United States. Indeed, this alternative account of colonial history—a reductionist parable as polemically slanted as the Black Legend itself—would become one of the buttresses of their attempt to reimagine the nation's origins and identity in Catholic terms.

But despite his irreverence toward the Puritan legacy, Spalding betrayed in his language of "civilization" a concept very much in keeping with prevalent notions of Anglo-American superiority. While his review of Prescott refrained from any overtly racial analysis, it seems clear enough that Spalding—who had elsewhere sought to excuse Mexico's recent political disorders by pointing out the inherent limitations of a society so populated by "aborigines"[25]—intended his remarks as a defense of the nation's Spanish civilizers and their white successors, not an apology for the population as a whole. Moreover, the language Spalding used to cast Cortés as an agent of civilization corresponded easily enough with the terms in which many expansionists imagined their latter-day conquest of Mexico. A magnanimous soldier who invaded a foreign country not for self-aggrandizement but in order to defend local rights against centralized tyranny, Cortés ushered Mexico into an era of heightened freedom and "purer religion," just as *norteamericano* soldiers aimed to do in their disinterested fight for Mexican federalism against the usurpations of

[23] Ibid., 422–3.
[24] Ibid., 480, 489.
[25] See Spalding, "Webster's Bunker Hill Speech," in *Miscellanea* (Louisville: Webb, Gill, and Levering, 1855), 333–352. This piece was originally written in 1843, shortly before the Prescott review.

a military dictator.[26] However Spalding felt about the specter of war with Mexico, his idealized descriptions of the civilizing conqueror clearly bore traces of the expansionist era's heady spirit. In defending Mexico's past, he employed language compatible with U.S. designs on Mexico's future. Such cultural condescension would seep into the works of other Catholic journalists seeking to protect Mexico from Protestant misrepresentations.

The mid-decade boom in travel literature provided ample opportunity for the U.S. Catholic press to play Mexico's advocate. The entire travel genre came under suspicion among Catholic critics as yet another unwelcome bequest of the Reformation, a quintessential expression of Protestant egotism that, in one reviewer's words, made "every man in his own fancy…a little hero, a genius," who "imagines that everybody will take the liveliest interest in knowing his sentiments."[27] Protestant travelogues were especially distasteful when they described Catholic countries like Mexico, which gave them occasion to ridicule local customs and reinforce common prejudices. By 1846, Mexico had received more than its share of such unflattering attention from curious readers in both the U.S. and Europe. The *Catholic Telegraph* ventured that no other country on earth "has suffered so much from the misrepresentations of travelers as Mexico."

The most popular Mexican memoir was Frances Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico* (1843). Published on the advice of her close friend William H. Prescott—and with the aid of Prescott's acquaintance Charles Dickens—*Life in Mexico* became a transatlantic literary sensation just months before *The History of the Conquest*. The author, an Edinburgh native educated in the United States, had married the Spanish diplomat Ángel Calderón de la Barca in 1838 and soon afterward accompanied him to Mexico, where he served two years as Spain's first envoy to its

[26] For numerous examples of parallel rhetoric among the boosters of America's invasion of Mexico, see John C. Pinheiro, "'Extending the Light and Blessings of Our Purer Faith:' Anti-Catholic Sentiment among American Soldiers in the U.S.-Mexican War," *Journal of Popular Culture* 35 (2001): 69–96.

[27] "Critics on Mexico," *United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review* 5:10 (October, 1846): 522.

former colony.[28] With splendid prose, Señora "Fanny" sketched colorful impressions of the young republic and its inhabitants, from statesmen and socialites to gambling-hall proprietors and tortilla-peddlers. Alternately enchanted, bewildered, and amused by her surroundings, she maintained a graceful, yet at times critical and subtly satirical perspective. Much more than Prescott, she drew the ire of Mexico's fashionable classes, who felt she had betrayed their hospitality and pandered to European preconceptions of an underdeveloped American culture.[29]

Fanny Calderón de la Barca's numerous remarks on Mexican religion attracted little attention in the U.S. Catholic press. The Louisville *Catholic Advocate* reprinted a notice from the London *True Tablet,* which judged her to be "a very decided Protestant…but still tolerably impartial."[30] Her tone apparently left an unfavorable impression on some Catholic readers, however. Several years after the publication of *Life in Mexico,* a correspondent to the *Freeman's Journal* saw the recently converted author receiving communion at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington. The reporter could not resist quipping that "her union with that Church which her work deprecated" served as a "sufficient atonement for the errors of opinion which it has given currency to."[31]

Catholic periodicals took a deeper interest in three travelogues penned by U.S. diplomats: *Mexico as it was and as it Is* (1844), by Brantz Mayer, former secretary of the U.S. legation to Mexico; *Travels over the Table Lands and Cordilleras of Mexico* (1846), by Albert Gilliam, a former consul to California; and *Recollections of Mexico* (1846), by Waddy Thompson, lately an ambassador to that country. As it had with Prescott, the *United States Catholic Magazine* printed

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[28] Manuel Romero de Terreros, introduction to *Life in Mexico*, by Frances Calderón de la Barca, Everyman Library edition (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1913), v–vi.

[29] See Costeloe, 344–346.

[30] *CA*, June 3, 1843. Despite occasional hints of disdain, De la Barca's treatment of Mexican Catholicism does strike the modern reader as more refined than that of other memoirists. For instance, she judges the "gaudy" Holy Week festivities of rural Mexico to be an expression of the "same religion" as the simple meetings of her native Scottish Kirk, a more inclusive vision of Christianity than many of her Protestant contemporaries would have hazarded.

[31] *NYFJ* May 29, 1847. The details of Señora Calderón de la Barca's conversion are unknown, but she remained a devout Catholic for the rest of her life. Following her husband's death in 1861, she took up residence in the Spanish court as tutor to the Infanta Isabella. She died as a Marquésa in the Royal Palace of Madrid in 1882 (Romero de Terreros, vi–vii).

substantial, and critical, responses to these fast-selling shapers of popular perception. Mayer's unnamed reviewer (likely the magazine's editor, Charles I. White) admitted his admiration for the Baltimorean author but regretted to report that this latest literary endeavor fell short of expectations; Mayer, despite having received a Catholic education under White and his colleagues at St. Mary's College, had failed to rise above the casual pedantry and vulgar pandering of "Protestant wit."

In 1846, the task of surveying, in a single essay, the Mexican landscape painted by Gilliam and Thompson, fell to Augustin Verot, a prickly French Sulpician and professor at St. Mary's, later to win fame as an outspoken "rebel bishop" of the Deep South during the Civil War. The resulting unsigned article was so stinging that Gilliam wrote to demand the reviewer's name and address, leaving White worried about a potential lawsuit and Verot fearful of a more extreme form of retaliation.[32]

The harsh judgments tendered by both reviewers stemmed from resentment of the authors' demeaning attitudes toward Mexican Catholicism. True to the instincts of ultramontane journalism, they defended Mexico's faith and culture by going on the offensive. Just as Spalding had reversed the terms of the Black Legend by castigating the cruelty of English colonization, so White and Verot redirected indictments of Mexico back upon Yankee Protestantism. Where the diplomats belittled Mexican ignorance of true religion, the *Catholic Magazine* exposed their ignorance of the Catholic faith. Verot drew attention to an incident in which Gilliam, a proud Virginian, mistook a statue of St. Joseph for a likeness of Thomas Jefferson.[33] After relating Ambassador Thompson's crude misrepresentation of the doctrine of real presence, he confessed that he was "pained to witness so much ignorance in such elevated rank."[34] Where the travelogues complained of Mexican "credulity" and "superstition," Verot challenged them to find

[32] Charles I. White to Martin J. Spalding, 16 November 1846, Spalding Collection, Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

[33] "Critics on Mexico," 523.

[34] Ibid., 542.

in Mexico anything as credulous or superstitious as the Millerite or Mormon movements recently spawned in Protestant America.[35] Whereas Mayer described Mexican processions and festivals as "painful exhibitions" of unrefined piety, White pointed to Methodist camp meetings, with all their shouting and groaning, as even more painful exhibitions of roughshod religion. This game of rhetorical reversal extended even to mundane matters. Mayer's complaints about the quality of Mexican roads and taverns were deflected into a reminder of the dismal traveling accommodations prevalent in much of the rural United States.[36] Animated by religious defensiveness, the *Catholic Magazine* prescribed cultural humility during a time of heightening cultural hubris, admonishing the public not "to ridicule the customs and habits of a people whose only crime is to be different from ourselves."[37]

As Spalding did with Prescott, the reviewers found their subjects beholden to the Black Legend and sought to rectify their portraits of Mexico by rehabilitating the reputation of Spain. Verot accused Gilliam of drawing on Prescott's misrepresentations, including his comparison of the inquisition and the Aztec sacrificial cult.[38] Mayer's work was likewise said to be marred by a "deep-rooted aversion and violent declamation against the Spanish nation" and a wrongheaded overestimation of the level of civilization attained by the Aztecs.[39] Offended by Mayer's insinuation that the Spanish caused the degeneration rather than the ennoblement of Mexico's native population, the *Catholic Magazine* portrayed the conquistadors as principled warriors who rescued a subjected people from a "cruel and sanguinary tyrant," stamped out the violent "superstition" and "barbarity" of Aztec life, and "began a new era in commerce, civilization, and the useful arts."[40] Like his friend and editorial partner Spalding, White contrasted the results of the Spanish colonialization with the legacy of the Puritans, who left New England's Indians in

[35] Ibid., 527.
[36] Ibid., 150.
[37] Ibid., 156.
[38] "Critics on Mexico," 536–7.
[39] "Mr. Mayer's Mexico," 141
[40] Ibid., 146, 142.

"their primitive state of superstition and barbarity."[41] Mexico's indigenous peoples, by contrast, seemed "to be pious, moral, and happy," having been delivered into the light of Christianity from a pre-conquest society that, despite its legendary splendor, was no civilization at all.[42]

Attendant to the reviewer's conception of civilization, however, were the same conventional modes of racial thinking and expansionist jargon evident in Spalding's essays. In defending Spanish colonization, the author outlined a clear hierarchy of races: before the conquest, Mexico's natives remained mired in barbarism, well below the "semi-civilized" peoples of East Asia, who in turn ranked below the fully civilized peoples of Europe.[43] Even centuries after the civilizing efforts of the conquistadors, Mexico's indigenous peoples remained fairly low on the racial ladder. But while the Protestant Mayer saw this stagnation as evidence of Spanish decadence, his Catholic reviewer found it a beneficial compromise with natural limitations. Modern-day Indians should not be blamed if they have "not received from nature that energy and ingenuity for the cultivation of the arts and sciences and of social refinement, which characterizes the whites." The Spaniards should rather be commended for making them happy and moral through evangelization, even if they had not been able to overcome inborn "deficiency" to a degree approved of by the "fashionable world."[44] The *Catholic Magazine* thus reflected a common Anglo-American sentiment in deeming a large portion of Mexico's population to be racially inferior and incapable of attaining a high degree of civilized refinement; in contrast with Mayer and many other Protestant meliorists, however, it did not judge these conditions to be morally blameworthy or even unfortunate.

The review's depiction of Cortés and his fellow conquistadors, meanwhile, suggested a certain sympathy with expansionist ambitions. Like Spalding, White presented Cortés as a liberator and civilizer, a providential instrument of justice and progress. Unlike Spalding,

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[41] Ibid., 143.
[42] Ibid., 147.
[43] Ibid., 146.
[44] "Mr. Mayer's Mexico," 146.

however, he made explicit the present-day implications of the correlation, comparing Cortés's alliance with suppressed provinces of the Aztec empire to U.S. support of Texas in its fight for independence from Mexico.[45] By equating U.S. expansionists with Spanish conquistadors, the implicit syllogism rather straightforwardly—perhaps even unthinkingly—linked the impulses to forswear the Black Legend on the one hand and to support invasion of Mexico on the other.

Though Verot had written his review before the war, it appeared in print a few months after the commencement of hostilities, prompting the *Catholic Magazine* to append a telling disclaimer that the piece "aims only at the vindication of Catholicity and…the defense of religion."[46] The magazine's apologia for Mexican manners and morals was not to be taken as a political statement. Unlike the chords of transnational sympathy sometimes struck in Whig papers and abolitionist pulpits, the Catholic press's protective stance toward Mexico did not serve an antiwar agenda. On the contrary, its inversions of the Black Legend and calls for cultural deference yielded rather easily to the currents that swept the United States like a second Cortés toward "the halls of the Montezumas."

Defending Mexico in the Wartime Press

The war with Mexico, which at last erupted in April 1846, was the first national conflict to become a media sensation, showcasing the novel powers of the press at their full scope and speed. Richard Caton Woodville's well-known painting *War News from Mexico* captures the eagerness with which readers devoured reports from the front. Papers rushed to provide first-hand accounts of the action as quickly as possible, exploiting newly stretched telegraph wires as far as they would reach and stationing riders to cover the space between. The effort to satisfy daily demand for battle stories gave rise to a new journalistic occupation: the war correspondent.[47] Scores of newspapermen invaded Mexico alongside U.S. troops and, together with the many letter-writers

[45] Ibid., 143.
[46] "Critics on Mexico," 521.
[47] Johannsen, 16–20.

and aspiring memoirists in uniform, flooded editorial desks back home with their impressions of the exotic nation to the southwest.

Catholic periodicals warned their readers not to place too much stock in these latest appraisals of Mexican culture. One regular contributor to the Boston *Pilot* mocked the "Mexican Trollopes" who after a month's residence deemed themselves authorities on "the state of civilization to which these people have arrived." The *Freeman's Journal* cautioned that Protestant correspondents would disseminate ignorance and falsehood, tempting readers to deny Mexicans the "courtesies of civilized life." The *Catholic Telegraph* warned of another wave of writers who, "influenced by their prejudice, are too ready to exaggerate the evil, and are unwilling to see, or disposed to conceal the good."[48]

To counter the biases, Catholic editors sought to print evidence from trustworthy witnesses—often, but not exclusively, Catholic soldiers—that challenged depictions of Mexican barbarism (or "Mexican Total Depravity," as the *Freeman's Journal* dubbed it in a phrase designed to goad Protestant travel-writers and theologians alike). "We do not believe our neighbors of Mexico half as bad and worthless as they are represented," the *Freeman* wrote when war seemed eminent. The *Telegraph* was similarly confident that, whatever its military outcomes or political consequences, the United States' southward foray would prove that "the Mexican people have been grievously misrepresented and slandered" in the popular imagination. Catholic papers like the *Freeman's Journal* believed that casting the enemy in a sympathetic light was not merely a stylistic choice but a religious duty: "The Mexicans, it is known on all hands, are our brethren."[49]

The *Catholic News-Letter* of St. Louis—published from one of the main staging grounds for Mexico-bound troops and a center of pro-war sentiment—took the lead in offering countervailing perspectives on the enemy. Just before the invasion, as anti-Mexico rhetoric was

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[48] Boston *Pilot* September 18, 1847; *NYFJ*, November 7, 1846; *CT*, September 6, 1846.
[49] *NYFJ*, August 30, 1845; *CT*, November 12, 1846; *NYFJ*, November 7, 1846.

escalating, the *News-Letter* corrected another paper's list of colonial precedents—and, implicitly, its narrow application of the word "America"—by pointing out that the first book published in America was a Mexican catechism, not a Puritan psalter. Shortly after the war began, as depictions of a spiritually desolate landscape came across many news cables, the *News-Letter* printed a laudatory survey of the "Present Condition of the Catholic Church in Mexico," whose establishment had been a providential compensation for souls lost to the Reformation, and whose episcopate was "worthy of the brightest ages of the Church."

The *News-Letter* published regular updates from a trusted Protestant colonel, G.M.T. Davis, who lauded Mexican piety and praised the quality of Mexican roads. Nearly every Catholic newspaper in the U.S. reprinted his rendition of a "touching incident" involving an aged Mexican man whose humble hut had accidentally been enclosed within U.S. lines. Even the Protestant soldiers in camp admired this *viejo*'s undisturbed devotion to his handmade cross and rosary. The *News-Letter* praised the "pure, sincere" quality of the man's faith, "which the 'shades of superstition' could never tarnish," concluding that the Mexicans were proving themselves "a better and a braver people" than their enemies had represented. When one St. Louis lecturer called for exterminating the "part dog" Mexicans, a contributor to the *News-Letter* wrote of feeling indignation "as an American, pity as a Catholic."[50]

Other Catholic newspapers joined the wartime effort to rehabilitate the image of Mexico, which some Yankee correspondents considered a morally stunted nation enslaved by a corrupt priesthood.[51] The *Freeman's Journal* submitted the testimony of R.W.M. Johnston, a bilingual officer who found the Mexican clergy "pious and learned," untainted by the scandalous behavior rumored to be endemic among them. The *United States Catholic Miscellany* printed positive reports from a lieutenant in Coatepec describing the generosity of his Mexican hosts and the

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[50] *Catholic News-Letter*, December 13, 1845; June 20, 1846; November 7, 1846; August 31, 1846; November 6, 1847.

[51] For examples of these unflattering portrayals, see James M. McCaffrey, *Army of Manifest Destiny: The American Soldier in the Mexican War, 1846–1848* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 66–80; also Johannsen, 167–8.

eloquence and helpfulness of the town's *padre*. The Pittsburgh *Catholic*'s regular contributor from the front, one Hugh McCann of the 2nd Pennsylvania Volunteers, portrayed the locals as "kind and hospitable…and always exceedingly polite to strangers." Their public buildings and churches he found magnificent—"on the whole I think very much of them."

A month into the campaign, the *Catholic Telegraph*, on the word of several first-hand sources, concluded that crime was disproportionately low in Mexican cities, that acts of charity were more prevalent, and that infidels were nonexistent: there was "no nation in the world so devoted in faith to the Christian religion." The Protestant characterization of Mexicans as a "disorganized and degraded mass without morals, industry, or religion" had proven inaccurate. McCann's final appraisal, though more prosaic, was no less a rejoinder to overdrawn caricatures. "The people of Mexico," he concluded, "are pretty much like other people."[52]

Such positive portrayals of the occupied country did not, however, reflect the experience of all lettered Catholics at the front. Even when limiting their observations to religious subjects, some Catholic memoirists felt scarcely more at home in Mexico than did their Protestant fellows. Lt. George Meade, for instance, recalled finding "a great deal of bad taste" in the Saltillo Cathedral, including wax likenesses of saints that could cause "no sensation but that of ridicule."[53] Raphael Semmes, another Marylander destined for Civil War fame, called the Corpus Christi procession in Puebla "one of those theatrical performances, which are carried to such injudicious lengths in all Spanish countries as to bring discredit upon religion." He went on to mock the "ludicrous appearance" of the city's priests and friars, advising them to "follow the example of their worthy brethren of the same denomination in the United States, and adopt their dress to modern ideas."[54] The Georgetown-educated army physician Richard McSherry similarly

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[52] *NYFJ*, February 19, 1848; *PC*, July 3, 1847; *USCM*, September 4, 1847; *CT*, June 23, 1846; *PC*, January 15, 1848.

[53] George Gordon Meade, *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade*, vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 157–8.

[54] Raphael Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore during the Mexican War* (Cincinnati: Wm. H. Moore & Co., 1851), 262, 264.

balked at the "coarse paintings and tasteless statuary" in the many churches he visited. While his pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe made a profound impression, McSherry ultimately deemed it all "carried too far for American taste."[55] Even a convert like Henry Smith Turner, who rode west with General Philip Kearny and resolved to become Catholic at some point during the expedition, felt disgusted by the obese priest and dissolute women that he encountered at mass in Santa Fe. Though sensitive to the "violent prejudice" of his associates, he found the clergy of New Mexico and California to be, much as rumor had them, "proverbially ignorant" and spiritually untrustworthy.[56]

These unfavorable impressions also reverberated in the letters of the most revered Catholic intellectual at the battle lines: John McElroy, Georgetown professor, frequent lecturer and periodical contributor, and one of the two Jesuit priests whom President Polk solicited to serve as army chaplains. A large, self-educated man who had preached hundreds of missions in rural America, McElroy was no stranger to simple folk and un-catechized flocks; even so, he found himself distraught by the habits of small-town Mexican Catholics.[57] He filled his diary and letters home with prayers for the inhabitants of Matamoros, whom he deemed "Christian only in name, and in civilization, without enjoying the blessings of either." Frustrated by their reticence to approach the sacraments, perplexed by the absenteeism of their "*Padre cura*," and dismayed by the dilapidated condition of their churches, he concluded that "the state of religion in Mexico…is deplorable." His reports created a measure of consternation back at home. His superior, Peter Verhaegen, wrote that he was surprised and dismayed—as many ultramontane apologists no doubt would have been—to hear a report so dire from "a country professedly Catholic."[58]

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[55] Richard McSherry, *El Puchero: or, a Mixed Dish from Mexico* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1850), 50, 152–4.

[56] Dwight L. Clarke, ed., *The Original Journals of Henry Smith Turner: With Stephen Watts Kearny to New Mexico and California, 1846 –1847* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 73–75, 163.

[57] See Curran, 122–3.

[58] John McElroy to Antoine Blanc, 18 July 1846, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-f, UNDA; Journal of John McElroy, SJ, MPA 12A4, Georgetown University Library Booth Family Center

Such disappointing frontline encounters with Catholic America could be reconciled, however, by ascribing Mexico's misfortunes to its racial makeup and political ineptitude rather than its religious identity. By the mid-forties, Americans had begun making forays into what would later be known as race theory. "Ethnographers" in the United States—including Harvard's eminent natural scientist Louis Agassiz—speculated about the separate origins of the various "races," while phrenologists used skull measurements to determine racial hierarchies, and historians made sweeping claims about the special characteristics of the "Teutonic" peoples.[59] Such theories appealed to some northern aristocrats, many southern slaveholders, and most "Anglo-Saxons" with a well-developed sense of racial superiority.

Catholic observers were not immune to the tendency. They made it clear that they admired Mexico's Spanish heritage more than its present appearance. McCann's flattering remarks to the Pittsburgh *Catholic*, for instance, did not extend to the "Camanche tribe of Indians" that he erroneously believed to inhabit much of the land around Jalapa. "The *real* Mexicans…are a superior race," he maintained, even if the Indians "seem to be far behind the age."[60] The *Miscellany*'s army contributor likewise qualified his compliments by restricting them to "those of the white or Spanish blood."[61] A *Freeman's Journal* correspondent describing the belligerents as "a high-minded, brave and honorable race," paused to clarify that he meant "those of Spanish origin." The rest of the Mexican army could adequately be described with the terms Waddy Thompson used in an excerpt widely circulated even in Catholic papers: effeminate and "impotent."[62] Richard McSherry, like Father McElroy, refrained from deeming Mexico uncivilized (as many Protestants did), but he found the hold of civilization there to be tenuous.

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for Special Collections, Washington D.C.; John McElroy, SJ, "Chaplains for the Mexican War—1846," *Woodstock Letters*, vol. 16 (Woodstock, MD: Woodstock College Press, 1887), 228.

[59] Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (New York; Schocken Books, 1965), 77, 88.

[60] *PC*, July 3, 1847, italics added.

[61] *USCM*, September 4, 1847.

[62] *NYFJ*, July 19, 1845; *CA*, June 27, 1846. For more on the gendered language so prevalent in Mexican War memoirs and filibustering literature—language that frequently styled Latin Americans in feminine terms—see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Populated by Indians "inferior to the negroes of the Northern Republic" and by "a mongrel, motley race" that constituted "the lowest people in the civilized world," Mexico easily succumbed to both internal political oppression and the superiority of Anglo-American arms.[63]

Catholic editors in the U.S. had a ready explanation for this apparent degradation. Mexico was "once prosperous, moral, and industrious, when under Spanish sway" but had suffered since its premature independence, when a sudden overdose of liberty led to religious indifference, factious politics, and government interference in ecclesial matters. "The expulsion of the old Spaniards, and the evil effects produced by the intermarriage of the various races" had so debilitated the nation, the *Telegraph* suggested, that foreign conquest might prove to be in its best interests.[64]

Wartime Catholic commentators thus held true to the narrative that had emerged from earlier literary interventions on Mexico's behalf. With its millions of Christianized and civilized Indians, Mexico stood as an admirable—and sobering—counter-example of the fruits of American colonialism. The unity of faith, language, and culture that Spain had achieved there in its *Siglo de Oro* was a source of wonder to U.S. Catholic intellectuals, an inspiring glance both backwards and forwards—a clue to what a future Catholic America might look like. "There is in Mexico a greater national identity than among ourselves," wrote the *Catholic Advocate* at the war's commencement, echoing sentiments inspired two years earlier by the sight of a shipboard mass in Charleston harbor. "They have a single language and sect, we many discordant ones."[65] And yet the very same *Advocate* column described Mexico as a theater of racial degeneration. Catholic writers tried to advance both views without slipping into incoherence.

It was precisely their repudiation of the Black Legend that allowed them to view Mexico in terms amenable to Anglo-American ascendancy. Spain's remarkable colonial achievement had ensured Mexico's enduring racial inferiority, and independence had exposed its innate

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[63] McSherry, 144, 132, 153, 96.
[64] *NYFJ* August 30, 1845; *News-Letter* June 20, 1846; *CT*, November 11, 1847.
[65] *CA*, June 27, 1846.

weaknesses and limitations to such a degree that a second conquest seemed inevitable, arguably beneficial. Throughout the prologue to and prosecution of the war, the U.S. Catholic press contested the prevailing Protestant "geopolitics of faith" even as it reinforced a conventional geography of racial progress, arguing that Mexico's backwardness stemmed not from its Catholic identity but from the incapacities of its indigenous peoples. This halfway accommodation to national myths of racial and religious superiority carried over into Catholic analysis of what war with Mexico disclosed about the identity and destiny of the United States.[66]

"The Church will Gain by the Late Terrible Vicissitudes": *Supporting the War, Lamenting its Excesses, Envisioning its Effects*

Supporting the War

Contrary to the expectations of nativists and the hopes of antiwar Whigs, Catholics raised no unified resistance to the U.S. invasion of Mexico. Even isolated hints of opposition were quickly brushed aside. When it was rumored that Father James Mullon of New Orleans—whose flare for fiery homilies sparked controversy in more than one American war—was preaching against enlistment, the Catholic press circulated an unequivocal response, in which Mullon claimed he would support military action in similar circumstances even against citizens of the Papal States.[67]

This hypothetical test of patriotism became a recurring motif for a coterie of Catholic editors whose ultramontane credentials would soon hang upon their support of the Papal army against Italian nationalists. "If the sovereign Pontiff of Rome were the temporal head of the Mexican nation, our sense of duty…would be precisely the same," wrote one Catholic journalist. The *Telegraph* reminded its readers that they would be obliged to support a U.S. invasion of the Papal States. Accustomed to charges that Catholics owed political fealty to the Pope, the Catholic

[66] Jon Gjerde coined the term "geopolitics of faith" to describe the manner in which nineteenth-century Protestant apologists "divided the world into faith-based cultures"—Catholic cultures marked by poverty, ignorance, and superstition, and Protestant cultures characterized by liberty, prosperity, and progress. See Gjerde, 40–47.

[67] *PC,* May 30, 1846, cited in Johnson, *Devotion to the Adopted Country*, 9.

press chose to address the question of divided allegiance preemptively, affirming that the order of the day, even for papists, was to "defend by every means in our power the national cause."[68]

Predictions of Catholic noncompliance with the war effort were not simply a matter of nativist propaganda or anti-Polk fantasy. The Catholic press had repeatedly questioned the administration's position in the Texas controversy. Concerned that hostilities with a Catholic country would give a pretext for church-plundering, they urged a peaceful annexation that would compensate Mexico and recognize the Nueces River, not the Rio Grande, as the state boundary.[69] In the months leading up to the conflict, the *Freeman's* communications from Washington exhibited a wide spectrum of Catholic opinion: one Georgetown employee, full of expansionist machismo, hoped that "our coquettish Mexican neighbor" would "return us a plump 'yes' whenever we pop the question 'annexation.'"[70] In contrast, the regular correspondent "Sigma" feared that war would bring out the nation's worst instincts and prove costlier than expected; another correspondent, however, scolded Sigma for siding with "his apparent friends—the Mexicans" and insisted that national honor demanded military action.[71] In the end, though he continued to question U.S. motives and doubt the justice of war, Sigma decided that, "guilty or not, we must take Commodore Decatur's toast for our motto."[72]

Sigma's editor at the *Freeman's Journal*, along with other Catholic publicists, apparently concurred: "my country, right or wrong" summarized the stance of a skeptical but supportive Catholic press in the conflict's early stages. The *Freeman*'s official opinion held that the war was deplorable, and possibly unjust, but necessary to national interests. Orestes Brownson considered it "uncalled for, impolitic, and unjust," but refrained from saying so at the outset, believing that "even in a free country, no man has the right to offer a factious opposition to the administration."

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[68] *NYFJ*, June 26, 1847; *CT*, May 21, 1846.

[69] See, for instance, *PC*, September 27, 1845; *NYFJ*, July 5-12, 1845; *CT*, January 9, 1845, May 14, 1846; *News-Letter*, January 3, 1846.

[70] "Annexation" became a common form of sexual innuendo during the war. Marriages between Yankee soldiers and Mexican women were routinely referred to as annexations. See McCaffrey, 200.

[71] *NYFJ*, February 28, 1846, July 5, 1845, November 7, 1846.

[72] *NYFJ*, November 14, 1846.

The *Catholic News-Letter* found the war "utterly unwarranted" but wished it, once begun, to be "vigorously prosecuted to an honorable conclusion."[73] Though they tempered their pledges of support with calls for humane treatment of the enemy—and respectful portrayals of Mexican culture—Catholic editors in 1846 deflected any impression that the invasion presented a conflict of interest for Catholic citizens. At the outset of a war that provoked levels of public opposition and conscientious objection not to be seen again in the U.S. for over a century, Catholic papers proved remarkably acquiescent.

Accounting for Catholic cooperation in the Mexican War is a fairly straightforward historical task. The taxonomy of the Second Party System offers one ready explanation. As an increasingly significant bloc in the Democratic electorate, Catholics had overwhelmingly supported James K. Polk in 1844; most Catholic editors, though declaring themselves apolitical, showed sympathy for Democratic policies. A related argument construes wartime Catholic patriotism as a response to nativism, which had reached new heights of popular credibility and political clout in the 1844 election cycle. Many newly naturalized citizens—Irish and German Catholics foremost among them—volunteered for the Mexican campaign in order to prove their loyalty to the United States.[74] Though historians have debated the extent to which their efforts succeeded in dispelling nativism, they agree that the desire to do so motivated many Catholic soldiers and other Catholics who publicly supported the war.[75]

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[73] *NYFJ*, August 8, 1846; *BQR* 1:3 (July, 1847): 359–60; *News-Letter*, July 11, 1846.

[74] See Johnson, *Devotion to the Adopted Country*.

[75] Johnson doubts that wartime Catholic patriotism did much to dampen nativist sentiment, which reasserted itself with renewed vigor in the Know Nothing movement of the 1850s. Isaac McDaniel's dissertation on the subject argues that anti-Catholic rhetoric was relatively subdued during the war and implies that the "nationalizing" experience of foreign combat helped to push ethnic and religious differences temporarily to the periphery. McDaniel's conclusions accord with the earlier findings of Ted Hinckley, who perceived a postwar decline in anti-Catholicism. John C. Pinheiro has recently issued a strong challenge to this more cheerful view, maintaining that the invasion of Mexico was both an expression of, and a catalyst for, long-term Protestant chauvinism. In the end, however, Pinheiro documents no direct connections between the war and nativist politics, offering instead a very vague association to the rise of the Know-Nothing movement five years later by passively noting that "events soon gave rise to the strongest anti-Catholic party yet seen in American politics." See McDaniel, "The Impact of the Mexican War on Anti-Catholicism in the United States," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Notre Dame, 1991); Ted C. Hinckley, "Anti-Catholicism During the Mexican War," *Pacific Historical Review* 31:2 (May, 1962): 121–

A desire for immigrant vindication certainly animated the war coverage of the Boston *Pilot*, the country's most widely read Irish-American weekly, which outdistanced any Catholic "religious" paper in its support for the conflict. Published from the heart of the antiwar movement, the *Pilot* took a counter-cultural stance, never passing on a chance to expose the patriotic failings of Protestant Bostonians. "Nearly all these anti-Popery folks are shirking from support of the war," one editorial observed. The *Pilot* lambasted the Massachusetts legislature's refusal to appropriate funds for Caleb Cushing's volunteer regiment, to which Irish soldiers had mustered in droves. Why would the State House choose not to subsidize "a conquest of peace, for the dissemination, if possible, of liberal and enlightened principles," a "sacred mission" that had begun as a "war of aggression on the part of Mexico, and not of our own seeking"? Despite the scorn of the legislature, Irish immigrants continued to volunteer and serve with distinction—more distinction, according to the *Pilot*, than their native-born counterparts, as evidenced by the running tally of desertions, broken down by national origin, that the paper reprinted from the *Police Gazette* each week. In addition to running its "Who are the Deserters?" feature, the *Pilot* also fended off nativist attacks by trumpeting the Irish roots of well-known army personnel (particularly General James Shields, that "gallant son of Hibernia"), speculated on the more distant heritage of others (General Stephen Kearny, for instance) and questioned the ethnic origins of the infamous *San Patricios*, the Mexican battalion of U.S. army defectors that was rumored to bear an Irish Catholic complexion.[76]

137; John C. Pinheiro, *Missionaries of Republicanism: A Religious History of the Mexican-American War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), here 172.

[76] *Pilot*, June 13, 1846, January 30, 1847. The San Patricio Battalion saw action in several battles before the majority of its members were killed or captured at Churubusco. Fifty of the captured deserters were executed, another 15 whipped and branded. Although the *San Patricios* continue to be popularly mythologized, particularly in Mexico, as deserters inspired by their Irish Catholic identity, recent historical analyses have confirmed the *Pilot*'s suppositions that, despite its name, the battalion was heterogeneous in composition, and that ethnic or religious factors were not especially prominent among the motives for desertion. See Robert Ryall Miller, *Shamrock and Sword* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 150–166. Paul Foos supports Miller's position, dismissing as "scapegoating" the tendency in the U.S. press to describe the San Patricios as Irish. See Foos, *A Short, Offhand Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict during the Mexican-American War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 108. John Pinheiro has recently lent more credence to the theory that religious factors played a role in the

At the time of the war, the *Pilot* was still, by its own admission, a political rather than a religious paper, one whose editorial independence the ultramontane press could not endorse but whose nationwide popularity among Catholic readers it could not ignore.[77] The *Pilot h*eld recurring feuds with sheets like the *Catholic Herald* and *Freeman's Journal*, sparked primarily by its tacit approval of the radical Young Ireland movement. It even seemed to affirm other anticlerical expressions of Irish nationalism, and its political temper spilled over into its treatment of the conflict with Mexico. While the editors of the *Pilot* and the *Freeman* butted heads over the proper way to run a newspaper, their Washington correspondents disagreed on the amount of sympathy due to the nation's enemy in combat. The *Pilot*'s "Alpha," confident in the justness of U.S. policy, took aim at Sigma's ambivalence, limiting any sympathy for Mexico to "the sympathy we feel for the unruly child who writhes under the lash of a just but enraged parent."[78]

Even this degree of pity was deemed excessive following the brutal siege of Veracruz in March 1847. Eager to begin his overland march to Mexico City before the onset of Yellow Fever season, General Scott had hemmed in the heavily fortified seaport, cut off its water supply, and demanded full surrender. When the *veracruzanos* refused, he subjected them to the most spectacular artillery display the continent had ever seen. For four nights, colonial church-bells, tolled by the trembling earth, issued a senseless litany, interspersed with shrieks. When Yankee troops and their imbedded journalists entered the capitulated city after 88 hours of cannon-fire, they witnessed the sickening work that 200 tons of ordinance could accomplish: families forced by hunger to eat donkeys, homes and churches reduced to rubble, hundreds of civilian corpses

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formation of the battalion, but he also admits that "when considered altogether, the evidence suggests that…the San Patricios had originally deserted more because of intense abuse by nativist officers than love of Mexico or the Catholic Church." Pinheiro, *Missionaries of Republicanism,* 104–105.

[77] In 1849, under the editorial pen of John T. Roddan, a priest of ultramontane proclivities, the *Pilot* would take a conservative turn and become more palatable to the U.S. Catholic hierarchy. See Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790–1865: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941), 173–4. For more on the *Pilot*'s wartime stance within Boston's political and ecclesiastical contexts, see Foos, 66–67.

[78] *Pilot*, January 2, 1847.

strewn amid the ruins.[79] Reports from the scene pricked the conscience of the *Catholic News-Letter,* among other pro-war papers. But the *Pilot* was unimpressed. "The idea of weeping for the fate of the *poor* Mexicans," it deemed "really sickening," and wondered about the patriotism of anyone who would let "morbid sensibilities. . . interfere with the love and defense of his country's rights."[80]

Such unqualified Yankee nationalism the ultramontane press could no more countenance than it could a revolutionary Irish nationalism that would seek independence at all costs. The republican ideology that allowed the *Pilot* to view the Mexican war as a "sacred mission" for the spread of "liberal and enlightened principles" did not surface in Catholic periodicals, which despite their attestations to the superiority of Anglo-American civilization, could not bring themselves to describe the conflict in such simplistic terms.

Nonetheless, although they struck a somewhat less spirited tone in support of the invasion, ultramontane papers paralleled the *Pilot*'s concerns by treating wartime events as opportunities for proving Catholic patriotism and celebrating Catholic prominence. They responded indignantly to suggestions from anti-Polk organs like the New York *Express* that Catholics ought to oppose the conflict, pledging on the contrary that, in the words of the *Telegraph*, any failures in the war effort "will not be through the cowardice or the faithlessness of the Catholic citizen."[81] Over the course of the campaign, they marshaled ample evidence to

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[79] See Timothy D. Johnson, *A Gallant Little Army: The Mexico City Campaign* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2007), 39–56; Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 169–172. Johnson offers a military justification for Scott's tactics, 44–45.

[80] *Pilot*, April 24, 1847; the *Catholic News-Letter*, by contrast, asked its readers—particularly "those who imagine that the Mexicans have no right to oppose our progress through their country"— to picture themselves subjected to such a horrific bombardment. "We should remember our duty as christians and pity the misfortunes of others, no to delight in them." *News-Letter*, June 26, 1847.

A wide spectrum of newspapers, varying in religious and political affiliation, voiced reactions similar to the *News-Letter*'s. According to Greenberg, "Veracruz was the most widely reported battle of the war, and the most negatively reported." Many papers broached open criticism of the U.S. government for the first time in its aftermath. See Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 172.

[81] *CT*, May 21, 1846; for direct responses to Express articles, see *USCM*, June 6, 1846, *NYFJ*, July 3, 1847.

support this prediction, highlighting the valor of Catholic soldiers and dismissing rumors of religiously motivated desertions. The *San Patricios*, for instance, caused relatively little consternation in the Catholic press. The *Miscellany* cobbled together inaccurate reports that John Riley, the company's Irish-American leader, was actually an Englishman named Ryder, along with more accurate intelligence that most of the court-martialed deserters were in fact U.S. natives.[82] The *Catholic Advocate* took comfort in finding so few Irish names on the list of executed deserters and in noting that many of those with Irish surnames were likely not Catholic, as they bore "Christian names that no Catholic parent would think of giving his child, viz. Abraham Kelly."[83]

Besides, loyal Catholics abounded in the army, foremost among them Fathers McElroy and Anthony Rey, the two Jesuit chaplains from Georgetown. Catholic editors upheld both as models of heroic citizenship as well as priestly devotion, particularly Father Rey, whose bravery under fire at Monterey and subsequent murder by Mexican bandits were interpreted as not only a Christian but a civic form of martyrdom, one that "cast a luster over the most brilliant achievements attained by our arms."[84] The many controversies that these chaplains sparked in the Protestant press—concerns about the circumstances of their appointment by the President, and the extent of Bishop Hughes's influence in the White House, as well as rumors of coerced deathbed conversions at their hands in Mexico—only allowed Catholic editors to highlight their exemplary service records and show that Catholics could faithfully fulfill national duties of the highest description.[85]

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[82] *USCM*, October 23, 1847.

[83] *CA*, November 20, 1847. The precise tallies fluctuated, but all Catholic papers seemed confident that the number of Catholics among the deserters was disproportionately low, given the demographics of the regular army. Hugh McCann reported to the Pittsburgh *Catholic* that only 5 of the 16 deserters executed were Catholic. (*PC* March 4, 1848.)

[84] Reprinted from the *United States Catholic Magazine* in *USCM*, October 30, 1847. For another editorial beatification of Rey as a national, as well as a Catholic hero, see *News-Letter*, July 10, 1847.

[85] The response of the Catholic press to these issues has been documented in full by McDaniel, 276–284.

Indeed, the amount of journalistic attention directed to the Jesuit chaplains—and to Catholics in the Mexican conflict more generally—was, in the eyes of the ultramontane press, rather flattering. It indicated an unprecedented public awareness of the changes that a rapidly growing Catholic Church had wrought in the religious landscape, not simply of isolated neighborhoods or cities, but of the nation as a whole. The Catholic press took pleasure in affirming that the wartime anxieties of Protestant publicists, though perhaps irrational in their implications, were not unfounded in their basic premises. John Hughes *had* been spending a lot of time in Washington, meeting with the President and his cabinet, praying in the House of Representatives, glad-handing with senators. The administration *was* openly courting Catholic support and—for arguably the first time in U.S. history—framing certain of its policies in deference to Catholic citizens. Polk had felt obliged to appoint Catholic chaplains because the immigrant-dependent regular army *was* roughly half Catholic, at least according to the estimates in Catholic newspapers.[86] General Winfield Scott and his staff *were* conspicuously attending mass and seeking cordial relations with the clergy along their path of conquest.

Moreover, the campaign gave many Protestant soldiers their first immediate exposure to Catholicism—whether in Mexican cathedrals or campsite chapel services—and while it confirmed some in their prejudices, it altered, in varying degrees, the attitudes of others. Some Catholic pundits hoped—and some Protestants feared—that anti-Catholic politics would soon prove a tougher sell back home.[87] Most explosively of all, a U.S. military commander *had*

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[86] *CT*, April 2, 1846; *CA*, June 20, 1846. Estimates both of the total number of troops and of the Catholic proportion varied considerably. A Protestant army correspondent to the *Catholic News-Letter* counted seven-tenths of the invading force as Catholic. The April 2, 1846 *Telegraph* claimed at least 4,000 Catholics among the 7,000 regular troops on the Rio Grande. A Catholic officer quickly wrote to correct this inflated figure, however, stating that the actual proportion was closer to 1,000 out of 3,000 total soldiers.Father Rey guessed that 1,000 out of 2,000 troops under Taylor's command were Catholic, though his other reports suggest that not nearly that number actually practiced the faith (See *Woodstock Letters*, vol. 15, 157). Most Catholic commentators settled on fifty percent as their standard approximation (i.e., *CA*, June 20, 1846).

[87] The Jesuit chaplains, in particular, made a lasting impression of many Protestants, including one correspondent who took their example as a definitive refutation of the assumption that "Roman Catholicism and Republicanism are antipodes." (*News-Letter*, January 9, 1847). Other Protestant soldiers were inspired

ordered his largely Protestant unit to kneel during a eucharistic procession in Jalapa, an incident that inverted the more familiar dynamic in which Catholics complained of coerced violations of conscience. Catholic editors could not help taking some vengeful joy in this reversal, hoping that a small taste of religious coercion would make Protestants more favorably disposed to their continuing pleas for protection of conscience in public schools and other state institutions.[88]

The swift success of U.S. arms during the war's first year gave Catholics occasion to celebrate. The cause to which they had so publicly pledged themselves was proving to be a source of pride rather than shame or second-guessing. The 1847 commencement exercises of Mount Saint Mary's College concluded with a rousing orchestral composition celebrating the victory at Cerro Gordo.[89] When Father McElroy was recalled to Georgetown that spring, his voyage home acquired the character of a celebrity tour, with overflow crowds gathering to hear the war hero preach in St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh.[90] Volunteer companies that had completed their year of duty returned home to raucous celebrations; immigrant companies like the Montgomery Guards of St. Louis and the Jasper Greens of Savannah merited special praise in the Catholic press.[91]

And in New Orleans, Bishop Antoine Blanc—who only two years before had refused to host Andrew Jackson's funeral festivities—opened his cathedral doors to the triumphal procession of Zachary Taylor, greeting the newly returned general at the foot of the altar, praising him for his magnanimous treatment of the enemy, and thanking God "for the brilliant success of our arms in the Mexican war." Blanc predictably compared Taylor to the late hero of New

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by aspects of Mexican Catholicism, as McDaniel has documented in detail. See McDaniel, 28–39; also McCaffrey, 71–72.

[88] *News-Letter*, July 10, 1847. Years later, the *Puritan Recorder* was still indignant over the fact that Protestant soldiers in Mexico had been "compelled to do homage to the gods of the land," a phrase to which the *Miscellany* responded with sarcasm, noting that "Catholics, bad as they are, do not worship the Aztec divinities." (*USCM*, September 6, 1851.)

[89] *PC*, July 10, 1847.

[90] *News-Letter*, June 12, 1847; *PC*, July 3, 1847.

[91] See *News-Letter*, July 3, 1847. The *Miscellany* would later fete the Jasper Greens as part of a larger ode to the Irish proclivity for fighting under freedom's banner across the world: "When the clash of arms resounded on the banks of the Rio Grande, they left their homes and their firesides to punish an insolent foe." (*USCM*, May 10, 1851)

Orleans, "who likewise came into this holy temple to offer thanksgiving after his victory."[92] But much had changed since 1815. While Andrew Jackson had defended a visibly Catholic city with an overwhelmingly Protestant army under the flag of a nation assumed to be Protestant *de facto* if not *de jure,* Zachary Taylor invaded a Catholic country with a largely Catholic army in the service of a nation that now included an unignorable Catholic population. To the satisfaction of the ultramontane press—and the dismay of antiwar and evangelical editors—St. Louis Cathedral did not, in the event, seem an inappropriate setting in which to celebrate one phase of successful combat against Mexico.

Lamenting the Excesses

Even as victory parades were being planned in the spring of 1847, however, undercurrents of misgiving had begun seeping into the columns of Catholic periodicals. The normally bellicose Boston *Pilot* printed on its front page an anti-enlistment poem that questioned why liberty-loving Americans—and particularly "sons of Erin ever join'd/ With those who would be *free*"—should rush to play the oppressor in a neighboring republic. The Irish "know by years of suffering/ How slavery doth gall," the contributing bard concluded, urging his Hibernian readers to "Therefore, pause ere ye advance/ Toward the Montezuma's Hall."[93]

The diocesan papers, whose pro-war sentiments had always been more guarded, now showed signs of greater discomfort as well. The destructive siege of Veracruz gave pause to many commentators. Reports from the wreckage prompted sobering reflections in the *Catholic News-Letter*.[94] The *Catholic Herald* of Philadelphia published on its front page a poem inspired by a one soldier's encounter with a young *veracruzana* whose entire family had died in the bombardment. The iambic lament for this "Mexican Maiden" concluded with a string of condemnatory questions: "Is Christian love forgotten?/ Do men no pity know,/ Who hoping to

[92] *CA,* January 8, 1848.
[93] *Pilot,* March 20, 1847.
[94] *News-Letter,* June 26, 1847.

gain fame or gold,/ Can treat their brethren so?"[95] However broadly the poet intended the words "Christian" and "brethren" to be construed in this case, it seems clear that some Catholic writers were starting to see the invasion of Mexico as a strain on their religious conscience.

Lingering discomfort over U.S. motives erupted into open mistrust following the May 11 publication of an editorial in the *Washington Union*—which was taken to be a quasi-official organ of the administration—advocating military seizure of Mexican church property. Fears of church despoliation—an inducement that was, indeed, occasionally advertised to volunteer recruits—had haunted Catholic commentators since the conflict first seemed imminent. Sigma had warned the *Freeman* that "pillaging churches is in the minds of Texas freebooters," and the *Telegraph* had cautioned, with sarcastic tones masking genuine concern, of a plan to "plunder all the churches, melt down the memorials of Christ and his Saints…then let [the Mexicans] be evangelized a la Protestantism!"[96]

Once the fighting began, Catholic writers did not publicly entertain concerns that it would degenerate into religious war, lest they lend credence to doubters of their patriotism. The suspicion endured privately, however, and upon receiving apparent confirmation from the *Washington Union*, pressed Catholic pens into action. [97] When combined with reports trickling from the front of "various excesses, outrages and sacrileges" wrought by undisciplined U.S. troops, the *Union*'s recommendations seemed to foreshadow an ominous new phase of warfare, one that would both "destroy all the elements of national existence" in Mexico and deal a lasting blow to "public morals" at home.[98] The *Catholic News-Letter* took Father McElroy's recall as a sign that "hereafter the President intends that the war shall be one of religions."[99]

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[95] *Catholic Herald*, June 17, 1847.

[96] *NYFJ* July 5, 1845.

[97] In August 1846, for example, Joseph Crétin, the vicar-general of Dubuque, confided to his bishop, Mathias Loras, that he believed the U.S. government to be "decidedly Protestant, above all since the war with Mexico which it regards as a war of religion." (Quoted in Gjerde, 134). It is unclear whether Loras felt similarly. He was, incidentally, among the three bishops who first met with President Polk about the appointment of chaplains to the army.

[98] *Catholic Herald*, May 25, 1847; *NYFJ*, May 22, 1847; *CA*, May 29, 1847. The "outrages" being committed were fairly minor at this point, at least according to the more detailed complaints enumerated in

A sense of disenchantment would now color the war commentary of literary Catholics, both publicly and privately. Orestes Brownson, heretofore silent on the issue, featured in his summer *Review* a retrospective rebuke of the invasion and called for a quick resolution that would annex no Mexican territory.[100] Jane McManus Storm, a convert who wrote a column for the New York *Sun* and was just returning from a secret diplomatic mission to Mexico, urged Bishop Blanc to "organize [the U.S. clergy] and demand peace" so as to "save the Mexican church from much wrong."[101] John Macnamara, a regular reader of the *Miscellany* and correspondent with South Carolina's Catholic literati, lamented the loss of his nephew to an "unjust and unnecessary" conflict that betrayed the very premises of the United States' existence as a nation.[102] The diocesan presses grew noticeably more cynical—by November, a Louisville political paper could broadly characterize "papal prints" as being opposed to the war. Still sensitive to any insinuations of unpatriotic behavior, the *Advocate* sought to clarify that what it and other Catholic papers opposed was simply the robbing of churches.[103] There was no arguing, however, that the tone of Catholic opinion had changed. Having sufficiently proven their loyalty in the war's early stages, Catholic writers had become less reticent in expressing their reservations about the government's course of action.

While some of this altered mood reflected a more general fatigue in popular support for a costly and prolonged conflict, much of it stemmed directly from rumors of church plundering, which began to surface with greater regularity as the army's attentions turned from combat to occupation. Idle troops were reportedly passing time by pilfering holy paintings and shooting at

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the *Freeman*. Soldiers were reported to be "wearing their hats in the churches, smoking cigars around the sanctuary," and pestering certain priests by "going up on the platform of the altar, and handling everything, no matter how sacred, within their reach." (*NYFJ*, May 22, 29, 1847)

[99] *News-Letter*, May 29, 1847. The *News-Letter* retracted this supposition the following week, after learning that McElroy had been ordered home by his religious superior, not by the President.

[100] *BQR* 1:3 (July, 1847): 334–367.

[101] Jane McManus Storm to Antoine Blanc, 4 May 1847, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-g-13, UNDA. For more on Storm's diplomatic mission to Mexico, see Hudson, *Mistress of Manifest Destiny*, 69–93.

[102] Macnamara to John Lynch, 25 August 1847, CDCA 5R6.

[103] *CA*, November 20, 1847.

roadside crosses.[104] Even more unsettling were indications that *regular* soldiers, not merely unruly volunteers, were taking possession of church property under direct military orders.

In February 1848, the *Catholic News-Letter*'s Washington correspondent alleged that U.S. troops had evacuated and laid claim to several convents in Toluca.[105] The full story broke three months later when the *Freeman's Journal* published "official communications" from Mexico's acting archbishop to U.S. military commanders, protesting the occupation of two convents, armed expulsions of priests and nuns, and uncompensated damages to vandalized churches. The *Freeman* had received a copy of the archbishop's written protest, along with an English translation, from Felix Varela, an exiled Cuban priest now retired to Florida, who had been a pioneering editor of several U.S. Catholic newspapers. Varela had received the letters directly from the archbishop, who wanted his grievances to come to light in U.S. newspapers. Nearly every Catholic paper reprinted the "Official Communications" along with the *Freeman's* "deeply pained" editorial comments. What had seemed a civil and conscientious campaign—at least within the regular army command—now looked like a mirage of "one-sided" intelligence. U.S. war correspondents had not told the full story. Until now "the Mexican had no reporter, letter writer, or special express to bear his tale of disaster and suffering." The archbishop's unresolved complaints left Catholics wondering what other outrages had gone unreported and what others would soon see print.[106]

Disregard for ecclesiastical property—whether expressed through official military appropriation or unsanctioned incidents of looting—disturbed Catholic commentators so profoundly not just because they wanted to protect pious Mexicans but, more significantly,

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[104] *PC*, March 11, 1848. Defacing crosses would have been understood not as a general expression of irreverence but as an affront to Catholics specifically, since crosses were still a hallmark of Catholic Church architecture in the U.S., yet to be widely adopted in Protestant designs. See Ryan K. Smith, *Gothic Arches, Latin Crosses: Anti-Catholicism and American Church Designs in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 51–58.

[105] *News-Letter*, February 19, 1848.

[106] *NYFJ*, May 20, 1848; two further installments of the "official communications" were published on the *Freeman's* front page each of the following two Saturdays, May 27–June 3, 1848.

because such actions aroused intense anxieties over the emerging national character of the United States. The young republic displayed its worst tendencies in such acts of profanation: disorderliness, irreverence, bigotry, possessiveness, and a proclivity toward mob violence. Reports of ruined churches and barricaded convents in Mexico triggered memories of the two most traumatic events in U.S. Catholic history: the 1834 burning of the Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts and the 1844 Kensington riots in Philadelphia. "To rob and plunder the temples consecrated to God in Mexico," the *Freeman's Journal* observed, "would indeed form a climax to that infernal fanaticism which laid the convent at Charlestown and the churches in Philadelphia in ashes."[107] The *Miscellany* alleged that the U.S. army was complicit in "acts worthy alone of the midnight incendiaries" at Charlestown.[108]

In the eyes of Catholic editors, this tendency toward violent sacrilege allied U.S. soldiers with those anticlerical revolutionaries who were already threatening church interests in several countries and would, in a matter of months, launch a full-scale assault on Catholic Europe. The *Washington Union*'s recommendations were of a piece with the "revolting propositions of agrarianism," which advocated repossession of church lands in France.[109] Yankee soldiers in Mexico were little better than "the Swiss infidels" who were battling to secularize the Catholic cantons and ban all religious orders.[110] The ultramontane press, pledged to the protection of church property and autonomy worldwide, had come to fear that the indiscretions of military personnel in Mexico provided yet another indication that the U.S stood on the wrong side of the impending conflict between revolutionary chaos and Christian civilization.

Many Catholic commentators would look back on the war in bitterness and disillusionment. One *Freeman* correspondent, in the midst of a strange, tobacco-induced dirge on American "progress," turned back to Mexico only to see "a powerful republic invade a weak one,

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[107] *NYFJ*, May 8, 1847.
[108] *USCM*,May 27, 1848.
[109] *CA*, May 29, 1847.
[110] *NYFJ*, January 22, 1848.

despoil its towns and cities, butcher its people, and then demand payment for their trouble."[111] The only gifts of superior civilization that the U.S. had bequeathed "the Mexican barbarians" were mint juleps, billiard tables, and unread Bibles.[112] Catholics watched in disgust as war trophies stolen from Mexican churches began to appear in local markets. In Louisville, peddlers approached clergymen with vestments and liturgical furnishings that had been "found" in Mexico; other salesmen, seeking a broader clientele, cut Mexican stoles into suspenders.[113] No memento was too sacred to find irreverent usage in Protestant hands. One Cincinnati veteran boasted of owning a consecrated host taken from a Mexican priest killed in battle. Bishop John Baptist Purcell, upon hearing the rumor, rushed to this captain's house and, finding the host lodged in a Book of Common Prayer, consumed it on the spot, much to his relief and the captain's perplexed disappointment.[114]

Human tokens of the costly war haunted Catholic communities as well. A boy named Allego Gomez, who "either through malice or charm" had been lured away from his home by U.S. troops, lived for a while among the Catholics of Charleston before Father Patrick Lynch managed to send him back bearing a letter of recommendation to the Archbishop of Mexico.[115] The Perez family of Puebla, their livelihood lost in the fighting, followed the Fourth Ohio regiment home to Cincinnati, where they spent two years in poverty, "a great burden to me and the Catholics of this place," according to Purcell, who finally raised enough money to ship them to New Orleans, hoping that the clergy there would pay their passage to Veracruz.[116]

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[111] *NYFJ*, March 18, 1848.

[112] *CT*, July 9, 1846. According to a report in the Catholic Herald, some of the Bibles distributed by Protestant missionaries had ended up being used as artillery tinder during the Battle of Buena Vista. "My God, how the gospel spreads in Mexico!" one general reportedly mocked. (Reprinted in *CA*, April 29, 1848)

[113] *CA*, August 19, 1848.

[114] John Baptist Purcell to Antoine Blanc, 15 January 1849, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-k, UNDA.

[115] Patrick Lynch to the Most Reverend and Illustrious Archbishop of Mexico, 14 July 1849, CDCA 6M4.

[116] Purcell to Blanc, 8 May 1850, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-m, UNDA; see also *CTA*, May 4, 1850.

Faced with such visible reminders of the war's *religious* casualties—sacred objects profaned and auctioned for profit, coreligionists impoverished and displaced—Catholic editors could celebrate only with ambivalence the successful conclusion of a war they had determined it was their duty to support. In backing the U.S. invasion, Catholic citizens had proven their loyalty to the nation, but they had also helped open new avenues for violence and contempt toward their religion. If there was any consolation to be taken among ultramontane critics, it was that the maligned Catholics of Mexico—whose reputation they had long labored to defend—could now claim a credible degree of moral superiority to their *yanqui* conquerors. The *Catholic Advocate* summarized the conflict as a vindication of both U.S. arms and Mexican character, concluding that, although "we have proved ourselves the better soldiers, the Mexicans, ignorant and priest-ridden as they are said to be, have proved themselves the better Christians."[117]

Envisioning the Effects

Despite the late-stage misgivings and retrospective resentments voiced within the Catholic press, most commentators remained confident throughout the war that U.S. victory would cause the church to flourish on both sides of the disputed border. However dismayed they may have been by reports of church pillaging, Catholic editors scoffed at the suggestion that any degree of desecration, conquest, or proselytizing would undermine Mexico's religious identity. "There is not the slightest danger to be apprehended that the Catholic Church will suffer any loss…on Mexican territory," the *Telegraph* declared. Even if Protestant missionaries should flood the country, they would find Catholicism "impregnable amidst the Spanish people."[118] The *Advocate* likewise expressed its confidence in racial terms, trusting not only in the "firm and unalterable attachment to the true church" that characterized Mexico's *criollos*, but also in the childlike

[117] *CA*, July 8, 1848.
[118] *CT*, November 11, 1847.

"simplicity" that would cause the Indians and mestizos to adhere to their religious traditions.[119] The *Freeman's Journal*, meanwhile, attacked the widely held notion that Catholicism would inevitably wilt wherever it was exposed to the "energetic Anglo Saxon race." To counter this preposterous claim, he pointed to Ireland, where Catholicism flourished despite long being exposed to precisely the sorts of "excesses" now committed by U.S. troops in Mexico. He reminded readers of Texas, where Anglo settlement had seen the Catholic Church prosper rather than decline. And he found further proof in the history of the United States as a whole, where despite a preponderance of "Anglo Saxon" Protestants, Catholics continued to make rapid gains. A similar result could be expected if Mexico were annexed to the U.S. and settled by increasing numbers of *norteamericanos*.[120]

Indeed, U.S. Catholic observers expected the Mexican Church not only to survive the invasion but to thrive in its aftermath. At times, they expressed these hopes in moralistic language, construing Yankee troops as a divine scourge sent to punish the Mexican people for their lagging devotion and the Mexican government for its encroachment on ecclesiastical rights. Julius Garesché, a studious and pious officer from St. Louis, made sense of the war by proposing that "God has fought upon our side, to chastise them for their sins," and assuring himself that "with such a holy and zealous band in their place, as is our Catholic priesthood of the United States, I feel quite sure that all could be amended here."[121] Following its self-critical thoughts on the siege of Veracruz, the *Catholic News-Letter* redirected its reproaches to the victims, praying that their sufferings would "chasten them, and awaken within them returning sentiments of religion" so that they would fashion once more a "Catholic country" in practice as well as belief.[122] In a kind but belligerent obituary for the nation's late archbishop, the *Catholic Telegraph* suggested that the U.S. intervention would spark a needed reformation of clerical

[119] *CA*, December 18, 1847.
[120] *NYFJ*, July 3, 1847.
[121] Quoted in Foos, 129. For more on Garesche's intriguing personal history and his time at West Point, see Longley, *For the Union and the Catholic Church*, 23
[122] *News-Letter*, June 26, 1847.

discipline and common morals. Archbishop Posada y Garduño had devoted his career to the elevation of public decency and the ending of political disorder; "and we have hope that the scourging which the Mexicans are about to receive from their Northern Neighbors, may have the effect to accomplish what he had so long and vainly endeavored to realize."[123] Presumptuous and self-justifying though such statements appear in the presses of the aggressors, they echoed the penitent interpretations of the conflict promulgated by many Mexican clerics and ultramontane publicists.

Most often, U.S. Catholic commentators vested their hopes for spiritual regeneration not in Mexican contrition but in the southward spread of their own nation's political and ecclesial institutions. The *Freeman's Journal* had argued from the beginning of the conflict that, for the church's sake, "we should consider it desirable that Province after Province, the whole of [Mexico] should incorporate itself into the Union, on the principles of our Government."[124] Although it grew wary of total annexation as the war wore on, the *Freeman* continued to believe that the Mexican Church would profit from an influx of northern immigrants—even if primarily Protestant—who would carry with them a capacity for "more settled and permanent government."[125] Jane McManus Storm, an adamant proponent of total annexation in her *Sun* columns, envisioned a mutually beneficial merger in which U.S. Catholics could draw on the material wealth of the Mexican Church, which would in turn be catalyzed to revival by the "poorer but more energetic church of this country."[126]

The *Telegraph* too thought that an annexed Mexico would "gain from the late, terrible vicissitudes" by acquiring a dose of the "zeal and vigorous action" of the U.S. Church.[127] In using such racially loaded rhetoric—an assertive, masculine North American church taking charge of a passive, effeminate Mexican church—as well as political arguments premised on a superior

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[123] *CT*, June 4, 1846.
[124] *NYFJ*, August 8, 1846.
[125] *NYFJ*, June 24, 1848.
[126] Storm to Blanc, 4 April 1847, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-g-13, UNDA.
[127] *CT*, November 11, 1847.

knack for self-government, the Catholic press presented a religious adaptation of rhetoric already well-rehearsed in the debates over annexation.[128] Where other annexationists envisioned U.S. rule enabling a more efficient Mexican government to maximize its natural resources, Catholic journalists looked forward to a more efficient Mexican church hierarchy making better use of its spiritual and temporal treasures.

The primary reason, according to the Catholic pundits, why the Mexican Church would flourish within U.S. jurisdiction was that it would finally be free from the state usurpations that had beleaguered it since the eighteenth-century Bourbon reforms, and more especially since independence from Spain a generation ago. U.S. Catholics had become convinced that their nation's law of religious disestablishment was manifestly beneficial to the church's fortunes; indeed, they celebrated religious liberty as a Catholic bequest to the continent. While an unbridled Catholic Church had progressed at a remarkable pace in the United States, Mexico's church had deteriorated just as rapidly owing to the parasitic demands of a state that had—as the accepted narrative among Catholic debunkers of the Black Legend recounted it—descended into disarray once loosed from Spanish moorings.[129] From the commencement of hostilities in 1846, Catholic commentators pointed to the spread of ecclesiastical liberty as a potentially positive outcome of a U.S. victory in Mexico. "Here the Church is free," the *News-Letter* had asserted with a palpable hint of national pride; and "wherever the Church is freest, there are her conquests greatest."[130]

The ensuing campaign had allowed U.S. Catholics to witness up close the remains of an era when the church had been free to make conquests of legendary fame. Spanish colonial architecture spoke of a golden age of faith—an age that in many cases seemed all too evidently to have passed. But the Catholics who belonged to this nineteenth-century army of conquest prayed, as they paced adobe porticos and passed under *churrigueresque* facades, that another age of faith

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[128] See John C. Pinheiro, "'Religion Without Restriction:' Anti-Catholicism, All Mexico, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo." *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (2003): 129–152.

[129] For another rendition of this narrative in the U.S. Catholic press, see *CA*, August 3, 1846.

[130] *News-Letter*, July 11, 1846.

was at hand. Making a redemptive martyr of his fallen colleague, John McElroy petitioned from the altar of a crumbling chapel in Matamoras that the blood of Anthony Rey, "watering the earth of this afflicted country, may draw down blessing on the Mexican Church."[131] The *Telegraph* featured one soldier's ruminations from the ruinous missions around San Antonio, beacons of a bygone century of "civilized society and peaceful happiness." Their former grandeur was still evident, however, leaving hope that the "commencement of a new era in the country," as overseen by the United States, would breathe life into them once more.[132] An officer stationed in California wrote to the *U.S. Catholic Magazine* that the missions there had been abandoned, returning the local Indians to their "barbarous" pursuits and leaving what Catholics remained in the territory to practice their religion under "deplorable" circumstances. This correspondent, who had converted to Catholicism somewhere during his tour of duty out west, prayed that the church's condition would improve under the oversight of the U.S. hierarchy.[133]

A half-decade of diplomatic and military conflict with Mexico forced Catholics of letters in the U.S. to take stock, as they never had before, of their religious kin to the southwest, and in doing so to clarify their own understanding of the American past and vision for the American future. Prewar works on Mexico, as well as Protestant impressions from the front, prompted them to mount a defense of the Spanish colonial legacy and to draw a sympathetic—though still racially condescending—portrait of Mexican Catholics. Their protective stance toward Mexico did not prevent them, however, from backing an invasion sparked by a sense of cultural superiority that they deftly redirected to the defense of their church. Though at times hesitant in supporting their nation's armed seizure of its Manifest Destiny, ultramontane authors and editors emerged from the war hopeful that it had not only secured Catholics greater patriotic credibility at home but that it would also result in a strengthened church throughout the continent. With nearly half of

[131] *Woodstock Letters*, Vol. 16 (1887), 226.
[132] *CT*, October 29, 1846.
[133] "Religion in California," *United States Catholic Magazine* 8:17 (April 28, 1849): 264–6.

Mexico's former territory now suddenly under the flag of the United States, clues to the nation's Catholic past had never been more manifest, and expectations regarding the church's destiny here had never run higher.

Chapter Three

THE LAND OF THE CROSS

Mientras el catolicismo se va debilitando en aquellos pueblos del Nuevo-Mundo que á él debieron esencialmente su origen, va adquiriendo un desarrollo considerable y progresivo en las distintas poblaciones de Estados-Unidos, es decir, de la sociedad que debe su traslacion á América, ya que no su orígen, al protestantismo.[1]

—*La Cruz*, Mexico City, December 27, 1855

Trinity Church's unfinished steeple set New Yorkers abuzz in the summer of 1845. Plans for the expanding Episcopal parish called for a spire of nearly three-hundred feet to soar high above the businesses of Wall Street. Even more noteworthy than its height was the ornament chosen to adorn its apex: not the weathercock typical of Protestant steeples but an iron cross like those that ordinarily marked Catholic silhouettes in the skyline. Some Protestants balked at the exorbitant expense of the neo-gothic design, believing the money better directed toward evangelistic and charitable efforts. Others saw in the suspiciously medieval architecture a confirmation that, after years of tending in a high-church direction, Trinity had finally fallen into "superstition and… deadly error."[2] According to the New York *Freeman's Journal*, Roman Catholics watched the erection of the cross-capped tower partly in approval, partly in amusement, and partly feeling "solicitude lest a Catholic brother, a sojourner here from far climes, misled by the outward emblem, should enter where nothing but cold disappointment awaits him."[3]

[1] "While Catholicism is weakening among those peoples of the New World who essentially owe their origin to it, it is developing considerably and progressively among the different populations of the United States—that is to say, of a society that owes its transferal to America, though not its origin, to Protestantism."

[2] Morgan Dix, *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York*, Part IV (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), 264–5.

[3] *NYFJ*, July 19, 1845.

A year later, not long after the controversial consecration of the new building, the *Freeman*'s fears were realized. A local correspondent, admiring Trinity's architecture on his way home from work one day, reported seeing six people, seemingly foreigners, cross themselves upon entering the church and begin praying from a Catholic breviary. The narrator gently informed them of their mistake, at which point they hurriedly and good-humoredly departed. Though the *Freeman* editor regretted the confusion caused by the "very Catholic appearances in which the *Protestant* Trinity Church has chosen to disguise herself," he could not help finding some satisfaction in the city's new landmark. [4]

The tallest structure in Manhattan, Trinity's gothic steeple figured prominently in the first impressions formed by hundreds of thousands of immigrants who entered the United States at the South Street docks and Castle Clinton during the 1840s and 1850s. For the many Catholics among that number, the exalted cross likely inspired hopes that the nation would offer a religiously welcoming new residence.[5] While such expectations sometimes proved deceptive—as they did for the immigrants found mistakenly genuflecting in Trinity's nave—they harmonized perfectly with the prevailing tone of ultramontane opinion, which perceived in America's increasingly Catholic outward appearance an essential truth about its origins and its destiny.

Still often regarded as a conspicuously Catholic symbol rather than a sign of generic Christian piety, crosses were becoming a commonplace feature of the midcentury U.S. landscape. This was in part due to the romantic proclivities of a new generation of Protestant church designers; in part, to the recent takeover of Mexican villages with their cross-capped chapels and mission facades; and in part, to the ambitious building campaigns being undertaken by expanding Catholic dioceses across the country. To anxious Protestant and satisfied Catholic observers alike,

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[4] *NYFJ,* August 1, 1846. Trinity's new gothic design was also praised, with qualification, in the October 1845 issue of *United States Catholic Magazine*. See Smith, *Gothic Arches, Latin Crosses,* 96.

[5] Smith quotes a correspondent to the *United States Democratic Review* who in 1853 noted how pleasant is was "to see the emigrants when they swarm up Broadway from the ships, stop in front of the Church, which they take to be a Roman Catholic Cathedral on a small scale, and kneel before it on the pavement, thanking their God for bringing them safely to land." Ibid., 115.

it appeared that the young republic was, like a catechumen preparing to enter the church, being physically marked with the sign of the cross.

In 1848, a prescient reporter for the Boston *Catholic Observer* looked forward to the day when Catholic crosses would dominate every vista of his beloved city. "This is the land of the cross," he reasoned. "Columbus consecrated it by raising the sacred sign of salvation before all others, and through the cross it must be regenerated."[6] A missionary correspondent to the Pittsburgh *Catholic* made a similar point after staking new a claim for the Church in Atlantic City, Jersey. Columbus "planted the Cross in this New World, and thus took possession of and consecrated America in the name of the Catholic Church…a fact that must make Catholics feel quite at *home*, and, so to speak, *on their own soil* in this country."[7]

By the late forties and early fifties, Catholics had good reason to feel "on their own soil" in the United States. New maps of the expanding nation now abounded in Romance language and religious imagery: Vincennes and Dubuque and Sault Sainte Marie, Colorado and Sacramento and Santa Fe. The Franciscan frontiers that once constituted northern Mexico were now gathered under the Stars and Stripes. An astounding boom in Catholic infrastructure—churches, colleges, hospitals, and orphanages—more than matched the rapid pace of construction in the country at large. Imposing new cathedrals were reshaping skylines throughout the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys, and Gothic architecture was becoming fashionable even among Presbyterian urbanites. Banners of St. Patrick and the Assumption of Mary were now fixtures at patriotic parades on the Fourth of July and Washington's Birthday.

Emboldened by the progress of their faith, ultramontane intellectuals had begun reaching into the American past to fashion a historical narrative befitting their increasingly Catholic country. External developments were making the United States seem less and less like a continent-wide wide swath of secularity between the sacralized landscapes of Quebec and

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[6] Reprinted in *CA*, March 4, 1848.
[7] *PC*, July 14, 1855. Italics original.

Mexico; Catholic minds, all the while, crafted a corresponding a mode of national imagining that that wove strands of the French and Spanish heritage more deliberately into the account of U.S. origins and identity. This effort was not without ambivalence. The invasion of Mexico had made Catholic Yankees more conscious of what they held in common with their southern neighbors but also more sensitive to the negative qualities attributed to "Catholic countries," not *all* of which they dismissed as figments of Protestant prejudice. So when taking stock of their newly cruciform nation, U.S. ultramontanes sought to incorporate themselves into a larger continental narrative while at the same time preserving a sense of exceptional destiny and national superiority.

"The Right of Conquest": Resurrecting the Catholic Frontier

The promise of the American west inspired dizzying speculation at mid-century. A Cincinnati tea company, advertising in the *Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, pictured the Union two-hundred years hence as a mighty empire centered in the Missouri River Valley. Representatives of a hundred states, ranging from the Bering Strait to Guatemala, would converge on the capital city of Centeropolis in eastern New Mexico, at their disposal the riches of the entire world (some of which were already available, conveniently enough, at the corner of Western Row and Fifth Street).[8] Such heady prognostications appeared as often in sermons as in sales pitches. Lyman Beecher's *Plea for the West* (1835), which set the tone for a veritable subgenre of Protestant missionary pamphlets, had predicted 300 million trans-Appalachian inhabitants by century's end.[9] In the years following the Mexican Cession, as streams of heavy migration began flowing into California and Texas as well as the Old Northwest, that prophecy seemed destined for fulfillment. So did Beecher's warnings about the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, which appeared

[8] *CTA*, July 2, 1853.
[9] Lyman Beecher, *Plea for the West* (Cincinnati: Truman & Smith, 1835).

poised to become the primary shaper of frontier society unless checked by intervention from the "Benevolent Empire" of evangelical congregations, schools, and reform organizations.

The occidental orientation of mid-century Catholicism was more than a figment of Beecher's imagination. German Catholics seemed bent on building an American Rhineland along the banks of the Ohio. The two *entrepots* of Mississippi commerce, St. Louis and New Orleans, featured deeply rooted Catholic subcultures. Lands recently wrested from Mexico, though sparsely settled, bore the clear imprint of a Spanish colonial past. "Catholicity, compared with the single sects, is the prevailing religion of the West," the *United States Catholic Miscellany* concluded in 1854—a fortunate state of affairs, in the editor's opinion, since only Catholic faith could withstand the lawlessness and infidelity of a frontier yet to be fully civilized.[10]

As a corollary to their belief in providential expansionism, many commentators had come to imagine the American west as a proving ground for republican government and Christian culture. Jacksonian renditions of the *translatio imperii*—the ancient theory of civilization's inexorable westward march, famously summarized in George Berkeley's verse, "Westward the course of empire takes its way"— commonly posed an enlightened Protestantism against a benighted Catholicism in a contest to redeem the barbarous western landscape.[11] Some visions of this impending confessional showdown were more conciliatory than others. Philip Schaff, a Swiss-American historian at the German Reformed seminary in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, looked forward to a process of frontier fusion that would hasten the advent of "evangelical Catholicism," a higher, hybrid form of Christianity.[12] But like other more combative contemporaries, Schaff considered the west primarily as a map of competing religious claims. Catholic intellectuals entrenched such thinking in their own rhetoric. From the vantage of the ultramontane press, James McMaster's provocative assessment of Texas held true of the

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[10] *USCM*, May 6, 1854.

[11] Beecher's is the most famous version of this theory. For others, see Gjerde, 96–137.

[12] Philip Schaff, *America: A Sketch of Its Political, Social, and Religious Character*, ed. Perry Miller (New York: C. Scribner, 1855; Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), 191–192.

continent's entire western expanse: "Its territory has once been evangelized, and the Catholic Church holds in it the right of conquest."[13] While Beecher and his protégés viewed the western frontier as an opportunity to replicate the successes of Yankee evangelism, McMaster and company took it as a mandate to revitalize the apostolic projects of the counterreformation. The inspiring legacy of the Spanish friars was now, thanks to the military campaign in Mexico, vividly impressed upon the Catholic imagination; so too were many disheartening instances of the physical and spiritual entropy of their missionary labors. For U.S. ultramontanes, this discovery served as a summons to action—their spiritual ancestors had left them a deed to claim and work to resume.

Pressing the "right of conquest" into effect proved more difficult than the triumphal rhetoric of Catholic editors sometimes suggested. The tenuousness of colonial precedents had become apparent on the southern frontiers of Florida, the first vestige of Spanish empire to come under U.S. jurisdiction. By the time of Florida's admission to statehood in 1845, the Catholic footprint there had dwindled to five churches, only one of which could be called a functioning parish. Outside of St. Augustine, where citizens of Spanish and Minorcan descent still predominated, the only noteworthy clusters of Catholics were gathering around the naval yards of Pensacola and the family compound of statesman Stephen Mallory in Key West.[14] Even in St. Augustine, the church was losing hold of its former possessions. The old episcopal residence was now occupied not by a Roman *episcopus* but by Episcopalians; the old Franciscan convent was serving as an army barracks. In the spring of 1848, even as they protested army occupation of church property in Mexico, ultramontane editors also kept a close watch on St. Augustine, where clergy and church wardens were petitioning the U.S. government for restitution of the convent,

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[13] *NYFJ*, November 18, 1848.

[14] Michael Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513–1870* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965), 152. Mallory would serve as a U.S. Senator from 1850 until the secession of Florida in 1861, at which time he became Secretary of the Navy for the Confederate States. Along with his Cuban wife, he served as patron for Key West's growing Catholic community—many of them transient military personnel—until the regular services of a priest could be secured.

among other properties. The suit, submitted to Mallory's arbitration, proved unsuccessful.[15] Despite such setbacks, Catholic journalists remained confident that the state's colonial foundations would prove determinative of its future. By the mid-fifties, with church membership increasing there as elsewhere, a correspondent to the *Miscellany* predicted that "zeal and patience will yet succeed in rendering Florida—what she once was and yet should be—a Catholic country."[16]

Texas, the other Hispanic frontier to achieve statehood in 1845, posed a similar disjunction between past identity and present reality. When Jean Marie Odin became its first bishop under U.S. auspices in 1847, he found only ten churches in regular use and eleven priests available to serve his vast diocese.[17] Diaries from his early visitations, widely published in Catholic newspapers back east, sketched an inauspicious vista. Along with letters from Jean-Baptiste Lamy—the newly appointed Vicar Apostolic of New Mexico, who was trekking through the Rio Grande Valley on his way to Santa Fe—they depicted Texas as a wilderness ravaged by cholera and Comanche raids, its missions in ruins, its few remaining Catholics un-catechized.[18] Lay correspondents contributed to the poor publicity as well. One colorful letter to the *Miscellany* described local *tejanos* as "half-breeds" whose lives amounted to a series of bloody fandangos by night, followed by all-day siestas. To make matters worse, "German infidels" were overrunning the hill country, and church lands once protected by the Spanish crown were now "occupied by squatters from Yankeedoodledom."[19] Ultramontane writers still publicly refuted charges that "Texas has never been evangelized," but it took some rhetorical bravado to convince

[15] Gannon, 153–156.
[16] USCM March 31, 1855.
[17] James Talmadge Moore, *Through Fire and Flood: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836–1900* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992) 78–79.
[18] Odin's reports appeared in *USCM*, December 28, 1850–January 25, 1851; see also Lamy's letter from San Antonio in *CTA*, April 19, 1851.
[19] *USCM*, May 26, 1855.

themselves—much less their adversaries in the Protestant religious press—that the Catholic Church held a valid religious claim to the largest state in the Union.[20]

Not all reports from Texas dampened belief in a Catholic destiny out west. Encouraged by recent migration patterns, one correspondent predicted that the country along the Guadalupe River would in time become predominantly Catholic.[21] Unlike the plaintiffs in St. Augustine, Bishop Odin was winning important suits over the rightful possession of church properties, including the mission San Antonio de Valero—better known as the Alamo—which had been in the hands of the U.S. army since the start of the war against Mexico.[22] His efforts to establish a Catholic presence in the booming port of Galveston were also paying off. By 1850, the newly constructed St. Mary's Cathedral dominated the cityscape, and its congregation claimed to be the largest in town.[23] Though Galveston had no Catholic heritage to revive, success there portended well for the neglected missions of the interior. "Our very temples seem conscious of the approach of their former splendor," wrote one Galvestonian familiar with those inland relics of Spanish empire. Like other ultramontane speculators on the state's religious future, this observer believed that "Texas is by prescription and by priority of possession, a Catholic country."[24]

It was California, more than any other spoil of the recent war, that inspired U.S. Catholics to pine for the Spanish missionary past and pray for their own missionary present. From the time it first came under U.S. jurisdiction, California had little trouble capturing the popular imagination. Its Mediterranean hills enchanted a nation of quixotic dreamers; its gold-veined riverbeds enticed a nation of restless schemers. What Catholic commentators found most alluring was the string of Franciscan missions that served as the territory's geographic and historical

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[20] *NYFJ*, December 2, 1848.
[21] *CA* May 2, 1846.
[22] Moore, 117–118.
[23] *NYFJ*, September 21, 1850. Later in the decade, the journalist and Catholic convert Thomas Low Nichols, describing a voyage along the Gulf Coast, would note that "Galveston Cathedral is one of the chief landmarks for mariners." See Nichols, *Forty Years of American Life, 1821–1861* (New York: Stackpole Sons), 1937, 140.
[24] *NYFJ*, December 2, 1848.

spine. The story of these missions, as related in the Catholic press, was equal parts romance and parable. Under the guidance of the saintly friar Junipero Serra and his successors, two generations of native Californians had acquired the arts and virtues of Christian civilization, cultivating something close to an earthly paradise on the Pacific coast. But since 1833, when Mexican liberals rashly secularized Franciscan properties, the mission lands had fallen into misuse, and the mission Indians had largely "relapsed into barbarism." Some American Catholic commentators interpreted Mexico's defeat as divine chastisement for the fate of the missions—and warned that the U.S. government faced similar punishment if it impeded the restoration of church property.[25]

Dispatches from California soon indicated that a second missionary era was already underway. Joseph Alemany, a Catalan-American friar appointed the new state's first bishop in 1850, began reclaiming lands and assets from both Mexico and the United States, a complex set of negotiations not fully resolved until the twentieth century. Meanwhile, a new test of the church's civilizing capabilities was mounting daily with the shiploads of fortune-seekers shuttling through the "Golden Gate." Swollen with rough-hewn adventurers and governed by improvisation, San Francisco soon acquired the character of a social experiment. As one reporter to the *United States Catholic Magazine* put it, "the people are a wild, motley set of all nations and creeds with no one to guide them*."*[26]

Alemany mobilized an impressive effort to evangelize this rising Babel by the Bay, and Catholic papers back east did their best to document his activities as both a record of religious progress and an index of civilization. The bishop's mere presence, providing a link to more placid

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[25] *United States Catholic Magazine*, January 13, April 28, 1849. McMaster's commentary on the subject was biblical in tone: "We cannot and ought not to forget that towards Mexico our Government and our people have been but the rod with which the Lord of Hosts has corrected a perverse and rebellious Catholic nation. And that we have a special occasion to step softly in this path, lest having answered the purpose of a scourge, we be ourselves broken to pieces for exceeding the commission He has given us." *NYFJ*, April 13, 1850.

[26] So great was the need for Christian preaching, according to this article, that one Catholic had donated five-hundred dollars to help lure a Protestant minister, "rather than have no one." Reprinted in *USCM*, May 19, 1849.

times, was said to boost public morality.[27] The arrival of several Sisters of Mercy—figures doubly exotic in a city virtually devoid of women—offered another sign of Christian improvement.[28] It seemed a favorable omen that California's first governor, Peter H. Burnett, had lately abandoned the Disciples of Christ for the Catholic faith.[29] And the frightening pace of immigration appeared to be benefiting the Roman Church disproportionately. Thanks to argonauts from Chile, Mexico, Australia, and Ireland—not to mention the crowded ghettos of the Eastern Seaboard—California claimed 85,000 Catholics in 1854, over ten times the number estimated just five years earlier.[30] "This moral wilderness might one day yet blossom like the rose," dared to hope a former forty-niner, now teaching literature at a startup Jesuit college in San Francisco. As new faces filled the old mission churches, California seemed to be revitalizing its former identity. At least there were grounds for hope. "This state is Catholic at heart," the *Freeman*'s Sacramento correspondent insisted. "Its history and traditions and reminiscences are inseparably connected with the Church and her ministers."[31]

The formerly Spanish states of the expanding Union, with their evocative architecture and place-names, did not monopolize the historical imagination of postwar Catholics. The French past of the Mississippi Valley also had its allure. Louisiana's Catholic culture—if not always its Catholic virtue—was clear enough to see. As St. Louis became more central to American commerce and overland migration, ultramontane intellectuals made a point of remarking on its decidedly non-Protestant roots as well. Once "the most truly Catholic city in these United States," French St. Louis had given way to the "bustling, worldly Saxon" under U.S. possession. Still, it retained many elements of its "primitive character" and seemed poised to build upon both its Catholic foundations and its strategic location in becoming the "Western Rome," the moral and

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[27] *USCM*, February 1, 1851.
[28] *USCM*, October 27, 1855.
[29] *NYFJ*, March 29, 1851. See similar sentiments expressed upon Alemany's arrival, USCM February 1, 1855.
[30] PC December 24, 1853. Gilberto M. Hinojosa estimates 75,000. See "Mexican American Faith Communities in the Southwest," *Cambridge History of Religions in America*, 80.
[31] NYIFJ December 22, 1855

commercial center of American empire.[32] With a strong—if perhaps affected—dose of local pride, J.V. Huntingdon voiced similar sentiments in the St. Louis *Leader*. The homesick New Englander was not long for the west, but he believed his momentary residence to be the future "heart and centre of the Republic," a city whose "Catholic element, originally exclusive" but still sizeable, would continue to increase in proportion to its national influence.[33]

The receding frontiers of the Old Northwest likewise bore a French imprint. An army surveyor writing in the *Miscellany* described Michigan as "classic ground for a Catholic," recalling the legendary travels of Father Jacques Marquette and other French Jesuits on the peninsula.[34] Those early missions foreshadowed the state's developing religious complexion—"the time is not far distant when Michigan must become a Catholic State," one booster for Irish immigration predicted.[35] Around the same time, the *Telegraph* was running articles on the Catholic origins of both Michigan and Illinois, areas first brought within the bounds of Christian civilization by Jesuit missionaries.[36] The convergence of French past and American future in the semi-settled Northwest was nowhere more apparent than at a bustling college and religious community recently carved from the forests of Indiana. Visitors to Notre Dame du Lac remarked on its frontier character—its existence in the twilight between primeval nature and advanced civilization. The sights and sounds of a day's stay there—priests tending lakeside vineyards, schoolboys learning mechanical arts between Latin recitations, French hymns intoned within hewn-log chapels—suggested an old Jesuit mission from Marquette's time, reinvigorated by the spirit of Young America.[37]

Midcentury Catholic writers embraced the elongating U.S. map as a clue to their heritage and a sign of their future on the continent. Despite lingering reservations about the recent war,

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[32] *USCM*, February 23, 1850; *CA*, August 12, 1843; *CA*, May 19, 1849.
[33] St. Louis *Leader*, September 29, 1855.
[34] *USCM*, January 26, 1850.
[35] *USCM*, August 30, 1851.
[36] *CTA*, August 3-24, 1850.
[37] *Catholic Mirror*, June 1, 1850; Nichols, 273–277.

they refused to abandon confidence that the Yankee conquest of northern Mexico would reward the church in the long run. And wary as they were of the slogan "Manifest Destiny"—which slipped easily into rhetoric about the eschatological triumph of Protestantism—ultramontane editors hinted at their own version of providential expansionism.[38] Their newspapers portrayed the west as a mission field that had been tilled decades, even centuries, in advance to prepare for the advent of energetic U.S. Catholics. The suspended labors of Serra, Marquette, and other American apostles had, under the Star-Spangled Banner, been resumed by evangelists equal to completing the task. Some sort of divine plan seemed to be unfolding wherever new railroad tracks and wagon trails intersected the old mendicant footprints. The joining of national ambition and colonial religion on the old French and Spanish frontiers suggested a Catholic country in the making—or at the very least, a country that could no longer count itself Protestant. This was, in any case, the ultramontane hope.

"In Proportion as the Church Prospers": Postwar Growth and Catholic Self-Assertion

There was no surer way to irk a Catholic editor at midcentury than to refer to the United States, whether casually or argumentatively, as "a Protestant country." Nineteenth-century intellectuals, beholden to a romantic fascination with national "type" or character, made such statements with some frequency. Religious polemicists, in particular, tended to parse the map of Christendom into Protestant and Catholic nations. Theological and racial hierarchies overlapped in this "geopolitics of faith." Evangelical writers cast the Protestant peoples of northern Europe and North America as industrious, educated, and capable of self-government; the Catholic peoples of southern Europe and Latin America they characterized as indolent, ignorant, and given to tyranny.

[38] For Catholic suspicion of the term "Manifest Destiny," satirically expressed, see *CTA*, May 14, 1853; July 9, 1853. The Pittsburgh *Catholic* found it an obnoxious but excusable choice of words, taking into account the impressive nature of "what we have done already, and what, with God's blessings, we will achieve hereafter." *PC* July 2, 1857.

Ultramontane apologists became well practiced in reversing such arguments on a global scale without questioning their basic premises: Protestant countries they characterized as chaotic, avaricious, licentious, and dull, while Catholic countries retained an instinct for beauty, decency, charity, and social harmony.[39] When it came to their own country, however, Catholic apologists in the U.S. departed from their colleagues elsewhere by refusing to apply the bifurcated template. The United States was, in their eyes, exceptional: "not a Protestant country, or a Catholic country, but a common broad land of freedom."[40]

The claim was, at its root, constitutional. As a religious minority in the early republic—one comprising large numbers of Irish immigrants who had lived under penal laws and French refugees who had witnessed an anticlerical revolution—Catholics had taken comfort in the federal guarantee of free exercise. Since its founding in 1822, Charleston's *Catholic Miscellany* had featured for its masthead motto not a verse of scripture or a papal exhortation but the text of the First Amendment [figure 4]. When anti-Catholic political activism spiked in the mid-forties and again in the early fifties, Catholic intellectuals positioned the church as a champion of religious disestablishment. Doing so seemed to place them at odds with the ultramontane push against religious liberty in nations such as Mexico, Colombia, Austria, and the Papal States. Nonetheless, U.S. Catholic literati maintained with near unanimity that, although "unnecessary and uncalled for" in a "purely Catholic country," religious freedom was essential to social order in a young republic of mixed creeds like their known.[41] Nor was the First Amendment to be supported only provisionally, until such time as Catholics predominated—one editor who dared

[39] For more on the Protestant "geopolitics of faith", see Gjerde, 40–47. Champions of the ultramontane twist on the "geopolitics of faith" relied heavily the work of Jaime Balmes, a Catalonian philosopher who authored *El Protestantismo comparado con el Catolicismo en sus relaciones con la civilización europea* (1845). This book became for midcentury ultramontanes what Chateaubriand's *Genius of Christianity* had been for a prior generation: an apologetics manual for anyone who wished to prove the superiority of Catholic to Protestant forms of cultural and political life. Translated and reprinted across the Atlantic World, it became widely known among U.S. Catholics after John Murphy published Charles Ignatius White's translation, *Protestantism and Catholicity Compared in their Effects on the Civilization of Europe*, in 1850.

[40] *NYFJ*, January 30, 1847. See also *CA*, February 4, 1843; June 29, 1844; *USCM*, April 30, 1853.

[41] See, for instance, *USCM*, August 13, 1853.

to suggest as much found nothing but censure from his colleagues.[42] Governmental neutrality in religious affairs was a foundational element of American nationhood, one that both allowed the church to flourish and secured harmonious relations within a diverse political body. By their own reckoning, Catholic apologists were its most steadfast supporters. Unlike nativists and "Know-Nothings" clamoring to instate religious qualifications for public office, they recognized the genius of the nation's constitutional agnosticism. It remained their strongest argument against the notion that the United States was "a Protestant country."

During the postwar decade, however, it became increasingly feasible to mount an empirical as well as a constitutional challenge to that cherished old epithet. Census data and church surveys showed that "Protestant" was now an inadequate a descriptor of the U.S. population. By 1850, nearly 10% of the nation's 23 million souls were Catholic, according to the federal census, almost double the proportion counted twenty years earlier. The Catholic press crunched the numbers to attain even more encouraging results. Not only did Catholics now outnumber any single Protestant denomination, but the total number of members in all Protestant churches—including, magnanimously, Mormons and Swedenborgians—reached only 3.76 million (15%), leaving 17.5 million citizens (75%) without any reported church membership. The data appeared to confirm the ultramontane apologist's standard argument that Protestantism amounted to "a simple denial of Catholicity," more often synonymous with unbelief than with any positive creed. The conclusion seemed clear enough to Baltimore's *Catholic Mirror*: "If Protestantism be distinct from irreligion, and of an affirmative character, this cannot fairly be considered a Protestant country."[43]

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[42] Robert Bakewell, the editor of the short-lived St. Louis sheet *The Shepherd of the Valley*, wrote in 1852 that "when Catholics obtain the ascendancy in this country, liberty is at an end. So say our enemies; so we believe." For a representative reaction in the ultramontane press, see *Catholic Mirror*, April 2, 1852.

[43] Reprinted in *PC*, February 25, 1854. For a similar conclusion, see *USCM*, October 11, 1851. It became commonplace for later historians to observe that the Roman Catholic Church was the United States' largest denomination by 1850. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, however, have demonstrated that this superlative relies on "incredibly inflated" estimates of the Catholic population, which assumed all immigrants from predominantly Catholic nations to be, in fact, Catholic. Following the lead of Gerald Shaughnessy, they showed this assumption to be fallacious and trimmed the number of Catholics in 1850 to

Many commentators expressed confidence, moreover, that the census had underreported the Catholic population, as did the internal surveys annually conducted by the *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac*. James McMaster was so certain—and so incensed—that the 1850 tallies were inaccurate, he offered $1000 toward a re-count, "if the *Almanac* will back the wager."[44] His expectations were understandable, if inflated (and, according to later research, unjustified). The U.S. Church now claimed many *californios* and *tejanos* likely overlooked by Anglophone census agents. German and Irish Catholics continued to disembark by the boatload in the nation's principal ports. Prominent citizens were converting almost daily.[45] The orbit of influential Catholics around Washington, deliberately expanded by Polk's wartime policies, continued to grow during the fifties. Chief Justice Roger Taney remained the most powerful Catholic in the capital. He was joined, as the decade wore on, by a Postmaster General and a handful of senators and congressmen. Newly strung news-wires—much less ambulatory census-takers—could hardly keep up with the nation's increasingly Catholic complexion.

What ultramontane editors touted as the "progress of Catholicity"—and some alarmed Protestants diagnosed as a cancerous spread of "popery"—impressed more with its speed than with its absolute numbers. Home from a successful foreign war and enjoying an economic boom, Young Americans frequently took stock of how much they had accomplished in only a generation's time. Catholic commentators participated in such assessments as well, grafting on to them a complementary narrative about the growth of their religion. Wherever new states were

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just over a million, or roughly 5% of the population. See Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 117–122. Thus, whether consciously or not, the analysts at the *Catholic Mirror* were applying a double-standard to their interpretation of America's religious landscape, accepting an extremely liberal definition of "Catholic" while at the same time limiting the definition of "Protestant" to those who could claim full church membership.

[44] *NYFJ*, January 11, 1851. McMaster believed the 1850 *Almanac* count of 1,334,500 Catholics to be "less than half" the actual total, meaning he must have thought the federal census results to be lacking as well. Protestant analysts arrived at similar figures to McMaster's, feeding anti-immigrant sentiment in some quarters. Robert Baird, for example, estimated the Catholic population at over 3,000,000 in 1855. If one accepts Finke and Stark's arguments, the *Catholic Almanac*'s diocesan surveys provided the most accurate contemporary estimate, though even they erred on the high side.

[45] According to recent estimates, over 50,000 U.S. citizens converted to Catholicism between 1830 and 1860. See Franchot, xx, 281.

admitted, new territories settled, new markets opened, or new factories built, the Church was present, contributing to the effort while at the same time strengthening its own institutions. Urging readers to support a new railroad tax, the *Telegraph* postulated a symbiotic relationship between national and ecclesiastical expansion: "Wherever you see great public works, you can trace the operations of our invincible church."[46] The *Advocate* perceived the same correlation, concluding that "national prosperity must advance in proportion as the church prospers and extends her influence."[47] McMaster, early in his *Freeman* editorship, set the tone for much future commentary by linking the nation's prospects directly to the church's success. "Every Catholic Church, every Catholic school, every convent, every Catholic asylum," he asserted, "is a foundation stone of this precious building of our country's greatness."[48] Catholic printers diligently published statistical updates on these "foundations of our country's prosperity." Articles marveling at the most recent numbers became commonplace in religious papers.[49] Beginning in 1854, each volume of the *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac* included a table tracking the exponential increase since 1808 of Catholic churches, clergy, colleges, female academies, and other institutions.

A grand visual representation of the church's growth occurred when the First Plenary Council convened on May 9, 1852. Over thirty prelates, including six archbishops—four of them recently appointed in the trans-Appalachian west—processed through the streets of Baltimore that Sunday in baroque splendor, accompanied by hundreds of priests, acolytes, and musicians. The Cathedral of the Assumption overflowed with worshipers, spectators, and newspaper correspondents, who later wired sketches of an overwhelming scene: the air thick with incense, Mozart's *Grosse Messe* resounding from the dome, ninety minutes' worth of Archbishop Hughes's forceful Irish inflections in the pulpit. The daily papers were intrigued, the Catholic

[46] *CTA*, September 28, 1850.
[47] *CA*, May 26, 1849.
[48] *NYFJ*, August 5, 1848.
[49] See, for example, *PC*, July 2, 1857.

papers enraptured. This first national council was a testament to the "magnificent movement of Catholicity under our republican institutions," a fitting show of strength for a church that spanned the continent as confidently as did the federal government.[50] The primate of this newly expanded flock, Archbishop Francis Kenrick of Baltimore saw a grand destiny unfolding in the council's aftermath. "Extending all the way to the Pacific Ocean," he wrote, "it is acceptable for us to hope and believe that in 25 years or less, the American portion of the Catholic Church will count as many Episcopal Sees as the most ancient kingdoms of Europe."[51]

The U.S. Catholic Church was now, to all appearances, national in scope. But ultramontane intellectuals had begun to press a stronger claim: that the nation itself was, to a notable degree, a Catholic achievement. To prove this civic heresy, they turned not only to census tables but also to the historical record, crafting their own distinct account of the country's colonial heritage and revolutionary achievement.

"At War With History"
Creating a Catholic Narrative

The proclivity of Catholics, among other groups, to recount their recent accomplishments reflected a larger fascination with history in the United States. A heightened historical consciousness had seized the nineteenth-century Atlantic, casting a Romantic penchant for brooding nostalgia over Enlightenment modes of research and an industrial-age conception of human progress. Even within this past-haunted milieu, Americans exhibited a remarkable appetite for history. Historical novels, led by the works of Walter Scott, dominated booksellers' inventories. Not far behind in popular appeal were the literary achievements of George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, Washington Irving, and William Prescott, to name only a few contemporary American historians of international fame. Historical societies and antiquarian clubs flourished from Massachusetts to Mississippi. Historical topics drew steady crowds on the lecture circuit.

[50] CTA May 8, 1852.
[51] Quoted in Pasquier, 129.

Ancient and modern history emerged as pillars of the new public school curriculum, subjects deemed requisite for the formation of productive democratic citizens. For all their animosity toward public education, Catholic authorities held history in no less esteem, considering it, among all the branches of instruction, "to hold the first place in forming young men for usefulness under a republican government."[52] United States History became the special province of primary schools, with popular textbooks by Samuel Goodrich and Emma Willard helping to define the young discipline.[53]

Literary Catholics appreciated the works of such luminaries as Bancroft and Prescott but turned to historians in their own circles for "non-prejudiced" narratives (or at least narratives prejudiced in a Catholic rather than a Protestant direction). Although the nation's most renowned ultramontane intellectual, Orestes Brownson, specialized in philosophy and theology rather than history, numerous other writers refracted the new historical consciousness through a Catholic prism. Martin Spalding gained a particularly strong reputation for historical acumen.[54] When Protestant wordsmiths fashioned yet another "Black Legend" of Spanish colonial cruelty, or contrasted the achievements of northern and southern Europe, or forged a direct connection between the Wittenberg doors and the Liberty Bell, Catholic readers counted on Spalding for historical counterarguments. His *Miscellanea*—an 1855 collection of essays previously published in the *United States Catholic Magazine*—remains the finest example of Catholic historical

[52] "Memoir of Rev. Pierre Fredet, S.S.S.," in *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, 1857), 47.

[53] George H. Callcott, *History in the United States, 1800–1860: Its Practice and Purpose* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 89. For a recent examination of primary school textbooks as a means of national identity formation, see Barry Joyce, *The First U.S. History Textbooks: Constructing and Disseminating the American Tale in the Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015). For the anti-Catholic dimensions of these popular early textbooks, see Marie Léonore Fell, *The Foundations of Nativism in American Textbooks*, 1783–1860 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1941), 206–223.

[54] As E. Brooks Holifield has observed, Spalding's "historical consciousness distinguished him from the Roman theologians who had trained him." Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians*, 107–108. For more on Spalding's education in Rome and the development of his historical interests, see John Farina, introduction to *Isaac T. Hecker: The Diary*, ed. John Farina (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 52–53.

apologetics from the period.[55] Thomas D'Arcy McGee fancied himself an expert in Irish and European history but his lecture-circuit repertoire also included a popular five-part series on the American past, published in 1855 as *The Catholic History of North America.*[56] John Hughes, though more a polemicist than a scholar, revealed a well-developed historical consciousness in many of his speaking engagements, including perhaps the most talked about Catholic lecture of the decade, "The Catholic Chapter in the History of the United States" (1852).[57] This command performance, along with McGee's discourses and Spalding's essays, headlined the postwar push to retell American history in Catholic terms.

The effort to craft a Catholic history for the United States extended into school classrooms, where the inchoate subject matter received its most systematic treatment. Objecting to the "sectarian influence" of Goodrich's works and other popular textbooks—which saw wide use in parochial settings as well as in the demonized public schools— bishops and editors clamored for primers better suited to suggestible young Catholic minds. The lack of such books was "a grievous and pressing evil," according to one teacher's urgent plea in the *Miscellany*.[58] Since 1840, U.S. prelates had been calling for textbooks that would "remove the discolorings of fiction, and vindicate the truth of history."[59] Catholic publishers began to meet their demands in earnest during the 1850s, printing trustworthy schoolbooks in all subjects. For ancient and modern history the standard works were supplied by Pierre Fredet, longtime professor at St.

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[55] Martin John Spalding, *Miscellanea* (Louisville: Webb, Gill, and Levering, 1855).

[56] Thomas D'Arcy McGee, *The Catholic History of North America: Five Discourses: to which are added two discourses on the relations of Ireland and America* (Boston: P. Donahoe, 1855).

[57] McMaster described this lecture, which attracted crowds that he could compare only with those assembled to see the operatic sensation Jenny Lind, as having "killed and buried, and done funeral honors to the cant phrase that this is a Protestant country." Responding to the buzz that it created among Catholics and Protestants alike, he planned to publish several thousand copies in pamphlet form. The *Mirror*, meanwhile, rushed the text of the lecture into print the very day it arrived, clearing out several articles already type-set. "We will not presume to speak on its merits," the editor said by way of introduction. "Every one must read it, as we are sure every one will. Were we at all disposed to indulge in an expression of the feelings which it has awakened, and which it cannot fail to awaken in the breast of every reader, we would find it no easy task to do it justice." *NYFJ*, March 13, 1852; *Catholic Mirror*, March 13, 1852.

[58] *USCM*, February 1, 1851.

[59] Pastoral Letter of the 1840 Provincial Council, printed in Guilday, ed., *National Pastorals*, 139–149.

Mary's College in Baltimore. Two other textbooks by leading Catholic intellects provided for primary-level instruction in U.S. History. Martin Kerney, editor of the *Metropolitan* magazine, published in 1850 a *Catechism of the History of the United States* that he had developed to tutor the children of cultured Baltimoreans (most noteworthy among them the young John Wilkes Booth). John Gilmary Shea, future doyen of the academic discipline of American Catholic history, found time among his more rigorous early-career projects to publish a *School History of the United States* in 1855, along with an accompanying volume in catechetical format. [60] These juvenile renditions of the American past mirrored the narrative that was, in more elaborate terms, taking shape in literary-institute lectures and ultramontane periodicals.

The Catholic retelling of American history functioned both as a refutation of the "Protestant Country" thesis and as a way of gaining purchase on expansionist notions of national destiny. It presented the nation's past as a series of Catholic precedents and Catholic achievements. The discovery and settlement of the continent had been a Catholic enterprise (Shea opened his book with medieval Irish explorations of Iceland; Kerney expected students to know that Columbus chanted the *Salve Regina* each evening at sea). [61] Spain's early claim to America extended farther north than commonly supposed—indeed, Spanish Jesuits had hallowed the Virginia Chesapeake with martyrs' blood a full generation before the English landing at Jamestown.[62] Among English settlers, it had been the Catholic pilgrims to Maryland, rather than

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[60] Peter Fredet, *Modern History: From the Coming of Christ and the Change of the Roman Republic into an Empire, to the Year of Our Lord 1850*, 10th ed. (Baltimore: Murphy & Co., 1853); Martin Kerney, *Catechism of the History of the United States; Adapted to the use of Schools in the United States* (Baltimore: Murphy & Co., 1850); John Gilmary Shea, *A School History of the United States, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (New York: Edward Dunigan and Brother, 1855). The *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac* hailed Fredet's work as "the most accurate and most comprehensive compendium of general history that we possess in the English language" ("Memoir of Rev. Pierre Fredet, S.S.S.," 47). The *Miscellany* welcomed Kerney's *Catechism* as "an excellent work for Catholic schools, as it has none of the bigotry which so often *points* a question in most of our class-books." *USCM* August 26, 1854. For more on Kerney's *Catechism*, see Joyce, 256–257.

[61] Shea, 5; Kerney, 11.

[62] Shea rescued from obscurity the account of an ill-fated 1570 Jesuit mission to Ajacán—that is, the Chesapeake Bay—first in an 1846 article for the *United States Catholic Magazine* and later in his 1855 book *History of the Catholic Missions in the United States*. See Anna Brickhouse, *The Unsettlement of*

the Puritan pilgrims to Massachusetts, who had laid the foundations for religious and civic liberty in the future United States. Catholics fully supported the war for independence, having naturally harbored little affection for the English Protestant crown. Victory in that war was a Catholic accomplishment, secured by French forces and other illustrious soldiers of Catholic heritage, whose names now graced monuments and street-signs and civic buildings throughout the land: Lafayette, Pulaski, DeKalb, Kosciusko, Montgomery, Barry. The new nation's federal constitution established a Catholic political order, restoring checks on tyranny that had originated in medieval Christendom but been disregarded by the absolutist monarchies unleashed in the Reformation. Catholic labor had made possible the country's astounding growth and internal development. Catholic colleges and academies spearheaded the ambitious effort to educate the young republic. Catholics loyally supported the war with Mexico and served with distinction on the field of combat. "Why be at war with history?" McGee would challenge his audience when concluding a lecture. As told by the ultramontane apologists, the American story was, in its essential contours, a Catholic story.[63]

This Catholic version of American history, forged in the polemical furnaces of the postwar press, took shape in part as a direct challenge to Protestant accounts of the country's identity. It functioned as a "counternarrative," an alternative mythology through which to imagine the meaning of American nationhood.[64] The comparative, anti-Protestant dimension of the narrative is especially evident in its creation of a rival pilgrim tradition to oppose the legacy of Puritanism [figure 2]. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, while many Protestant clergymen, orators, and editors began to lionize America's Puritan past with renewed

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America: Translation, Interpretation, and the Story of Don Luis de Velasco, 1560–1945. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 215–221.

[63] McGee, 66–67.

[64] I borrow the phrase from Gjerde, who offers the best available analysis of how this "Catholic counternarrative" both challenged and reflected the Protestant narrative. See Gjerde, 67–82.

vigor, ultramontane writers emerged among the leading architects of an anti-Puritan historical tradition.[65]

The contest of narratives occurred not merely in words, but in organizations and rituals. Puritan admirers formed their New England Societies; Catholics, in turn, led the establishment of a Maryland Pilgrims Association. Even as Plymouth Rock became a place of increasing reverence and religious tourism, Catholic college groups and lay associations began organizing festive trips to the sites where Maryland's settlers first landed, commemorating there the "true" source of the nation's noblest instincts. For every parade-day or picnic speech that traced constitutional principles to Puritan genius, Catholic spokesmen offered a caustic rebuttal. The Puritan achievement, in their eyes, amounted to "three small theocracies" that hung Quakers, harried Baptists, banned Catholics, and coldly exterminated Indians. "We would prefer the yoke of the Pharaohs to any form of government that was truly an extrapolation of the Puritan colonial model," McMaster vouched in response to one rendition of the New England myth.[66] The Catholic proprietors of Maryland, by contrast, made a policy of religious toleration and enjoyed irenic relations with native inhabitants.[67] To them belonged precedent for the harmonious political and social relations that normally characterized life in the United States. The Puritan spirit lived on largely in attempts to rupture those relations: in strict temperance laws, in sabbatarianism and abolitionism, in anti-Catholic activism and any other reversion to the authoritarian habits of government cultivated in colonial New England.

The contrast of pilgrim lineages, as set forth in the Catholic press, was overdrawn but not Manichaean. Catholic schoolbooks praised Puritans for their educational efforts—though not without notable qualifiers—identifying Harvard as the "oldest literary institution between Quebec

[65] For background on the "revival of interest in Puritanism" during the middle decades of the nineteenth-century, see Jan C. Dawson, *The Unusable Past: America's Puritan Tradition, 1830 –1930* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 9–48. For Catholic rejoinders to the Puritan revival, see 50–55.

[66] *NYFJ*, April 29, 1848; also *NYFJ*, August 13, 1859.

[67] See, for example, Fredet, 406.

and Mexico."[68] Catholic commentators sometimes expressed admiration for the "sturdy race" of Puritan colonists; Bishop Hughes even made social appearances at the New England Society on occasion.[69] Nor was the Maryland heritage a source of unqualified pride among U.S. Catholics. By midcentury, a number of ultramontanes had come to resent that genteel and "liberalized" tradition of Catholic accommodation, favoring the more assertive mentality that characterized recent immigrants. McMaster, for one, despised "Baltimoreism" and found the only commemoration of Maryland Settlers that he attended to be a disheartening bore.[70] Others must have been of a similar mind, for in 1859 the Baltimore *Mirror* expressed regret that the Pilgrim's Landing celebration had yet to become an annual or well-attended occurrence. "It is the manifest duty of us Catholics," the editor pleaded, "to rescue from present comparative oblivion the bright pages of history that record the high-toned principles and noble works of our ancestors."[71]

But despite rising anti-Baltimore currents and a relative lack of enthusiasm for steamboat outings to their alternative Plymouth, Catholic intellectuals had indeed begun fulfilling their "manifest duty" with remarkable consistency, promulgating an account of U.S. origins that turned to Maryland for enduring principles and to Massachusetts for menacing disruptions. Their rival myth extended from colonial times through the revolutionary era—Kerney, for instance, highlighted the burning of the cargo ship *Peggy Stewart* in Annapolis harbor as an alternative to the Boston Tea Party, while others drew comparisons between George Washington and the first U.S. bishop, Marylander John Carroll— and carried forward into current affairs, providing grounds for their position within the mounting sectional crisis. Roger Taney, author of the Dred Scott decision, was heir to the stable social instincts of Maryland Catholicism, while abolitionists like Wendell Phillips were avatars of Puritan "fanaticism."

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[68] Shea, 70; see also Kerney, 22–24.

[69] *CA*, February 27, 1847; Boston *Pilot*, January 1, 1848.

[70] James A. McMaster to Orestes A. Brownson, 17 March 1848, 9 September 1848, Brownson Papers I-3-i, UNDA; *NYFJ*, May 26, 1849.

[71] *Catholic Mirror,* April 2, 1859.

The Catholic narrative offered more than a rejoinder to the case for the nation's Protestant essence. A product of the fractious postwar decade, it reached maturity in a rhetorical climate propelled by the bluster of Manifest Destiny as well as the paranoia of the Know-Nothing movement. It emerged not only in competition with the U.S. past as imagined by Protestants, but also in comparison with the histories of neighboring republics to the south. As they had during the invasion of Mexico, U.S. Catholic writers remained sensitive to the ambivalence of hemispheric dominance. Postwar prosperity, catalyzed by the conquest, was accelerating the church's growth and increasing its national prominence. But U.S. ascendancy also caused neighboring Catholic countries to suffer—by comparative reputation when not by actual political or economic harm, their relative stagnancy lending credence to those who argued for the superiority of Protestant peoples.

The alternative history forged by U.S. Catholics, to the extent that it functioned as a fully *American* history, sought to alleviate these tensions. Ultramontane Yankees drew Spanish America into their narrative in a manner that allowed them to negotiate the moral ambiguities of national progress and expansion. Historical juxtaposition to other New World republics—Mexico especially—gave them means to embrace as *Catholic* the triumphs of U.S. nationhood while blaming Protestantism and infidelity for all that had gone awry in the American experiment. Two historical issues provided especially fruitful grounds for comparison: the fate of America's indigenous peoples and the achievement of American independence from colonial rule.

Contrasts between the English and the Spanish encounters with America's Indians had recently become a recurring motif in U.S. Catholic apologetics. Spalding had set the template for the argument in his response to Daniel Webster's pro-Puritan speech at Bunker Hill (1843) and his reviews of Prescott's *History of the Conquest* (1844), portraying English colonists as indifferent or hostile to native peoples and Spanish *conquistadors* as humane conquerors concerned for their physical and spiritual welfare. A decade later this redirected "Black Legend" was surfacing in newspaper editorials, primary school tutorials, and college podiums. At

Fordham, young orators staged debates on the relative merits of English and Spanish colonialism; in Mobile, Spring Hill College students eulogized "the chivalrous Hernando Cortez."[72] While it was true, as Kerney admitted in the *Metropolitan*, that "some enormities were perpetrated" in the Spanish conquest of Mexico, "still an impartial posterity is grateful to the conquerors for the addition of a vast country to the domain of Christianity and civilization."[73]

The complexion of this Christianized country to the south remained strikingly indigenous, as the recent influx of travel diaries and warfront letters had so often observed. To Catholic commentators, the absence of a comparable native population in the U.S. was damning. "Where are the Indians of our portion of North America?" McMaster asked, accusingly. "Where are the red men of North America?" the *Telegraph* demanded. The answer seemed clear enough—they had been "annihilated" by British Protestants. Meanwhile, the brown-skinned multitudes of Mexico endured, "a living monument of the saving spirit of Catholic civilization."[74] The near extinction of the United States' first peoples, a sobering fact brought home by the nation's late encounters with Mexico, haunted Catholic historians and educators as a glimpse at the underside of America's glorified Protestant past. "Of the Indians they made no account," Shea wrote of Massachusetts' Puritan settlers. The review questions at page-bottom directed Catholic schoolchildren toward the moral of the story: "What did they do for the Indians? What contrast exists on this point?"[75]

Shea, McGee, and Spalding sought to absolve Catholics of all culpability for Indian removal by chronicling the church's beneficent missionary labors. Shea's first major publication

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[72] *NYFJ*, July 15, 1848; *USCM*, March 18, 1854.

[73] *Metropolitan*, vol. 1 (1850), 113.

[74] *NYFJ*, September 6, 1851; *CTA*, February 12, 1853; McGee, *The Catholic History of North America*, 44. McGee was honest enough to admit that there should have been *more* Indians in Mexico. Other reiterations of the basic argument are numerous. For instance, following a lecture at the Baltimore Catholic Institute by General James Shields, hero of the war in Mexico and now a U.S. Senator, the *Mirror* reflected on his description of the Indians who inhabited the theaters of his former military glory: "How beautiful a spectacle it is to contemplate these aboriginals of the country, preserved and civilized, not exterminated as they have been wherever Protestant governments have gained control over them." *Catholic Mirror*, April 2, 1859.

[75] Shea, 70.

for adults was a *History of Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States* (1855). Having clerked in a Spanish merchant's office as a youth, he brought a matchless mastery of Iberian sources to bear upon his argument for the "remarkable" distinction between Spanish and English approaches to native peoples, not only deep in Mexico but also within the boundaries of the current United States.[76] French Jesuits, from seventeenth-century martyrs like Brebeuf to present-day pioneers like De Smet, provided just as clear a contrast to Anglo-Protestant missionaries. Spalding penned a three-part series of articles on the French missions of the Old Northwest, seeking to prove with the aid of Bancroft (whom he found a reliable and only mildly "partial" historian) how much more civilized had been the Catholic than the Protestant settlement of the New World's northern latitudes. "So it had been in South, so it was also in North America," Spalding asserted. The French, like the Spanish, exposed the evangelistic failings of New England's colonists by counterexample.

Nor did English Catholics share in what Shea identified as the "inborn hostility of the Anglo-Saxon race to the Indian."[77] Maryland's pilgrims were feted for their warmth toward natives as well as their tolerance of other Christian sects. Processions to their landing site bore banners featuring the likenesses of Andrew White, the colony's first Jesuit priest, alongside an Indian convert. Orators on the scene envisioned "warriors of East and West kneeling in peace together around the glad altar of their common God," a sight unknown to New England Puritans or Anglicans across the Potomac.[78] "How did Lord Baltimore treat the Indians?" Kerney's catechism asked. "With kindness and humanity," students were expected to respond.[79] Exploitation of Indians, and failure to evangelize them—in Maryland or elsewhere—was entirely the fault of Protestant influence.

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[76] Shea, *History of Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529–1854* (New York: Edward Dunigan & Brother, 1855), 16, 116. For more on Shea's unrivaled command of Spanish and native documents, see Brickhouse, 215–216.

[77] Shea, 120.

[78] *CA*, July 8, 1843.

[79] Kerney, 25.

Such a simplistic conclusion came easily to ultramontane commentators, who took it as axiomatic that Protestant missions could bear no fruit. Distracted by the need to provide for their households, divided by denominational squabbles, and prone to ally themselves with scheming business interests, "sectarian" missionaries could muster only half-hearted attempts at conversion that ultimately proved more debasing than ennobling. The Sandwich Islands provided a present-day case study in Protestant clumsiness with indigenous cultures; American history, as recounted by Catholic intellectuals, offered a long record of supportive evidence.[80] Few ultramontanes found any difficulty in accepting McGee's lecture-hall premise that in North America "the only systematic attempts to civilize and Christianize the Indians were made by Catholic missionaries."[81]

In the process of correcting partial narratives, ultramontane historians left plenty untold. They did not draw attention to the 1680 uprising of New Mexico's Pueblos against overbearing friars, or the diseases that decimated California's native peoples after Serra founded his idyllic missions, or the curious fact that Indian Catholics were just as scarce in Maryland as Indian Congregationalists in Massachusetts. By rendering the disappearance of indigenous Americans a byproduct of the Protestant Reformation, they wrote Catholics out of the darkest subplot in the continent's history. And although unwilling to accept Catholic guilt in this national transgression, they admitted that it may have been a *felix culpa*—that the U.S. was in fact better off because of its present racial composition. Spalding explained the unsettled politics of Spanish American republics by asking whether it could be "reasonably expected that such vast masses of population, so lately reclaimed from barbarism—some of them from cannibalism—should have become so soon capable of the delicate business of self-government?"[82]

Other commentators made similar arguments—at once defensive of and demeaning toward fellow Americans to the south—that accepted the premise of U.S. superiority but removed

[80] On the Sandwich Islands, see *USCM* July 19, 1851, November 5, 1854; *CTA* May 31, 1851.
[81] McGee, 9.
[82] Spalding, *Miscellanea*, 336.

the anti-Catholic connotations of its assertion. Mexico's instability was due to the "surrender of the government into the hands of Indians, negroes, and such like," not to the Catholic faith that had preserved these "feebler races" in the first place.[83] Though at Maryland Pilgrim commemorations they might have imagined an alternative universe in which—as one libidinous speaker put it—"the bright soul of many a Pocahontas would have flashed in the dark eyes of her honored Anglo-Indian descendants," U.S. Catholics did not truly regret the "drawback" of a "vast semi-civilized Indian population."[84] McMaster believed that "intermarriage of whites with Indians is attended with no permanent good," matter-of-factly accepted the imminent "extinction" of unmixed Indians, and declared the United States' racial and political constitution to be more conducive to Catholic flourishing than Mexico's.[85] His views amplified for the editorial page what was already implied in the Catholic narrative of American history—a narrative that, in its distinct take on westward expansion, granted Catholics an alibi from the crime of Indian removal but allowed them to celebrate its results.

Shapers of Catholic opinion in the U.S. agreed with the general consensus that independence from colonial rule had allowed their nation to thrive but caused other American countries to languish.[86] Religious sympathies could not bring them to ignore the disparity of "enterprise, talent, and industry" that existed between the U.S. and Mexico. They dismissed, however, the facile implication—commonly posed in the Protestant press—that Catholicism was the explanatory variable. Neither did they countenance the notion, promulgated by many pro-monarchical ultramontanes overseas, that there was something inherently defective in the republican form of government. In the U.S. Catholic mind, Mexico's post-independence ills stemmed in part from its morally laudable but politically unviable racial makeup; only so much

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[83] *CTA*, February 12, 1853; *NYFJ*, July 24, 1858.

[84] "Oration, Delivered at the First Commemoration of the Landing of the Pilgrims of Maryland, celebrated May 10th, 1842, under the auspices of the Philodemic Society of Georgetown College, by William George Read" (Baltimore: J. Murphy, 1842), 28; Spalding, *Miscellanea*, 336.

[85] *NYFJ*, March 6, 1858; July 31, 1858.

[86] See, for example, *CA*, March 9, 1844.

could be expected of a republic vested in "Indians, negroes, and such like." But the surest explanation for the diverging fortunes of the "sister republics" could be found in the fact that Mexican independence had curbed the church's sphere of influence while U.S. independence had expanded it. Unlike the separation from the English crown, which had been respectful of religion and led North American Catholics to unprecedented freedoms, the revolt from Spanish monarchy had taken root in "the principles of the French Infidel philosophy" and resulted to the "expulsion of the religious orders, the confiscation of church property and the breaking off of communication with the See of Rome"[87] When it came to civilized politics, McMaster did not wonder that Mexico, "a country where, from its origin, the State has been interfering with Catholicity, assuming its control, [and] plundering its churches" lagged so far behind "our country, where Catholicity has been free at once from miscalled *aid* and from usurped interference on the part of the civil power."[88]

Catholic school histories, in their closing chapters, hinted at similar explanations for the outcome of the recent war. Mexico had steadily declined since the end of Spanish rule, leaving it "distracted and weak," its northern borderlands particularly exposed due to the impudent secularization of the missions. Not that the U.S. had acted nobly—the Yankee aggressors had waged a simple war of conquest, prompted by a fabricated border dispute and pushed through congress by "bombastic" messages from the president. The resulting territorial gains hardly justified such a "vast expenditure of money and life," unless, perhaps, one considered the "paramount advantages that may arise from it in the future." The loss of Mexican land to the U.S. may yet prove a net gain for "civilization," that exclusively Catholic accomplishment.[89] One of the warring republics, it seemed, was clearly more favorable to Catholic principles and interests than the other—and not the one that most Protestant commentators would have assumed.

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[87] *CTA*, December 25, 1852.
[88] *NYFJ*, March 6, 1852.
[89] Shea, 265, 268, 282; Fredet, 476.

Indeed, according to the ultramontane nationalists, the United States thrived because of the exceptionally *Catholic* character of its government. Throughout the fifties, Catholic lecturers and publicists frequently applied their historical instincts to the development of a revisionist political etiology, one that traced the nation's most cherished civic institutions to medieval origins. In March 1852, Bishop Michael O'Connor of Pittsburgh delivered the classic lecture on this theme, identifying the English Common Law tradition as "wholly the production of Catholics," a set of legal precedents through which the church had indelibly "impressed" its truths on the national character of England and her American progeny.[90]

Frustrated with the mounting effort among some Protestants to show that American government had its sources in Puritan covenant theology and congregational church governance, Orestes Brownson, John Hughes, and Martin Spalding devoted much of their energy in this period to proving that the Catholic Church not only taught republican principles but modeled them in its own internal organization. "Who originated all the free principles which lie at the basis of our own noble constitution?" asked Spalding. "Who gave us trial by jury, *habeas corpus,* stationary courts…? Are we indebted to Protestantism for even ONE of these cardinal elements of free government?" Nay, such institutions were all medieval in origin, remnants of the "good old Catholic times" when free republics thrived in Italy and Switzerland and the Magna Carta held sway in England.[91] The very concept of the deliberative assembly Hughes claimed as a medieval ecclesiastical invention; the Cortes of Spain, the Estates General of France, and the Diets of Germany had all patterned themselves after the legislative councils of the church. "I defy any historian to find any other origin for the representative form of government," Hughes challenged.[92] O'Connor held to a somewhat different theory: religious orders, which from earliest

[90] "Lecture on the Influence of Catholicity on the Civil Institutions of the United States," reprinted in USCM, April 10, 1852.

[91] Spalding, *Miscellanea*, xl–xli.

[92] John Hughes, *Complete Works of the Most Reverend John Hughes, D.D., Archbishop of New York*, vol. I, ed. Lawrence Kehoe (New York: Lawrence Kehoe, 1865), 363.

centuries had elected their own officers, served as the forerunners of republican polity.[93] McMaster made the most elaborate attempt to show that "our form of government borrows largely from the visible organization of the Catholic Church," equating parishes to municipalities, dioceses to states, ecumenical councils to the congress, the college of cardinals to the cabinet, and the pope to the president.[94] Though careful not to encourage nativist bluster or incur Old World censure by suggesting that republics were the only—or even the best—forms of lawful government, Yankee ultramontanes rarely missed an opportunity to demonstrate, with the aid of their historical libraries, that their nation possessed a legitimately Catholic political order, rooted in medieval precedent.

Thus could Catholics celebrate, even in a post-1848 climate of wariness toward revolution, the heroes and events three generations prior that had given birth to the United States. And celebrate they did, observing the great national festivals of February 22 and July 4 in several languages and distinct cultural permutations of American patriotism. Irish parades in Lafayette, Indiana featured banners with George Washington on one side and the Maid of Erin on the other, a shamrock and harp set amid the stars and stripes.[95] In Mobile, Spring Hill students gave speeches "on love of one's country" in French and English, while also presenting a theatrical rendition of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. The editors of the *Telegraph* grudgingly observed Cincinnati's ban on Fourth of July fireworks but "satisfied the republican side of our conscience, by sending a barrel" to an Ursuline convent in Kentucky.[96] In St. Augustine, Spanish-Floridians repaired to a picnic grounds for patriotic poetry and a dramatic reading of the Declaration.[97] Fourth of July toasts in Pittsburgh honored the memory of Charles Carroll, "the last surviving signer [of the Declaration]…and not the least star in the galaxy of

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[93] *USCM*, April 10, 1852.
[94] *NYFJ*, May 17, 1856; for a similar argument, less fully developed, see *Catholic Mirror*, March 16, 1850.
[95] *CTA*, April 2, 1853.
[96] *CTA*, July 9, 1853.
[97] *USCM*, July 17, 1858.

American Patriots," as well as John Barry, "a devoted Catholic—the father of the American Navy."[98] In Savannah, speakers paid special homage to General Casimir Pulaski, the Polish horseman who had died attempting to wrest the city from British occupation.[99] Even reverence for the non-Catholic Washington was not without religious associations. His step-grandson George Washington Parke Custis was a faithful supporter of Georgetown College, and Catholics took pride in his honorific presence at the school's patriotic celebrations. Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati sought to baptize Washington's genealogy, contending in a public lecture that "Washington was not an Anglo-Saxon, but a French Celt," from a lineage that had produced many abbots.[100]

On such occasions, there appeared to be plenty of popular support for McGee's lecture-hall claim "that the independence of the United States was, in a great degree, established by Catholic blood, talent, and treasure," or Hughes's widely publicized interpretation of the revolutionary war as an international contest between Catholic and Protestant alliances that had, with God's help, ended happily.[101] The nation born of this quasi-religious conflict had fostered a tremendous increase in Catholic faith ever since. From the perspective of U.S. ultramontanes, when Protestant critics isolated Catholicism as the key point of comparison in assessing the relative prosperity of American republics, they were partially correct. Friendliness to church interests *was* the determinative factor in a young nation's success, and on this point the U.S. was peerless. Its history revealed a litany of martyrs, confessors, and Catholic pioneers; its constitution guaranteed the church perfect freedom from state interference; a nostalgia for medieval society permeated its political institutions. Despite demographic evidence to the contrary, the United States was, in the historical reminiscences of midcentury apologists, arguably the most Catholic country in the New World.

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[98] *PC*, July 10, 1852.
[99] *USCM*, April 28, 1855.
[100] *CTA*, March 23, 1861.
[101] McGee, 88; Hughes, 109.

A decade of unceasing Catholic expansion reached its visible climax on August 15, 1858. Skylines from Albany to Mobile had recently been commandeered by monumental new cathedrals. Now, with plans in place for the new St. Patrick's in New York, this transformation of America's urban landscape—this "coming forth from the catacombs," as the *Freeman's Journal* put it—would literally reach unparalleled heights. Nearly 100,000 people filled the suburban lawns and lanes around Madison and 51st for the laying of the cornerstone that Sunday afternoon, leaving lower Manhattan eerily "depleted."[102] Archbishop Hughes spoke from a platform draped with Star-Spangled Banners and adorned with a cross, erected on the spot where the high altar would one day stand. Once completed, the towering spires of St. Patrick's, rather Trinity Church's controversial cross, would mark the highest point in the city. The daily papers were impressed by the blueprints; McMaster was moved to contemplate their national significance: "This material exhibition of Catholic growth in the commercial metropolis of the United States will adequately represent—will gloriously embody the fact that Catholicity alone is entitled to be called the religion of the American people."[103]

Like most of his colleagues, McMaster had grown increasingly confident that Catholic faith would soon encompass all of American life, from sea to shining sea—and perhaps even beyond. "We have…a destiny, whether 'manifest' or not, to fulfill," the *Telegraph* had proclaimed five years previously.[104] The fulfillment of that destiny—the church's and the nation's alike—was evident upon the admission of each new state. Minnesota brought with it an estimated 40,000 Catholics in 1858, along with several schools, hospitals, and religious houses, enlarging "the fold of the Catholic faith" even as it expanded U.S. boundaries.[105] But American Catholic

[102] *New York Times*, August 16, 1858.
[103] *NYFJ*, August 21, 1858.
[104] *CTA*, May 14, 1853.
[105] *NYFJ*, May 22, 1858.

destiny stretched beyond the present limits of United States territory. Inspired by Hughes's invitation to consecrate the new cathedral in St. John's, Newfoundland, McMaster fancied it a "manifest destiny" for the United States soon to embrace Canada, and for the U.S. church to extend its competence to more northerly jurisdictions. "We naturally look forward to the extension of our ideas of every this whole continent and the adjacent islands," he admitted. [106]

After all, the U.S. push toward the Pacific had brought a renewed sense of Catholic mission and "hopes of a better civilization" to lands desiccated by Mexican rule. That precedent was sufficient to turn McMaster's attention momentarily toward Havana. "The Catholics of the United States," he announced in 1858, "desire to see the flag of their country, in any just and lawful manner, planted on the top of Moro Castle, assured that beneath its folds a Catholic bishop with a clergy faithful and virtuous, will soon raise the Cross over Cuba."[107] A decade removed from their conflicted support for the conquest of Mexico, many Catholic *gringos* now took it for granted that wherever their flag went, the cross would quickly follow.

[106] *NYFJ*, October 6, 1855.
[107] *NYFJ*, April 10, 1858.

Chapter Four

FILIBUSTERISM AND CATHOLICITY

Unos aventureros miserable, la scoria de las cárceles que la Europa arroja á los Estados-Unidos, se han apoderado de Nicaragua, donde las pasiones mas bajas no podian satisfacerse sino por medio de la perfidia y de la traicion.[1]

—*La Cruz*, Mexico City, April 24, 1856

As the exceptionally hot summer of 1852 drew to a close in New York, the city's attention turned from the stifling weather to a simmering political conspiracy. A network of secret societies known as The Order of the Lone Star, purportedly able to muster several thousand armed men at a moment's notice in Gotham alone, was plotting an expedition to wrest the colony of Cuba away from the Spanish crown. The timing of this venture was not accidental. The first anniversary of Narciso López's failed invasion of the island was approaching, and the Lone Star conspirators were seeking vengeance for their fallen hero. A number of prominent figures were rumored to have a hand in the scheme—U.S. Senators and army generals, newspaper editors and steamboat entrepreneurs, social club proprietors and ward bosses. According to a story that broke in the *New York Herald* on September 1, the ranks of Lone Star auxiliaries even included Archbishop John Hughes, who had agreed to celebrate a memorial Mass for the "martyrs" of López's foiled coup.[2]

**This chapter is a slightly revised and expanded version of the article, "Filibusterism and Catholicity: Narciso López, William Walker, and the Antebellum Struggle for America's Souls," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 33:4 (Fall 2015): 5–30. It appears here with permission of the Catholic University of America Press.

[1] "Certain miserable adventurers, the dregs of European jails cast into the United States, have taken control of Nicaragua, where their basest passions cannot be satisfied except by perfidy and treason."

[2] On the heat, see *New York Daily Times*, July 26-27, 1852. On the Lone Star conspiracy, see *New York Herald*, August 25, 28, 1852. On Hughes's involvement, see *New York Herald*, September 1, 1852.

Hughes had made the acquaintance, some weeks prior, of Domingo de Goicuría, treasurer of the Cuban *Junta*, which had served as López's fundraising arm and continued to coordinate Cuban independence efforts across the United States.[3] Wishing to commemorate the previous year's invasion and raise awareness of the *independentista* cause, Goicuría requested that Hughes offer a requiem Mass on behalf of those Catholics who had died in battle or been executed as part of López's expeditionary force. Hughes agreed, under the condition that the service be an intimate and purely religious exercise, free of political connotations. Soon enough, however, the papers were advertising a "High Mass for the Martyrs" at St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the *Herald* was accusing the archbishop of "throwing the weight of his sacred office and character into the same scale with the Lone Star Association."[4]

In the printed exchanges that followed, Hughes claimed he had been duped. His agreement with Goicruría had been to say a Low Mass attended only by families of the deceased. When Goicuría asked for a High Mass instead, Hughes initially gave his consent. But it soon became clear that the Cuban activist intended to maneuver the liturgy into a partisan demonstration. He requested that a cenotaph bearing the names and death-places of the deceased be erected in the cathedral, suggested scriptures and topics for the sermon, and invited the "public at large" to attend. Embarrassed by the publicity that the event had begun to attract, Hughes finally celebrated a Low Mass with as little occasion for grandstanding as possible.

According to Goicuría, however, it was Hughes who first turned the Mass into a political issue. Goicuría's aims had been purely religious—to mark with appropriate solemnity "a day forever sacred" to Cuban exiles across the United States. The newspaper advertisements had not been his doing. By reacting so defensively to the press's insinuations and reneging on the

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[3] To have played a role in so many momentous events—including William Walker's Nicaraguan regime, Benito Juarez's Mexican insurgency, and the Ten Years War in his native Cuba—Goicuría remains a surprisingly obscure figure. For glimpses of his career, see Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 97, 172, 258, 274; Brian R. Hamnett, *Juarez* (London: Longman, 1994), 52–53.

[4] *New York Herald*, September 1, 1852.

agreement for a High Mass, Hughes had made a political statement himself, one that in Goicuría's eyes was driven by desire to earn a cardinal's hat from a pro-monarchical papacy. Goicuría wondered furthermore why the Archbishop allowed only "the humble and silent offering of low mass," when Archbishop Antoine Blanc of New Orleans, responding to a similar request from *cubanos* in his city, had reportedly celebrated a High Mass in a cathedral "veiled in mourning."[5]

Hughes's editorial-page feud with Goicuría revealed the difficulties that Catholic prelates and publicists faced in responding to the filibustering craze of the 1850s. A neologism swept into English parlance by López's exploits, the word "filibuster" referred to a privately organized invasion of a country formally at peace with the United States, or to the individual participants in these ventures.[6] Though such experiments in vigilante expansionism were as old as the nation itself—from Aaron Burr's enigmatic western schemes to early designs on Spanish Florida to periodic ventures into Canada—they became something of a seasonal pastime during the turbulent fifties. Hundreds of restless veterans, disgruntled clerks, and quixotic college dropouts joined secret armies with their sights set on Caribbean conquests. Thousands of other citizens supported them, from winking customs agents to fundraising socialites. Tunesmiths published filibuster polkas, novelists penned filibuster romances, and stage companies performed filibuster revues to packed houses.[7] The most audacious agents of that already polarizing cliché, "Manifest Destiny," filibusters captured America's attention as a source of both political angst and popular amusement. Some commentators lionized them, and some vilified them, but few found it possible to ignore them.

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[5] *New York Herald*, September 18, 1852.

[6] The word derived from the Spanish *filibustero,* already current among Cuban exiles, which in turn drew from an old Dutch term for "freebooter." See May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, xv, 3–4; Rodrigo Lazo, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 5–6. As Lazo points out, Cuban activists, poets, and publishers in the U.S. embraced the designation *filibustero*, in addition to armed insurgents.

[7] See May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 65–79. For examples of filibuster fiction, see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, 47–53, 219–225.

The Catholic press had its own reasons not to ignore filibusters. Like the recent U.S. invasion of Mexico, these forays into Spanish America were animated by a spirit of cultural and religious hubris that Catholic editors felt compelled to dampen. In the case of Cuba, filibusters and their supporters carried forward the antimonarchical, revolutionary momentum of 1848, against which the ultramontane presses had erected a united front worldwide. The fact that they pursued their activities in secret associations with strong ties to Masonic orders—that they participated in the anticlerical underworld against which recent popes had so often, and so futilely, preached—only strengthened the impression that filibusters posed an imminent danger to the Church.[8] Indeed, Catholic commentators saw filibustering as an index to the "anarchical spirit of the times," a spirit increasingly prevalent in U.S. politics and popular attitudes.[9] They could not ignore these small, mostly unsuccessful bands of *yanqui* buccaneers because the filibuster was, in their conceptual lexicon, synonymous with the Know-Nothing, the Bowery Boy, the armed abolitionist, and anyone else threatening to dismember the United States through illegitimate, socially corrosive violence.

On the most practical level, however, they could not ignore the phenomenon because the two most celebrated faces of 1850s filibustering, Narciso López and William Walker, were both Catholics. Like Archbishop Hughes in his dealings with Domingo de Goicuría, the Catholic press wrestled with how to regard these communicant scofflaws who, from a political vantage, gave their lives for an odious cause, yet from a religious perspective, reportedly died Christian deaths. In seeking to make sense of these filibusters, ultramontane commentators came to present a more urgent but less optimistic vision for Catholic America.

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[8] López was himself a Mason, as were many of his associates. See May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 84–85. For the Catholic Church's hardening opposition to Freemasonry in the nineteenth century, particularly in the United States, see David G. Hackett, *That Religion in Which All Men Agree: Freemasonry in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 209–211.

[9] *NYFJ*, September 13, 1851.

"America to Spain Lies Due"
Defending the Victims of Manifest Destiny

By April 1850, the *Catholic Telegraph and Advocate* had heard enough—the time had come to admonish souls led astray. "There is a mad spirit of aggression abroad, over all the land, in which Catholics are occasionally found participating," the paper warned. This spirit had given rise to the proposition that "Anglo-Saxons have a commission to extend the area of freedom," a notion that may have become "as common in bar-rooms as General Jackson on a white horse," but was simply irreconcilable with Catholic principles.[10] What necessitated this pastoral intervention was Narciso López's recent recruiting tour through the Ohio River Valley. López had stopped in Pittsburgh and Louisville, among other towns, on his way to "revolutionize" Cuba.[11]

A native Venezuelan, López had fled to the U.S. in the summer of 1848 after attempting to foment a rebellion in his adopted Cuban homeland. Silver-haired and silver-tongued, he had succeeded in building an influential network of stateside supporters for his scheme to return triumphantly and rid the island of its Spanish rulers. His first attempt, in July 1849, had hardly inspired confidence, his makeshift fleet having been turned back by the U.S. Navy before reaching international waters. Undeterred, López set about plotting a second expedition in the spring of 1850, raising as his standard the newly designed "Lone Star" banner, which would decades later become Cuba's national flag. This time his 500-man army made landfall and managed to occupy the town of Cardenas for the better part of a day, burning through the local liquor supply before re-embarking at evening in the face of superior Spanish forces.[12]

The aborted 1850 filibuster inspired a mixture of relief, ridicule, and indignation in the Catholic press. The *Telegraph* rejoiced at the "overthrow of the conspirators" against whom it had cautioned readers several weeks earlier. The *New York Freeman's Journal* mocked the

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[10] *CTA*, April 13, 1850.
[11] Tom Chaffin, *Fatal Glory: Narciso López and the First Clandestine U.S. War against Cuba* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 78–79.
[12] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 20–29; Chaffin, *Fatal Glory*, 128–136.

"radical courage" displayed by the retreating freebooters, though editor James A. McMaster did not ultimately think it a laughing matter. He demanded retribution for "this effort of ruffianism upon the inoffensive people of Cuba," and in a later issue of the *Freeman* called for the execution of Mississippi Governor John Quitman, a known collaborator in the scheme.[13]

McMaster and his colleagues did not voice the prevailing opinion, however. López's many friends in the press— including the New Orleans *Delta*'s Laurent Sigur and the *Democratic Review*'s John L. O'Sullivan—along with other opportunistic publishers, spun the news so as to make Cuban independence a fashionable cause. López was now a national celebrity, toasted in banquets and street meetings as a freedom fighter comparable to the foreign generals who had helped secure U.S. independence from Britain.[14] Buoyed by such enthusiastic support, he embarked for Cuba once more in August 1851—despite having assembled only a small portion of his projected army—in response to reports of popular unrest on the island. The rumored insurrection never materialized, however, and López's outmanned force soon dissolved into several fugitive bands. The famed *filibustero* was captured, soiled and starving, after a two-week pursuit through the mountains. On September 1, he was publicly garroted in Havana.[15]

Amid the clamor surrounding this final, highly publicized stage of López's career, U.S. Catholic editors struck dissonant notes of pro-Spanish sentiment. While the daily presses churned out gruesome reports of Spanish soldiers mutilating captured filibusters, Catholic papers printed alternate accounts that stressed the civility and decorum of the Cuban authorities.[16] As pro-López mobs ransacked the Spanish cafes of New Orleans and nightly filled the public squares of every major city to protest their hero's fate, Catholic commentators saluted the justice served by

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[13] *CTA*, June 8, 1850; *NYFJ*, May 25, 1850, December 7, 1850; see also *USCM*, June 1, 1850, which agreed with the Charleston Mercury's assessment of the filibuster as "the most hair brained adventure of modern times."

[14] Chaffin, *Fatal Glory*, 140–156.

[15] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 32; Chaffin, *Fatal Glory*, 211–216.

[16] See, for example, *USCM*, September 13, 1851.

López's execution.[17] They were not alone in approving of the *filibustero*'s demise. Numerous other outlets, including Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* and the recently launched *Harper's Monthly,* applauded the vindication of international law in the Antilles.[18] But the response of the Catholic press suggested a sense of religious kinship that sparked a defensive reaction toward popular attacks on Spanish Cuba.

As they had during the war with Mexico, U.S. Catholic commentators assumed a mediating stance on behalf of the invaded country. They did so with less ambivalence, however, than they had in the early stages of the Mexican conflict. Cuba was a different case. The violence there was unsanctioned and unlawful, bearing more resemblance to the later stages of Mexican occupation—which by some reports had degenerated into sacrilegious banditry—than to the commencement of congressionally approved hostilities. Indeed, Charleston's *Catholic Miscellany* feared that promises of consecrated loot, such as had been seized by many soldiers in Mexico, were "even now held out by daring, unprincipled men to volunteers in what is called the cause of 'Cuban Independence.'"[19]

Moreover, as a possession of Spain—the "last relique of the mighty Colonial Empire" that American Catholics admired and considered part of their own patrimony—Cuba remained politically and racially "superior" to Mexico, making intervention there both less justifiable and less likely to succeed.[20] "The old Spaniards [of Cuba] are very different people from the mongrel breed of Mexico," the *Telegraph* asserted in an anti-filibustering editorial.[21] Uncorrupted by premature independence, Cuba represented Spain more directly than any other of the United States' neighbors. The López episode, and the rash of anti-Spanish activity that it provoked, offered the Catholic press a welcome opportunity to champion the present-day policies of a nation

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[17] For more on the "López Meetings" see Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, 185–196.

[18] Chaffin, *Fatal Glory*, 218–219.

[19] *USCM*, September 6, 1851.

[20] *American Celt*, October 16, 1852.

[21] *CTA*, June 8, 1850.

whose historical reputation it had already grown accustomed to protecting. For ultramontane editors, the failure of the U.S. public to appreciate Spain's colonial achievement constituted an embarrassment; the failure to prevent piratical attempts "to rob her of her last Atlantic seat" constituted a crime. As Thomas D'Arcy McGee concluded in an anti-filibustering poem entitled, "What Do We Owe to Spain?"

> A common reckoning, through the Ages runs,
> And thin America, to Spain lies due.
> Arouse thee then—restrain thy willful sons;
> Nor let the Old World's glory shame the New.[22]

The best known lay Catholic journalist of the day, Orestes A. Brownson, advocated on Spain's behalf in a quasi-official capacity following the López fiasco. In the October 1850 issue of his quarterly review, Brownson had published a philippic against the Yankee fervor to "free" and then inevitably annex Cuba, styling López as a creation of both popular avarice and governmental negligence in the United States.[23] His labors did not go unnoticed among Spanish-American readers. Anita George, a Spanish-born *cubana* and sometime resident of New York, received a copy of the article from a fellow Spaniard and sent Brownson a note of gratitude for his "generous and frank vindication" of her homeland. George, herself a participant in the literary effort to rehabilitate Spain's image, considered Brownson's exposure of filibustering to be a "veritable heroism."[24] It was perhaps this piece that prompted another Spanish-American author, Frances "Fanny" Calderón de la Barca, to ask for Brownson's help in the summer of 1851, when López's final invasion seemed imminent.

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[22] *American Celt*, November 20, 1852.

[23] *BQR* 4:4 (October, 1850): 490–516.

[24] Anita George to Orestes A. Brownson, 5 January 1851, Brownson Papers I-3-j, UNDA. George authored a series of books called *Memoirs of the Queens of Spain*, which sought to defend the Spanish character by blaming the nation's troubles on its monarchs, including Queen Isabella, to whom even Anglophone historians had generally been kind. For a contemporary biography of George and an appraisal of her work, see *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science, and Art* 2 (March 1851): 307–308.

Señora Calderón de la Barca, the Scottish-born and Boston-bred wife of a Spanish diplomat, had come a long way since 1843, when she had earned the censure of Catholic critics through certain insensitive remarks in her bestselling memoir *Life in Mexico*. Now a devout Catholic, she fretted over the threat that U.S. rapine posed to both her adopted country and her adopted church. The invasion of Mexico and the plotted Cuban takeover formed a single narrative in her mind, one born of the "false idea that Catholicism and liberty are incompatible and…a lurking notion of the riches to be found in the churches." While her husband Ángel, currently the Spanish ambassador in Washington, pressured cabinet officials to take stronger preventative action against the plot, Fanny asked Brownson to write an article stating Spain's case against the filibusters.[25] After López's disastrous invasion did occur, Ángel Calderón de la Barca wrote several times to renew the request himself, asking Brownson to demand reparations for Spanish property destroyed in New Orleans and Mobile, as well as to gainsay fabricated reports of Spanish cruelty toward captured Americans. The de la Barcas even relayed classified dispatches from Madrid to help Brownson represent the Spanish position more faithfully. Though he wished it had come three months sooner, Señor Calderón de la Barca approved of the piece Brownson finally published in January 1852. He sent Brownson a check for one hundred dollars soon afterward.[26]

Much as he had in his previous anti-López article, Brownson used this commissioned essay to unmask U.S. sympathy for Cuban independence as a pretense justifying "an insane desire to extend the territory of the Union." Cuba was the latest stage of a national land-grab begun in Texas, which "our citizens literally stole" from Mexico.[27] Having witnessed its destructive consequences in the Mexican War and the late filibuster-mania, Brownson repented of once

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[25] Fanny Calderón de la Barca to Orestes A. Brownson, August 1-2, 1851, Brownson Papers I-3-j, UNDA.

[26] Ángel Calderón de la Barca to Orestes A. Brownson, September 4, 19, November 10, 1851, Brownson Papers I-3-j, UNDA; Ángel Calderón de la Barca to Orestes A. Brownson, January 31, 1852, Brownson Papers I-3-k, UNDA; Nicholas Reggio to Orestes A. Brownson, April 1, 1852, Brownson Papers I-3-k, UNDA.

[27] *BQR* 6:1 (January, 1852): 66–95, here 94, 81.

voicing support for the annexation of Texas, "a great national crime, not yet expiated." He denounced the "prevailing belief" in "manifest destiny" as a license for piracy that threatened to banish the United States from the ranks of civilized nations. A government that had seized Texas and then goaded and "dismembered" Mexico no longer deserved the benefit of the doubt in Brownson's eyes.[28] He charged the U.S. with culpability for the actions of the filibusters and their riotous supporters, demanding that the government make reparations for all financial losses and also satisfy the damages sustained to Spain's national honor.

Despite the recent outrages, Spain's actions had remained honorable, Brownson argued, rendering American standards of decency shameful by comparison. Though the stateside press was "teeming with abuse," targeting the Anglo-American's ancestral instinct "to credit any absurd tale of Spanish cruelty that any idle vagabond chooses to invent," the Cuban authorities had actually treated the captured filibusters with great consideration and lenience—too much lenience, in fact, for Brownson's taste.[29] So long as it retained possession of any territory enticing to U.S. speculators, Spain's best defense against filibustering, Brownson believed, would come in the form of swift and merciless retribution. With Anglophone pirates descending once again upon the Spanish Caribbean, the Black Legend was gaining renewed currency and proving itself to be, in contemporary as in historical events, an exact inversion of the truth. "We call Spaniards cruel, bloodthirsty, and vindictive, and ourselves mild, human, and forgiving," Brownson submitted, but in truth, "a more cruel, barbarous, or vindictive people than our own…would be hard to find."[30]

Brownson's responses to the López episode marked the most direct assault on "Manifest Destiny" yet leveled by a major Catholic publicist. Recent events in Cuba had, for him, cast the entire history of U.S. expansion in an unflattering light. "The boasted skill and energy of the Anglo Saxon race on this continent have been most strikingly displayed in land-stealing," he

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[28] *BQR* 4:4 (October, 1850): 498–99, 503.
[29] *Ibid.*, 512; *BQR* 6:1 (January, 1852): 79.
[30] *Ibid.*, 77; *BQR* 4:4 (October, 1850): 512.

concluded. "The word is hard, we know it, but it is true."[31] This sobering judgment was not, as were many anti-expansionist polemics, prompted by any hint of free-soil or abolitionist sentiment. Indeed, Brownson criticized other opponents of filibustering for directing their ire against the potential spread of slavery rather than the affront to Spanish sovereignty.[32] He even suggested that resistance to the recently adopted Fugitive Slave Act was comparable to filibustering, symptomatic as it was of the nation's penchant for disregarding inconvenient laws.[33] Like other ultramontane editors, Brownson opposed vigilante expansion not out of compunction regarding the "peculiar institution" but out of concern for the dignity of Spain and other Catholic nations under threat of *norteamericano* aggression.

Such concern came naturally to the Catholic literati of the 1850s. Their expanding networks of newspapers, schools, and clerical contacts kept them regularly connected with coreligionists to the south, rendering their perception of events in Spanish America something more than mere Anglophone abstractions. The *Freeman's Journal* claimed several subscribers in Mexico and in turn recommended Mexico City's ultramontane journal *La Voz de la Religion* to its readers.[34] Spring Hill College in Mobile was reported to have enrolled over twenty Mexican students in 1852.[35] St. Mary's College in Baltimore, which closed that same year, housed pupils from Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela during its final days of operation.[36]

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[31] *BQR* 6:1 (January, 1852): 94.

[32] *BQR* 4:4 (October, 1850): 501–502. Brownson may have overstated the extent to which anti-filibustering and anti-slavery positions were intertwined, at least in the case of López. Although the Cuban Junta was decidedly proslavery, López's U.S. supporters represented a wide spectrum of regional and political constituencies. See Chaffin, *Fatal Glory*, 7–8. According to May, filibustering did not become strongly identified with Southern nationalism and the extension of slavery until 1854, when the Kansas-Nebraska Act intensified the urge to acquire new slaveholding domains. See May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854–1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 36–37.

[33] *BQR* 6:1 (January, 1852): 95.

[34] *NYFJ*, March 7, 1851; March 3, 1849.

[35] *USCM*, March 20, 1852.

[36] For a complete list of St. Mary's College students and their hometowns, see *Memorial Volume of the Centenary of St. Mary's Seminary of St. Sulpice, Baltimore, MD* (Baltimore, 1891), 79–159. Catholic editors not only noted with pride the pan-American classes of Catholic colleges but also warned friends in "the extreme South" against sending their children to fashionable non-Catholic schools in the U.S. "So surely as they do so their children will be brought up infidels," McMaster cautioned after hearing that

Several U.S. bishops took fundraising tours of Spanish-speaking countries. Ignatius Reynolds visited Havana in 1850 seeking funds for his new cathedral in Charleston. John Timon of Buffalo traveled across Mexico for the same reason in 1853, confirming over 30,000 people along his route and receiving a more favorable impression of the country than he had expected.[37] Patrick Lynch, Reynolds' successor in Charleston, served as a liaison for numerous Havana-bound Yankees, both ordained and lay. By the end of the decade, his desk had become a relay point for communications—and occasional cigars—from both U.S. colleagues wintering in Cuba and Cuban colleagues summering in upstate New York.[38]

Direct encounters with Spanish America increased Catholic resolve to soften popular prejudices against targets of southward expansion. Upon returning from Mexico, Timon delivered a public lecture in Buffalo designed to dispel misconceptions of moral and religious life there. The Mexican clergy, rumored to be indolent and fabulously wealthy, were in fact zealous churchmen with fewer resources at their disposal than the Protestant establishment of Manhattan alone. The purported vices of the "aborigines" had been greatly exaggerated and their numerous virtues overlooked. Christianity had, on the whole, succeeded remarkably in civilizing the Mexican people; the nation's many problems were largely the result of a luxurious climate and a premature separation from Spain.[39] Downstate, McMaster sought to invert the common juxtaposition of an enlightened Protestant "north" with a degraded Catholic "south." His correspondents reported that Mexican cities were cleaner and less corrupt than New York. He compared Havana with "Hindostan" to prove that Spanish colonization remained superior to the British model even in the nineteenth-century. He denounced the "savage" behavior of "our

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several South American students at a New York boarding school had accompanied their principal to a Protestant prayer service (*NYFJ*, January 18, 1851).

[37] John Timon to Anthony Blanc, April 11, 1853, Archdiocese of New Orleans, VI-1-e, UNDA.

[38] CDCA, Bishop Lynch papers, 10W2 (Michael O'Connor to Lynch, February 2, 1858), 24S6 (Hughes to Lynch, January 8, 1860), 24T7 (January 18, 1860), 25C1 (March 21, 1860).

[39] For the complete text of the lecture, see Charles G. Deuther, *Life and Times of the Rt. Reverend John Timon, D.D., First Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo* (Deuther: Buffalo, 1870), 173–188.

enlightened and progressive fellow countrymen" who were drinking, gambling, and fighting across Panama on their way to California. "A fine idea the Spanish Americans must have of the Yankees!" he declared.[40] As filibusters continued to plan incursions into Mexico, Central America, and even Ecuador, McMaster and other ultramontane journalists found continuing occasion to mediate between proponents and victims of Manifest Destiny.

Nowhere did this opportunity present itself more urgently than in the case of William Walker, the most storied and successful of Anglo-American filibusters. Raised by devout Disciples of Christ in Nashville, the precocious Walker had by his mid-twenties earned a medical degree, toured Europe, opened a law practice, and taken on editorship of the a major New Orleans newspaper. At some point, influenced perhaps by connections in the Crescent City—and, according to rumor, by the death of the deaf-mute debutante with whom he was infatuated—he had settled his considerable energies upon a career in filibustering. After a briefly effective attempt to wrest Sonora and Baja California from Mexico, he set sail in 1855 with his small band of "Immortals" to intervene in the Nicaraguan civil war. Allying himself with the victorious Liberal party, he managed to become part of the provisional government and eventually, through ruthless maneuvering, to secure election as president. His regime was short-lived, however. Having alienated many of his collaborators through reckless policies—including an attempt to re-introduce slavery to the republic—he was forced to flee back to the U.S. in 1857. Still considering himself the rightful ruler of Nicaragua, he launched four more failed invasions before finally meeting his fate at the hands of a Honduran firing squad on September 12, 1860.[41]

Walker's temporary seizure of power in Central America raised alarm among U.S. Catholic scribes. While Nicaragua's acceptance of a foreign-born president offered a useful polemic against nativists at home—such a tolerant political climate "might illumine some

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[40] *NYFJ*, April 12, 1851; September 26, 1857; June 1, 1850.

[41] For Walker's life before the Nicaraguan expeditions, see Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Lives and Times of the Filibusters* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 174–193; for a concise of overview of his career in Central America, see May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 45–52.

Republics farther North," quipped J.V. Huntingdon—it portended a dark future of dispossession at the hands of Yankee land-grabbers.[42] The Pittsburgh *Catholic* feared Walker's triumph would instigate a domino effect that would "Anglicize" the entire Central American isthmus, squeezing the noble "descendants of the conquerors of Mexico" off their soil as relentlessly as the English colonists of North America had "driven the red man" from his native ground.[43]

More significantly, the Walker regime posed a grave threat to the region's Catholic identity and infrastructure. Reports from Panamanian sources indicated that the *gringo* filibuster intended to establish a Protestant Church headed by "the Nicaraguan Luther," Augustín Vijil, a liberal clergyman whose support Walker had secured.[44] A correspondent to the *Miscellany* had witnessed a party of filibusters strip a nun of her spoons and several other trifles, which they then pitifully exhibited as trophies of war. A later *Miscellany* article, reprinted from the New Orleans *Catholic Standard*, listed destruction of churches and mistreatment of clergy among the calamities that Nicaragua had suffered under Walker's rule. The author urged U.S. Catholics to help restore the country's ruined churches, as a form of penance for their fellow citizens and a sign of solidarity with their fellow Catholics.[45] This call to action may have been inspired by an appeal for funds similar to one that Archbishop Blanc of New Orleans received from the city of Granada's *Junta de Reedificación de Templos*, an organization formed to rebuild the churches that Walker had set ablaze there during his ignominious retreat. The *Junta*'s plea insinuated that U.S. Catholics ought to be especially sympathetic to Nicaragua's plight at the hands of church-burning filibusters, whose anachronistic barbarities were a "scandal to the civilized world."[46]

Many Catholic *yanquis* were indeed sympathetic and felt vindicated when combined Costa Rican and Nicaraguan forces succeeded in ousting Walker from the isthmus. "Some of the

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[42] St. Louis *Leader*, November 24, 1855.

[43] *PC*, June 21, 1856. For more anti-Walker commentary, see *BQR* 2:1 (January, 1857): 89–114; *NYFJ*, February 20, 1858.

[44] *PC*, June 14, 1856.

[45] *USCM*, April 11, 1857; June 20, 1857.

[46] Jose Antonio Castillo to Anthony Blanc, December 1, 1858, Archdiocese of New Orleans, VI-l-o, UNDA.

old blood which achieved the overthrow of the Aztecs still courses in the veins of the men of Costa Rica," the Pittsburgh *Catholic* reported following this latter-day triumph of civilized *conquistadors* against a barbaric foe.[47] Just as López had turned Brownson decidedly against the "Manifest Destiny" mode of national expansion, Walker's exploits had given the epithet an odious connotation among many literary Catholics. Early in the filibuster's Baja prelude, the *Telegraph* had ranked Manifest Destiny—the belief "that if the American flag but waves over a land, that land must be an Elysium"—among the severest current threats to social harmony, alongside Red Republicanism and fanatical Abolitionism.[48] "Manifest Destiny has now been routed," declared Frederick Chatard, the Catholic naval officer charged with transporting the stranded remnants of Walker's army safely back to Norfolk in July 1857. Chagrined by his orders, Chatard wrote his friend William Seton III—a budding Catholic novelist and grandson of Elizabeth Ann Seton—a letter dripping with disdain for "those glorious regenerators, who go from our country with the torch of enlightenment to weak countries" but only use its light "to see the better to rob churches."[49] The ragged cargo in question later accused Chatard of stowing them below deck and treating them "like coolies."[50]

The ultramontane defense of Spanish America was not without its hints of ambivalence, however. Despite generally decrying the crude form of Manifest Destiny peddled in the penny press, Catholic commentators continued on occasion to promote their own modification of the expansionists' creed, denouncing the means of U.S. territorial acquisition but anticipating ends conducive to the church's growth. In August 1851, with López set to launch, the *Telegraph* suggested that the annexation of Cuba would "work no injury to the Church" and may in fact prove a "boon" to religion, as was beginning to seem the case in Texas and the Mexican Cession. McMaster rejoined that there would be, "side by side with this, a proportionate increase of

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[47] Pittsburgh *Catholic*, June 13, 1857.
[48] *CTA*, July 9, 1853.
[49] Frederick Chatard to William Seton III, July 20, 1857, Chatard family papers, II-1-a, UNDA.
[50] See May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 212.

individual poverty, of shootings and stabbings, of hangings and lynchings; of wholesale frauds and stupendous miseries."[51] But he too believed the Cuban Church to be unduly burdened by state regulation (having apparently conducted some private research into the matter), and when attempts to purchase the island heated up in 1859, he flatly asserted that U.S. rule would be beneficial to the Catholic religion there as it had been in California.[52] The Pittsburgh *Catholic*, after sounding alarm over the Anglicization of Central America, concluded its take on Walker with a fatalistic, and passively jingoistic, note. "It may be as well," the editor conceded. The "unfilial, often hostile, attitude to the Church," shown by Nicaragua's past leaders proved "that there is something sadly defective in the principles on which they are governed." Even a government of *gringo* ruffians "can scarcely make things worse."[53]

As they had during the late stages of the Mexican invasion, the ultramontane literati of the United States mourned and condemned their nation's crimes against fellow Catholics to the south even while envisioning a revivified Spanish landscape springing forth under the stars and stripes. Their acutest anxieties over filibustering, however, arose not from the destruction that these non-deputized enforcers of Manifest Destiny leveled abroad but from the alarming social trends that they epitomized at home.

"Sympathy for Robbers"
Filibustering and Revolutionary Violence

On May 26, 1851, as Narciso López was gathering his last expeditionary force, a deadly riot erupted in Hoboken, New Jersey during the annual *Maifest* celebrated by Manhattan's German immigrants. What began as a row over stolen beer ended up escalating into a pitched battle between German *Turners*—members of politically active gymnastic clubs—and an uptown street

[51] *NYFJ*, August 16, 30, 1851.

[52] *NYFJ*, September 26, 1857; February 19, 1859. McMaster did not lend any credence, however, to rumors that Pope Pius IX was pushing for Cuban annexation in order to bolster the Catholic vote in the United States.

[53] Pittsburgh *Catholic*, June 21, 1856.

gang known as the Short Boys.[54] In the days following, coroners and police officers worked to determine who was responsible for the incident, which had left one man dead, dozens more seriously injured, and several buildings in disrepair. The *Freeman's Journal*, however, had little doubt where blame was due. German May Fests were known to be hives of "Red Republican" political activity organized by "Forty-Eighters," revolutionary exiles who had proven themselves "the greatest curse ever sent to this country." The German and Hungarian ruffians now spilling blood in Hoboken were drawn from the same lot of foreign radicals who only a month earlier had been "seized making ready to rob Cuba."[55] Even when later reports indicated that the Short Boys had started the brawl, McMaster maintained that their "socialist" adversaries ultimately posed the graver threat to American society.[56]

McMaster's linking of urban hoodlums, European revolutionaries, and Caribbean filibusters was not accidental. This constellation of nemeses to Christian civilization preoccupied the U.S. Catholic press throughout the 1850s. López and his ilk were, in the eyes of Catholic editors, nothing but "European revolutionists" in a different guise. They and their supporters belonged to the ranks of homegrown "French Jacobins" and "Red Republicans."[57] So too did Know-Nothing office-seekers and their bands of mercenary street-toughs, as well as the countless small-time gangsters who emulated or competed with them. So too did the self-appointed guardians of public order in San Francisco, and the Mormons who were carving out a rogue state in the Utah desert. The filibuster became an emblem for all such examples of degeneration into mob rule and the "worship of the dagger."[58] The turbulent fifties, a decade that began with a pope in exile and ended with abolitionist insurgents seizing a federal arsenal, confronted

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[54] See *New York Herald* May 27, 1851.

[55] *NYFJ*, May 31, 1851. For the arrest of Louis Schlesinger and the implication of as many as eighty other German and Hungarian immigrants in López's latest plot, see *New York Observer and Chronicle*, May 1, 1851. The Baltimore *Catholic Mirror* also accentuated the foreign cast of López's army, describing it as a "medley compound of Hungarians, Poles, and United Staters" (*Catholic Mirror*, September 6, 1851).

[56] *NYFJ*, June 6, 1851.

[57] *USCM*, September 6, 1851; *BQR* 4:4 (October, 1850): 490–516, here 495.

[58] Ibid., 496.

America's ultramontane literati with the threat of revolutionary chaos at every turn. They opposed filibustering not only as an opportunity for cultural chauvinism toward Catholic countries but also as a troubling sign of the tendency to sanction, and even celebrate, illegitimate modes of violence.

The revolutions that swept across Europe in the summer of 1848 left a profound impression on U.S. Catholic commentators, galvanizing their resistance to liberalism worldwide. The new republican regimes were banishing religious orders, revoking clerical privileges and sequestering church property; anticlerical violence and atheistic politics appeared poised to restore a Reign of Terror over the continent. "God seems to have, for a time, delivered the world to the powers of darkness," the *Catholic Advocate* asserted in a retrospective of that *annus* non-*mirabilis*.[59] Some Protestant observers hailed Italian, French, German, Swiss, and Hungarian revolutionaries as heirs to the fashioners of American independence. Catholic editors, however, perceived them as scions of 1792 rather than 1776. U.S. citizens who backed France's "Red-Republican Comanches" or other revolutionary regimes were the supporting "the deadliest foe of Christian civilization" since the Huns and the Saracens.[60]

The threat of reversion to pre-Christian savagery was not confined to Catholic Europe. Spanish America too was, in McGee's words, "smitten with the French disease of proclaiming republics at bayonet point."[61] Having a generation ago declared premature independence, the nations of Spain's former colonial empire continued to "retrograde toward barbarism," a process accelerated by the recent importation of Red-Republicanism.[62] These *rojos* had already established themselves in Colombia and begun to enforce their platform of "universal ruin" by erecting a secular state "purged from all relics of the past," including ecclesiastical autonomy.[63] In Mexico, the plundering of church property inaugurated during the U.S. invasion continued, at

[59] Louisville *Catholic Advocate*, February 10, 1849.
[60] *CTA*, April 19, 1851; *BQR* 4:4 (October 1850): 497.
[61] *American Celt*, February 5, 1853.
[62] *USCM*, November 20, 1852.
[63] *USCM*, December 4, 1852.

intervals, under liberal regimes. The nation's political situation—admittedly a result, at least in part, of the *norteamericano* conquest—was considered untenable. Fearing a total collapse into liberal banditry, and dismissing the thought of U.S. annexation as racially unpalatable, Catholic editors considered a restored monarchy to be Mexico's best hope.[64] Such anxieties over the fate of increasingly radicalized New World republics only strengthened their resolve to see Cuba remain firmly attached to the Spanish crown.

Apostles of revolutionary violence were making conversions at home as well as in the tropics. Narciso López was not the only failed republican insurgent to attain stateside celebrity in the early fifties. Louis Kossuth, the exiled leader of the Hungarian independence movement, became a national sensation during his 1851-1852 speaking tour. The anti-Kossuth rhetoric of the Catholic press quickly earned notoriety as well. Ultramontane editors unanimously condemned "the Magyar chief" as a dangerous radical who, like López, had introduced disorder to a venerable Catholic monarchy, seeking to replace noble Christian customs with "barbaric traditions."[65] His popularity in the U.S. was disheartening. Equally inauspicious that year were the warm receptions of Thomas Meagher, the Young Irelander banished for his role in the aborted 1848 uprising, and Alessandro Gavazzi, former chaplain to Garibaldi's anti-Papal army.[66] Catholic commentators expected little good to come of the United States' emergence as a hospitable—and lucrative—asylum for exiled radicals. "Are these men to transplant their ideas to America and to commence their ruthless warfare here?...It would seem so," the *Catholic Telegraph* conceded in November 1853.[67]

The expected warfare began in earnest just weeks later, with the attempted assassination of Gaetano Bedini, papal nuncio to the United States, by a Cincinnati mob. Anti-Catholic

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[64] See *American Celt*, December 18, 1852; *CTA*, February 27, 1858; *NYFJ*, September 11, 1858; November 27, 1858.

[65] *USCM*, January 24, 1852; *NYFJ*, October 25, 1851.

[66] See John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: Norton, 2003), 23–25; Robert Francis Hueston, *The Catholic Press and Nativism, 1840-1860* (New York: Arno, 1976), 195–200.

[67] *CTA*, November 5, 1853.

politics, which had simmered at a reduced level since the "Native American" fervor of the mid-forties, were now entering a new phase of unprecedented aggression and success due to the dramatic rise of the Know-Nothings, a coalition of secret societies committed to electing candidates who would reduce the influence of immigrants and Catholics in public life. According to the Catholic press, the Know-Nothings' xenophobic platform was oxymoronic, since they were themselves of foreign origin. The plot against Bedini had been orchestrated by *Turners*—whom the *Telegraph* described as a secret society of German atheists—and the riots that met him elsewhere were likewise the work of "aliens to our institutions."[68] The Know-Nothing conspiracy that subverted election results from 1854 to 1856 was, according to the consensus of Catholic editors, an invention of Forty-Eighter immigrants and other European radicals.[69] Like so many filibusters, these menacing outsiders created chaos in order to seize power for themselves. And like all other contemporary revolutionaries, they relied on violence and intimidation to secure their political ends, contracting the services of opportunistic gangs to strong-arm voters.[70] Cannon-fire and skull-cracking became Election Day rituals in mid-fifties America. The Blood Tubs and Plug Uglies, among other crews, turned Baltimore precincts into war zones; pitched battles left dozens dead in St. Louis and Louisville as well.[71] Surveying the damages of the previous two election cycles, the *Miscellany* concluded in 1856 that revolution had arrived in the United States—"the Jacobins have had their say."[72]

Many citizens, it seemed, were coming not only to accept such thuggery as a component of the political process but to glorify gangsterism as a heroic lifestyle. On March 11, 1855, over a hundred thousand people packed the streets of lower Manhattan to pay final respects to Bill "The Butcher" Poole, the saloonkeeper, boxer, and Bowery Boy ringleader who had supplied polling

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[68] *CTA*, December 31, 1853.

[69] Hueston provides an excellent summary of the position of the Catholic press on this issue, 230–231.

[70] See *NYFJ*, June 13, 1857.

[71] See Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1938), 420–421.

[72] *USCM*, September 20, 1856.

place muscle for Know-Nothing candidates.[73] According to the *New York Daily Times*, only Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay had received comparable funeral honors in recent memory.[74] Such adulation caused McMaster to wonder whether his nation could any longer claim to be "a Christian people."[75] Others among his colleagues had worried for some time about the increasing number of youths, including many from respectable backgrounds, who wished to play the role of the "B'hoy," or the idle neighborhood ruffian, by now a fixture in popular culture as well as in urban crime. A correspondent to the *Freeman's Journal* in 1849 bemoaned the sight of so many "young bloods" ambling down Broadway with a "lazy rolling gait," adorned with "sickly mustachios, straight-rimmed hats, over-large coats" and ill-fitting trousers.[76] McGee imagined how shocked a revived contemporary of Washington's would be to find his adolescent grandsons smoking cigars and his local tavern populated by "mustachioed loafers in Kossuth hats."[77] By 1857, after witnessing the proliferation of gangs such as the Dead Rabbits, the Forty Thieves, and the Mackerelville Boys, McMaster declared that "a new age of barbarism may be upon us."[78] The appeal of the desperado lifestyle came as no surprise to the Pittsburgh *Catholic*, given the filibustering spirit of the day. "When men who claim respectability in society endeavor to get up a sympathy for robbers, and strive to raise theirs to the rank of an honorable profession," as had happened with of Narciso López and other touring revolutionaries, young people would inevitably be drawn to dishonorable pursuits.[79]

Things had reached such a state by 1856 that the federal government could claim little or no actual authority over several settled patches of U.S. territory. San Francisco was ruled that summer by a clique of private citizens calling itself the Vigilance Committee, which maintained

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[73] Rona L. Holub, "Poole, Bill"; http://www.anb.org/articles/20/20-01912.html; *American National Biography Online,* October 2008 update.

[74] *New York Daily Times*, March 12, 1855.

[75] *NYFJ*, October 13, 1855.

[76] *NYFJ*, November 24, 1849.

[77] *American Celt*, December 11, 1852. Unlike more conventional hard-sided hats with stiff, curved brims, the "Slouch" or "Kossuth Hat" was pliable, with a soft, broad brim often worn flat.

[78] *NYFJ*, November 28, 1857.

[79] Pittsburgh *Catholic*, November 13, 1852.

its own militia, prison, and well-worn scaffold. This ad hoc regime provided further confirmation to the Catholic press that "mob law and club government" ruled the day. Like Walker's Nicaraguan government, San Francisco's filibusters styled themselves "champions of Reform and Liberty" but were in fact "subverters of law, social order, and the common principles of justice."[80] The Vigilance Committee's revolutionary tendencies derived, not surprisingly, from the Know-Nothing backgrounds of its leading members.[81] In Kansas, meanwhile, free-soil Jayhawkers and proslavery Border Ruffians vied to enforce rival state constitutions through guerilla warfare. And in the Utah Territory, Latter Day Saints had forged a practically autonomous state and were making ready to battle federal troops in defense of their own peculiar social arrangements. Like filibustering convoys and Know-Nothing clubs, the Mormons' ranks were, according to reports in the Catholic press, swelled by the refuse of Europe.[82]

As ultramontane editors of the 1850s perused their weekly telegraphic dispatches and newspaper clippings, they charted the alarming spread of "Filibusterism," a political "disease" that was threatening the rule of law throughout the Atlantic world.[83] This pernicious "ism" had become representative of Red Republicanism, socialism, communism, abolitionism, secessionism, and every other "ism" by which a radical minority threatened to bend the social order to its will.[84] It was, in McMaster's words, a highly "contagious" strain of "political insanity" that by decade's end had put in serious doubt the viability of both the Pope's temporal domains and the U.S. political experiment.[85] Garibaldi's Italian insurgents and John Brown's armed abolitionists were all styled "filibusters" in Catholic papers.[86] J.V. Huntingdon applied the

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[80] *Catholic Mirror*, August 30, 1856.

[81] *USCM*, September 20, 1856; *NYFJ*, September 27, 1856; *Catholic Mirror*, June 5, 1856.

[82] *NYFJ*, May 21, 1859.

[83] The March 26, 1859 *Catholic Mirror* described "the rage for filibustering" as "a fixed disease upon a good portion of our people, a disease of the intermittent character, indeed, sometimes better, sometimes worse, but never quite cured."

[84] For "Filibusterism" as an "ism," see *USCM*, April 11, 1857; June 20, 1857. On "isms" generally, see *NYFJ*, November 24, 1855; December 1, 1855.

[85] *NYFJ*, November 19, 1859.

[86] See *CTA*, June 6, 1860; October 20, 1860; *Catholic Mirror* (quoting the Philadelphia *Herald and Visitor*), October 13, 1860. Catholic journalists were not alone in applying the neologism to a broad

term to those Irish nationalists plotting insurrection against the British crown; sympathetic though their cause may have been for any Catholic polemicist, their means were an unacceptable concession to the lawless spirit of the times.[87] That "insidious spirit of infidelity, insubordination and anarchy," born of the French Revolution and intensified in recent aftershocks, had arrived "on the wings of the wind" and taken hold of the United States for good during the Texas controversy, according to a Pittsburgh *Catholic* correspondent. The spoliation of Mexico and succeeding filibusters to Cuba were clear signs that the country had succumbed to the revolutionary epidemic.[88] The *Catholic Mirror* agreed. The annexation of Texas had marked the nation's transition from the heroic age of independence to a new era of fragmentation and violence.[89] The American filibuster was a fitting, if unsettling, archetype for the age.

"Christian Heroism": The Lessons of Repentant Filibusters

In March 1854, the *Catholic Miscellany* published an account of the festivities recently held to honor George Washington's birthday at Spring Hill College in Mobile. Two student orations had headlined the program. The first presented a contrast between Washington's honorable patriotism and the destructive extremism of Louis Kossuth. The second, a Spanish discourse delivered by Francisco Velasco—possibly one of the two dozen Mexican students attending Spring Hill at the time—paid tribute to "the chivalrous Hernando Cortez." The *Miscellany* correspondent admitted that his limited knowledge of "the noble tongue" prevented a full appreciation of the latter speech, but he was nonetheless impressed by the tenor of the day's

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range of international affairs. See May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 61–65. May argues that such usages of the word were not always promiscuous and that Garibaldi did in fact qualify as a filibuster in the strict sense.

[87] St. Louis *Leader*, November 24, 1855; December 15, 1855; January 29, 1856.

[88] *Catholic Mirror*, March 5, 1853.

[89] Pittsburgh *Catholic*, January 5, 1856.

events.[90] At a time when young men across the country were sporting Kossuth hats and embarking on piratical quests to upend the legacy of Spanish conquistadors, students at Catholic colleges like Spring Hill were eloquently affirming anti-revolutionary, anti-filibuster principles. Just a few weeks earlier the *Miscellany* had lamented that "every tyro who spends a few years within the walls of a College" learned only to "talk nonsense about the rights of man" and to imagine himself "an Apostle of Liberty, sent to destroy tyranny and revolutionize the world."[91] There were havens of hope for the rising generation, however, in places like Spring Hill and St. Joseph's College in Bardstown, Kentucky, where students were "well taught how to view in their proper light the erroneous and subversive political and philosophical doctrines of the day"—to reject the appeals of the "Hungarian Rover, of the Cuban Pirates" and of any other fashionable insurgents.[92]

The unnerving events of the 1850s increasingly convinced ultramontane intellectuals not only that Catholic colleges were the surest educational safeguard against an anarchic future, but that a general acceptance of Catholic principles was necessary to prevent the ultimate collapse of political life in the United States. Catholicity alone—never, significantly, "Catholic*ism*"—could effectively counteract Filibusterism and all attendant "isms" that strained the bonds of social stability. Inherently antinomian, Protestantism could not restrain popular passions to the degree that a healthy democracy demanded. Only the Catholic Church inculcated a respect for law and authority adequate to meet the challenges of a revolutionary age. Only Catholics took the Decalogue seriously enough to accept divine prohibitions against stealing and coveting as a true deterrent to filibustering.[93] Only Catholics observed their oaths as citizens with the force of a religious obligation, one that forbade them on penalty of sin from warring against peoples with

[90] *USCM*, March 18, 1854.
[91] *USCM*, January 14, 1854.
[92] *CTA*, September 4, 1852.
[93] See *CTA*, April 13, 1850; January 15, 1859.

whom their nation was at peace.[94] It came as no surprise to McMaster that so many "thinking" citizens were turning to the Catholic Church in the mid-fifties. The recklessness of Know-Nothing politics had proven the "failure of Protestantism to meet the want of the times." In the aftermath of that failed electoral coup, it became clear that all friends of law and order were now standing "side by side with us."[95]

As the filibustering fifties unfolded, the conversion of the entire country seemed not only politically imperative but also remotely conceivable. In a provocative 1850 lecture, Bishop Hughes had declared, in effect, that Protestant alarmists were correct: Catholics intended to convert all inhabitants of the United States, up to and including the President.[96] Though they usually employed less strident language, other ultramontane spokesmen soon grew comfortable voicing similar visions. By tracking the exponential recent growth of Catholic institutions, they pointed out the plausibility of a predominantly Catholic United States. By forecasting the ruinous trajectory of current events, they set the stage for a future of Catholic renovation. "The Church will have the glorious task of…re-organizing the shattered fragments of the social body," the *Miscellany* predicted in 1851, as López was preparing his final invasion and foreign revolutionaries were lining up dates on the U.S. lecture circuit. "No one else can attempt the undertaking and the Church will have to perform it."[97]

By mid-decade, talk of nationwide conversion had become commonplace in the ultramontane press. To commemorate the national feast-day of the Immaculate Conception in 1856, the *Catholic Telegraph and Advocate* printed a widely circulated prayer that the "crowning grace" of conversion "be added to our worldly favors and national glories, which without it are

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[94] *American Celt*, October 16, 1852. McGee here warned naturalized Irish-Americans that supporting filibusters to Cuba—or even to Ireland itself—would constitute a forswearing of their oaths as citizens and a violation of their "duty as Catholics."

[95] *NYFJ*, September 1, 1855.

[96] John Hughes, "The Decline of Protestantism, and Its Causes," in *Complete Works of the Most Reverend John Hughes, D.D.*, vol. 2 (New York, 1866), 87–101, here 101.

[97] *USCM*, May 3, 1851.

nothing."[98] In his October 1856 review, Brownson observed that the Catholic religion "is just what is needed to complete and consecrate the American character." Only through a broad acceptance of Catholic principles could the nation fulfill the mission for which many believed it was poised—namely, to advance a "higher and more Christian order" of civilization. "We Catholics are the American people," Brownson asserted, "and we hold the destinies of the country in our hands."[99] McMaster had come to a similar conclusion in his 1852 lecture on "The Future of the United States." Three years later the topic had become something of an editorial fixation of his, broached below dozens of *Freeman* mastheads between 1855 and 1857. The people of the United States, he believed, had grown weary of moral dissipation and longed for a religion that could harness and constructively apply their seemingly boundless energies. It was now manifest that only Catholic faith could supply "the social conscience for which our Society calls." McMaster was generally bullish on the prospect of national conversion, but always fearful of the alternative. "If Catholicity does not spread," he warned, "the country must fall in ruins."[100]

But if Catholic conversion really could cure the social madness embodied by the American filibuster, it was certainly not evident by the beliefs and behavior of many practicing Catholics. As Archbishop Hughes discovered in his dealings with Domingo de Goicuría, many *filibusteros* conducted their clandestine operations with a devout faith. The same was undoubtedly true of some Irish nationalists in the U.S., whose political aims allied easily with those of Cuban *independentistas* and other dissidents. It was precisely to suppress such sympathies that McGee published his defenses of Spanish rule in *The American Celt*.[101] Pro-filibustering Catholics presented both a pastoral quandary, as in Goicuría's case, and a challenge to the credibility of ultramontane opinion. Even while promoting a Catholic antidote to America's maladies, Brownson had to admit that his fellow believers were "as deeply implicated

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[98] Reprinted in *USCM*, December 20, 1856; see also *CTA*, December 11, 1858.
[99] *BQR* 1:4 (October, 1856): 409–444.
[100] *NYFJ*, July 4, 1857.
[101] See, for instance, *American Celt*, October 16, 1852.

as any other class of citizens in the scandals which have of late years been so frequent."[102] One need not search far for Catholic proponents of vigilante expansionism. Stephen Mallory, the Catholic senator from Florida, gave López a good luck charm as he prepared to launch his final invasion from Key West. Jane McManus Storm, like Brownson and McMaster a converted editor of some renown, wrote numerous articles in favor Cuban annexation—some of which were commissioned by the *Junta*—and invested financially in Walker's Nicaraguan regime.[103] The most obvious examples were López himself, who was raised a Catholic in Spain and Venezuela, and William Walker, who was received into the Roman Church on January 31, 1859, while in Mobile making preparations for his final expedition.

How did ultramontane editors, so firm in their opposition to filibustering as an expression of revolutionary disorder, respond to the Catholic professions of the decade's two most notorious freebooters? Their treatment of each man's execution was telling. From the perspective of the Catholic press, it was their final moments that López and Walker offered the truest windows into their souls—and also, perhaps, the best glimpse at potential redemption for a nation strained by feverish expansionism and anarchic violence.

Newspaper accounts of López's last days varied widely. The first steam-packet reports from Havana included sensationalized stories of captured filibusters being shot on the spot, "dragged by the feet by negroes," and dismembered by vengeful mobs. As updates arrived throughout the second week of September 1851, the scene depicted in the popular press became calmer but still imbued with anti-Spanish sentiment. Descriptions of López's execution emphasized the inquisitorial cruelty of the *garrote* and the revolutionary bravery that the captured freedom-fighter maintained to the end. His defiant final words—"I die for my beloved Cuba"—

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[102] *BQR* 1:4 (October, 1856): 409–444.

[103] Storm wrote under the name "Cora Montgomery" for the *Democratic Review* and the *New York Sun*. Her biographer notes that she was "strangely quiet in the press about Cuba" during and after López's final invasion. See Hudson, *Mistress of Manifest Destiny*, 96, 135–6, 159–164.

gave lasting inspiration to the crowds who assembled nightly in his honor across the United States.[104]

Catholic press reports spun things rather differently—especially concerning the propriety of the Cuban people and the justness of the Spanish authorities—but concurred that López had died a valiant death. In the Catholic version, however, it was his contrition, rather than his defiance, that made him a heroic figure in his final moments. The *Freeman's Journal*, drawing upon unspecified sources, noted that López had paused "to collect himself for his appearance before the awful judgment seat of Eternity, with the charitable assistance of a priest, and embracing the Crucifix, whose lessons he had so long despised."[105] The *Catholic Miscellany* gave the fullest and most sermonic treatment of the event, relying upon a Spanish newspaper account that had been translated and forwarded by an "estimable friend" in Cuba. Here the scene took on a solemn, liturgical air: López had processed to the scaffold between two priests, preceded by the local Confraternity of Charity; he had asked the crowd for pardon and prayers, then received the priests' final exhortations and reverently kissed the crucifix, while the assembled *habaneros* looked on in dignified silence.

By dying as a "brave man and a repentant Christian," López had "expiated his errors,…purged the stains of his character, and regained his title to fame." The *Miscellany* lambasted popular accounts that had occluded "the Christian heroism of his departing spirit" with "expressions of silly enthusiasm or inopportune patriotism." If López was worthy of adulation, it was because of his submission to Catholic truth, not the obstinacy of his revolutionary pretensions. Once a celebrated embodiment of the country's self-destructive tendencies, he had now, in the *Miscellany*'s view, become a noteworthy model of the path to national reclamation. As if to accentuate the point, the paper reported two months later that seven non-Catholic *gringos*

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[104] See *New York Herald*, September 8, 1851; Boston *Pilot*, August 30, 1851; *USCM*, September 13, 1851.

[105] *Freeman's Journal*, September 13, 1851.

captured alongside López "were received into the bosom of the Church" by the Bishop of Havana prior to their executions.[106]

William Walker's late-life conversion and dying contrition drew a more muted response in the Catholic press. Editors who normally celebrated every notable conversion gave only passing notice to the new ecclesial allegiance of one of America's most famous men. The New Orleans *Propagateur Catholique* first reported the story in snippet form, expressing a "certain hesitation that will be easily understood." A fuller account from a Mobile correspondent later explained that Walker had diligently sought instruction from vicar-general Gabriel Chalon and, arriving at "a very profound conviction," had been received into the church in a cathedral packed with witnesses on January 31, 1859. The whole thing had been a "*coup extraordinaire de la grace*," reminiscent of the road to Damascus.[107] As the *Freeman's Journal* heard it, the former filibuster was even considering religious vows.[108] By the following year, however, the sincerity of the conversion was in serious doubt. As rumors of another invasion circulated, Walker's new Catholic credentials looked like a ploy to gain credibility among potential Central American allies. Brownson concluded that reports of his conversion must have been unfounded, so lacking were his recently published memoirs in any sense of repentance, religious conviction, or basic moral sentiment.[109] When Walker did at last embark on his final filibuster in the summer of 1860, McMaster declared him to be "a hypocrite, violating, in the most public manner, the morals of the Catholic Church." The *Freeman* editor prayed that "he may soon be seized, and, after short shrift, shot or garroted."[110]

McMaster's wish came to pass shortly afterward in Trujillo, Honduras. Reports from the scene of execution indicated that this Catholic of dubious sincerity had, like López, died a good

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[106] *USCM*, September 13, 1851; November 22, 1851. The *Catholic Mirror* inserted the exact same account, complete with uncited commentary from the *Miscellany*, into its coverage of the event. See *Catholic Mirror*, September 20, 1851.

[107] *Le Propagateur Catholique*, February 12, 1859.

[108] *NYFJ*, March 26, 1859.

[109] *BQR* 1:3 (July, 1860): 407–408.

[110] *NYFJ*, September 15, 1860.

death. According to the *Freeman*'s translation of an account in the Havana newspaper *Diario de la Marina*, Walker had, upon his capture, immediately requested a priest, in whose company he passed his final night kneeling at a humble altar within the prison. The next morning he met the firing squad with a crucifix in hand, professing his faith as a Catholic, confessing the injustice of his actions, and asking forgiveness of the Honduran people [Figure 3]. The Boston *Pilot* also printed a version of this report, accompanied by favorable commentary. Though hardly the martyr that some proslavery papers made him out to be, Walker did die admirably enough that "we can scarcely bring ourselves to refer to the life of crime he led."[111]

But the *Pilot*'s brief remarks only accentuated the general reserve of the Catholic press in response to the filibuster's fate. The *Freeman's Journal*, so seldom at a loss for strongly worded opinions, made no editorial statement on the story. The *Miscellany* and other Catholic papers were similarly silent. Walker's repentance, if instructive at all, offered an ambiguous and unsettling lesson. In 1851, Narciso López's garrote-chair confession had provided hope that a filibustering nation might, in the end, preserve its integrity by embracing the Catholic faith. But in 1860, the United States seemed on the verge of splintering into rival bands of insurgents. Fire-eaters intent on forcing slavery into the tropics had met their match in abolitionists plotting their own southward filibusters. Brownson conceded that Filibusterism, the Jacobinism of American democracy, had come to rule the day.[112] The national collapse that the Catholic press had feared throughout the fractious fifties seemed finally set to take place. William Walker's conversion might simply have come too late.

[111] Boston *Pilot*, October 13, 1860.
[112] *BQR* 1:3 (July, 1860): 360–391.

Chapter Five

TO MEXICANIZE THIS REPUBLIC

¿Qué importan, por ejemplo, las balanzas mercantiles, y el aumento en las esportaciones marítamas, si éstas se hacen á costa de la esclavitud, como sucede en los Estados Unidos del Norte? Las riquezas que por este medio se acumulan, son el fruto de un trabajo no recompensado en millares de infelices, sujetos á increibles padecimientos. [1]

—*La Cruz*, Mexico City, December 11, 1856

A perplexing ballot awaited U.S. voters in the fall of 1856. Two new parties had arisen to oppose the Democrats, whom many now discredited as pawns of the slaveholding interest: the American Party, which attracted remaining veterans of the northern Know-Nothing movement, and the Republican Party, an amorphous coalition of abolitionists, free-soilers and former Whigs. To make matters more complicated, the Republicans had done something almost unthinkable—they had nominated a Roman Catholic for President.

So, at least, claimed scandalmongers in the opposing camps. John C. Frémont had never been a stranger to controversy. Despite attaining heroic status for his treks across the Rocky Mountains, "the Pathfinder" remained an ambiguous figure in the public imagination. Had the "Bear Flag Revolt" that he engineered to wrest California from Mexico been a reckless filibuster or a covert operation authorized by President Polk? Had his wartime court-martial for insubordination been a petty scolding or a fair rebuke to an overly ambitious officer? Now the newspapers wondered aloud whether he was, as he claimed, an Episcopalian. Viewed at a slant, the facts suggested otherwise. His father was a French immigrant. His clandestine marriage to Jessie Hart Benton had been witnessed by a Catholic priest. He had been seen crossing himself in

[1] "For example, what do trade balance and increased maritime exports matter if they come at the cost of slavery, as happens in the United States? The riches accumulated in this manner are fruits of the unpaid labor of millions of wretches, subjected to incredible suffering."

Catholic churches.[2] Among those voters still haunted by the prospect of a Roman conspiracy against the United States, Frémont fit the profile of an undercover operative.

Catholic editors, however, found little to arouse excitement in Frémont's religious life. Drawing upon confidential sources within the church, they confirmed that he had indeed "lived for a time as a Catholic" (James McMaster claimed to have it on "good authority" and threatened to prove it if correspondents continued to insist otherwise).[3] Despite their privileged intelligence on the issue, ultramontane commentators—who celebrated the questionable Catholic credentials of war heroes like James Shields and the centuries-remote Catholic ancestry of George Washington— expressed no pride in or affinity with the Republican candidate whatsoever. No sense of religious camaraderie, much less political support, could survive the stark facts of Frémont's apostasy: his apostasy not simply from the Roman rite but, more significantly, from an acceptable position on the nation's most divisive issue. "With every disposition to help the Colonel into the Church, he must do a little more in the premises before we can recognize him as one of the faithful," the *Catholic Mirror* counseled. "We should also require him to drop his abolitionism, before we took him up."[4]

As an explorer and soldier, Frémont had embodied the promise of westward expansion; as a presidential candidate, he epitomized its perils. The elongated U.S. map that the Pathfinder had helped to sketch inspired in Catholics, as in other visionary *yanquis*, a sense of wonder at their seemingly boundless prospects. But it also stirred anxieties over a republic stretched too thin, ruled by filibuster notions of justice, cast into perpetual dispute over the future of slavery. The ultramontane press took the election of 1856 to be a referendum on the very survival of "American nationality," which Frémont's Republicans—a party cobbled together by nativists and

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[2] Rolle, *John Charles Fremont: Character as Destiny* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 165–166.

[3] *NYFJ*, September 13, October 18, 1856; see also *USCM*, October 4, 1856, which expressed "no doubt" that Frémont was once a Catholic.

[4] *Catholic Mirror*, August 2, 1856.

abolitionists—seemed strategically engineered to endanger.[5] Their political neutrality more nominal than ever, Catholic journalists stumped for the Democratic ticket nationwide and sighed collectively in relief at the defeat of Frémont's "Black Republicans" and "Negro-fusionists," whose revolutionary platform had, in their minds, threatened the religious liberty, racial hierarchy, and regional cooperation that made the United States prosper.[6]

Ultramontane nationalists thought it no accident that Catholic votes had helped save the Union from sectional fissure in 1856. Only Catholic principles could, they were certain, preserve the United States from the instability inherent to a republic populated largely by Protestants. But the political commitments that they revealed in the 1856 campaign would, by the end of the end of the next presidential campaign, prove the Catholic vision for the country to be as fatally divisive as any Protestant variant.

Throughout the roaring forties and the fractious fifties, Catholic apologists had positioned themselves as the nation's sturdiest allies of constitutional law and political harmony, an indispensable bulwark against the revolutionary tendencies of the times. They had also promoted a social order and moral vision for the nation that deemed slavery a necessity, branding opponents of the "peculiar institution" as civil and religious heretics. In the winter of 1861, as the Cotton States seceded in protest of Lincoln's election, it became impossible to sustain both positions. Forced to choose between rebellion against the lawful authorities or loyalty to a nation where abolitionism held sway, Catholic intellectuals went in both directions, assured in either case that theirs was the truly Catholic position. Despite their many prognostications to the contrary and their many denials of complicity after the fact, the ultramontane nationalists not only failed to prevent a violent schism but actively contributed, through their postwar reimagining of American nationhood, to the tragic failure of the young republic.

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[5] St. Louis *Leader*, October 27, 1855.
[6] Ibid.

"Inflexibly and Altogether American"
The Catholic Basis for National Unity

In 1850, the faculty of an upstart Catholic college in the wilds of northern Indiana—a school still scarcely known beyond the diocese of Vincennes—drafted a letter of encouragement to the aged Henry Clay, who was playing the Great Compromiser one last time amid rancorous Senate debates over the fate of slavery in the Mexican Cession. "While you are assailed by the violent and insane of both sections of the Union," wrote the Holy Cross fathers of Notre Dame, "we thought it might be agreeable to you to know that in a secluded religious house…your kindling oratory has warmed and cheered many a heart inflexibly and altogether American."[7] The letter made no political recommendations but its prayer for unity echoed the sentiments of Catholic spokesmen throughout the turmoil of 1850. When the United States seemed in imminent danger of fragmenting along sectional lines, ultramontanes prioritized national unity over any particular policy decisions on slavery. Patriotism and religious duty equally informed their position. Unity was not only in the country's best interests; it was also a manifestly *catholic* desire to seek that "pertaining to the whole."[8]

The crisis of 1850 brought to a boil sectional tensions that had simmered since the first *norteamericano* advances on Mexico. One compelling line of interpretation—embraced at both extremes of the national debate but tacitly acknowledged even among moderates—identified slavery as the driving force behind westward expansion. It was to extend the plantation economy and strengthen the slave-state voting bloc that southern colonists had swarmed into Texas and staged rebellion against a Mexican constitution that outlawed human chattel. The same motives had sparked the outright invasion of Mexico and subsequent attempts to annex the entirety of the conquered country. Slaveholder visions of a hemispheric empire would later fuel filibustering

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[7] *CT*, April 13, 1850.

[8] For a concise account of the etymology and history behind this definition of the term "catholic," see Henri de Lubac, "Pourquoi 'Église Catholique' et non 'Église Universelle,'" in *Catholicisme*, ed. Michael Sales (Paris: Cerf, 2003), 455–6.

expeditions into the tropics. By 1850, as congress debated whether to permit slavery in the portion of Mexico formally ceded to the U.S., it seemed clear that chronic sectional strife would define the domestic legacy of the nation's first foreign war. The press indulged forecasts of doom, from which Catholic editors did not abstain. "We are threatened with the combined horrors of civil war and servile insurrection," Baltimore's *Catholic Mirror* feared.[9] McMaster ventured an eerily accurate prediction, imagining that "in 1860 the troops of the United States might be marched into Virginia to protect the slaves of that State from being sold in the market."[10] Continental dominance had, it seemed, come at the cost of amicable inter-state relations.

Even such a grave political situation could be made to serve religious polemics. The *Catholic Telegraph* of Cincinnati pointed out that the "conspirators and traitors" who now threatened the Union were not papal agents, as Lyman Beecher and his generation of nativists had feared, but rather homegrown "fanatics" from the Northern and the Southern extremes.[11] Catholics were not to blame for the nation's potentially fatal maladies, according to ultramontane opinion; indeed, Catholics alone could be trusted *not* to betray the constitution or speed the Union's dissolution. The crisis at hand was an outgrowth of Protestantism, a political testament to its divisive and anarchic effects.

Since the mid-forties, when the Methodists and Baptists split along sectional lines on the issue of slaveholding clergy, Catholic thinkers had viewed Protestant churches as the primary hosts for those divisive diseases that threatened the body politic.[12] They concurred with John C. Calhoun's widely quoted warning from the senate floor that these denominational fissures portended national fracture.[13] The failure of Protestant churches to maintain a unified

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[9] *Catholic Mirror*, January 26, 1850.
[10] *NYFJ*, February 9, 1850.
[11] *CT*, May 17, 1851.
[12] See, for instance, *CA*, May 24, 1845.
[13] *Catholic Mirror*, March 16, 1850. The *Mirror* took issue, however, with Calhoun's opinion that all of the country's denominations, "with the exception, perhaps, of the Catholics, were organized very much upon the principle of our political institutions." Though the senator had failed to appreciate "how efficiently the Catholic system tends to promote the union of the confederated states," he had at least exposed Protestant culpability for the present crisis.

administration and a coherent set of social teachings across regional divides discredited their claims upon the nation's conscience and made the stabilizing presence of Catholic communities a civic imperative. "Protestant moral theology must be studied on a map," the *Mirror* quipped.[14]

Besides encouraging sectional discord, Protestantism also served as a gateway to a welter of strange new ideas that corroded the foundations of civilized life: the fallibility of scripture, the equality of women, the evilness of slavery. In casual asides as well as extended essays, Catholic papers cast Protestantism as a mode of heterodoxy not only toward Christian doctrine but also toward mainstream social convictions, particularly where race was concerned. The *Advocate*, for instance, gave the cautionary notice of an Irish boy wooed first into Presbyterian services and then into service on the Underground Railroad.[15] The *Miscellany* called attention to the wording of a New York classified ad that it found amusing, revealing, and ultimately superfluous: a black woman seeking a live-in maid had advised that only Protestants need apply.[16] The logic of such syllogisms was so obvious that it required no commentary. When it turned out, at decade's end, that one of John Brown's accomplices was an itinerant Catholic poet named Richard Realf, the ultramontane press hit upon a ready explanation: the man in question was not only a foreigner, lately arrived from England, but was also known to have been associating with Methodists in Austin, Texas.[17]

Haunted by the specter of disunion raised in 1850, Catholic apologists began promoting their religion as the nation's surest safeguard against sectional dismemberment. They emphasized two qualities that enabled the Catholic Church to withstand the centrifugal tendencies accelerated by American Protestantism. First, Catholics maintained a unified ecclesiastical organization and, uniquely among U.S. Christians—at least according to the sweeping characterizations of ultramontane opinion—did not allow their teaching on human bondage to vary by latitude.

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[14] *CM*, January 26, 1850.
[15] *CA*, August 26, 1848.
[16] *USCM*, April 5, 1851.
[17] *USCM*, December 31, 1859.

Second, Catholics possessed a stronger conception of the force of law than did Protestants, who tended toward varying degrees of antinomianism. Just as this law-abiding instinct *theoretically* prevented Catholics from signing onto filibustering expeditions, so it also kept them from entertaining thoughts of secession. No other denomination made it "a religious duty to her members to stand by the constitution" as did the Catholic Church, James Corcoran maintained from his editor's chair in Charleston, the perennial wellspring of secessionism.[18] Naturalized Catholic immigrants, who took their oaths of citizenship as solemn vows not to be broken on pain of sin, were even less likely to turn against the Union.

Whether sincere or wishful in their rhetoric, ultramontane voices expressed confidence throughout the fifties that Catholic consciences would resist the temptation to give up on the strained republic. In his pivotal 1852 lecture, McMaster pegged the nation's survival to a distinctly Catholic "veneration for the sanctity of law" and inviolable "attachment to the Constitution and political traditions of our country."[19] James Ryder, the president of Georgetown and a lecture-circuit regular, insisted that no Catholic "shall cause the glorious columns of liberty to crumble… for the Catholic Church teaches that treason against our country is treason against God."[20] Visitors to colleges like Ryder's often came away convinced that Catholic youth, "instructed from their earliest infancy to respect the laws of God…and to prize the principles of Washington," would take no part in tearing the Union asunder. [21]

To lend further evidence to their argument, ultramontanes boasted of having avoided the north-south schisms that recently split the Methodists and Baptists, among other Protestant denominations. They praised their priests for keeping divisive political opinions out of the pulpit; they took comfort in the immutability of Catholic doctrine, which at least on paper allowed the faithful to maintain a consistent position on slavery regardless of geographic location. Protestant

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[18] *USCM*, April 24, 1858.
[19] *NYFJ*, February 21, 1852.
[20] From a Georgetown commencement address, reprinted in *USCM*, July 28, 1855.
[21] *CM* March 8, 1856.

doctrine, by contrast—at best an imperfect derivative of divine revelation, at worst a willful perversion—was subject to the natural processes of change and corruption. It was no surprise, therefore, that a Protestant's beliefs tended to vary by region, as surely as did his complexion, habits, and diet. "South of Mason and Dixon's line, his proslavery must burn at a white heat," the Pittsburgh *Catholic* observed, "while in more northern latitudes he is called on to anathematize the Fugitive Slave Law and all who traffic in human flesh."[22] Pittsburghers were well informed on Catholics' supposed immunity to such sectional disparities. They had lately hosted the Boston *Pilot* editor John T. Roddan to lecture on the church's capacity to resist "the expansive forces tending to overcome the adhesion essential to our national existence."[23] Only the Catholic Church transcended the balkanizing tendencies to which large countries were prone, a fact made more impressive and more imperative by the continental scope of the United States' postwar boundaries. This unique ability to secure interregional cohesion was among the factors that convinced Isaac Hecker of America's Catholic destiny.[24] His friend and fellow visionary James McMaster concurred: Catholic uniformity was the one constant upon which the nation could rely:

> They may look along our coast from Passamaquoddy Bay to the Rio Grande, and from San Diego to Van Couver's Island—they may examine through all the valleys that lie between the White Mountains and the snowy range of the Sierra Nevada, and all the plains that stretch between the head-waters of Lake Superior and the Keys of Florida, and everywhere they will find the professors of one faith…nowhere suffering such questions as slavery to divide them in their loyalty to their country or to their Church.[25]

Unity of diverse regions, peoples, and customs was more than an accident of national existence that Catholics could help to perpetuate; it was an essentially *catholic* characteristic that allowed the United States to mirror and move into closer harmony with the Roman Church.

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[22] *PC*, August 6, 1853. See also *USCM*, November 30, 1850, which argued that the Church's views "do not vary with change of latitude."

[23] *PC*, February 26, 1853.

[24] "The most intelligent of all parties, in North and South, regard Catholics as the only religious body conservative of the Union, and perceive that the latter can only be perpetuated by Catholicity, which alone is able to guide the nation to the fulfillment of its noble destiny." From Hecker's essay on "Catholicity in the United States" for the Roman newspaper *La Civilta Catolica*, reprinted in *NYFJ*, January 2, 1858.

[25] *NYFJ*, September 12, 1857.

Ultramontane nationalists promoted political unity as a religious good. Corcoran asked *Miscellany* readers to consider the wide array of languages and ethnicities that allowed the church in the United States to make manifest the principle of catholicity to a degree seldom before seen. "We have, between our Atlantic and Pacific borders, churches, in which the Word of God is announced in English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Dutch (for Hollanders), Bohemian, the language of the Red Man, and even Chinese," he marveled.[26] From cosmopolitan Gotham, McMaster shared similar sentiments. In a land where "so many languages…flow together, so many bloods and races commingle," unity constituted the highest civic virtue and discord the ultimate transgression.[27] He hoped that the survival of the federal system, which sought to bind diverse regions under a common government, would eventually lead the United States toward Rome, "the Federal City of the Christian Republic," whose model of both moral and political unity had become "a paramount necessity in harmonizing and cementing the Union and brotherhood of this vast confederacy."[28] Such connections between *e pluribus unum* and the primacy of Rome spread well beyond McMaster's clique of visionary converts. Parishioners at St. Mary's, New Orleans, for instance, heard preaching on the many nations that "commingle and harmonize to form the great American people," in whose common destiny "will rest the Church's most glowing hopes!"[29]

Throughout the fifties, as the federal compact grew more precarious, Catholic commentators styled themselves as champions of national unity. Even as they presented Catholic respect for rule of law as the antidote to revolutionary filibusterism, they also commended *catholicity*—in its quintessential Roman expression—as the answer to sectional strife. If the states were to remain united, it would be in large part due to a work of catholic grace upon the American political system. A nation led by Protestant schismatics could not be other than a

[26] *USCM*, October 24, 1857.
[27] *NYFJ*, June 30, 1855.
[28] *NYFJ*, December 15, 1855.
[29] Quoted in *NYFJ*, November 6, 1858.

"house divided"; a nation beginning to fulfill its Catholic destiny could promise nothing if not oneness.

And yet the ultramontane pitch for catholicity, in both its religious and national implications, found expression in terms well suited to southern interests. Although the majority of them now labored above the Mason-Dixon line, Catholic prelates and publicists spoke for a church that was accustomed to maintaining a southern center of gravity and accommodating the region's peculiar institutions. Sympathetic with traditional social hierarchies and inflexible in their application of church teachings on human bondage, they stated the Catholic case for national unity with a decidedly southern accent.

"Untainted with the Fanaticism of Abolitionism"
The Southern Accent of U.S. Ultramontanes

Late in the 1856 campaign, the upstart Republican Party made a canny move for the Catholic vote. Handbills appeared in urban thoroughfares urging Catholic citizens to "Read Pope Gregory's Bull!" The document alluded to was the apostolic letter *In Supremo,* promulgated in 1839, in which Pope Gregory XVI had condemned the African slave trade strongly enough to suggest moral censure of all slave-based economies in the New World. Faithful Catholics, the campaign posters insinuated, ought to cast their ballot for Frémont, who had "pledged to prostrate the slave oligarchy." Republican field offices were encouraged to distribute the papal letter in pamphlet form, along with anti-slavery quotations from Daniel O'Connell, the revered martyr of the Irish Repeal movement.[30]

Ultramontane editors dismissed the ploy as a risible and desperate gimmick. Their confidence in the Democratic instincts of their audience was not misplaced. Frémont received little Catholic support in his failed bid for the presidency; neither did Lincoln in his successful

[30] Advertisement reprinted in *PC,* September 20, 1856. For more on the Republican attempt to woo Catholic voters in 1856, see Michael Hochgeschwender, *Warheit, Einheit, Ordnung: die Sklavenfrage und der amerikanische Katholizismus, 1835–1870* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), 116.

campaign four years later.[31] Reasons for Catholic antipathy toward the upstart party were numerous. Efficient Democratic machines were already humming in the immigrant neighborhoods of the Northeast, dispensing patronage and winning loyalties that would last for generations. Nativist sentiments—whether real, remembered, or imagined—tainted the reputation of each party fashioned from remnants of the old Whig coalition. And on the issue that now mattered most, U.S. Catholics sided with Southern interests, cementing an alliance that would undergird the Democratic Party for a century to come. The political circumstances that brought these voting blocs together may have been accidental, but at the intellectual level, a genuine concord of aims and commitments facilitated the process. Throughout the fifties, Catholic commentators at every latitude made known their distaste for abolitionism, their basic sympathy with the Southern temperament, and their conservative views on the "peculiar institution," proving themselves less adept than Frémont's strategists when it came to judging the temper of ultramontane opinion worldwide.

Like anyone else with a public voice in the United States, Catholic bishops and editors had begun sharpening their opinions on slavery in the 1830s. The decade that opened with Nat Turner's insurrection thrust the subject into the national consciousness with new urgency. Upon the rise of abolitionism and the subsequent hardening of proslavery apologia, what had once been widely accepted as a regrettable but ameliorable institution came increasingly either to be condemned as an unconscionable evil or defended as a positive good. Catholics were asked to declare where they stood on slavery—at times forcefully. In July 1835, anti-abolitionist mobs in Charleston threatened to attack Catholic churches, fearing that Rome had taken an interest in the supposed conspiracy against Southern institutions. Bishop John England, whose reluctant acceptance of a papal ambassadorship to Haiti had aroused such suspicions, responded with a

[31] For more exact figures, see Joseph George, Jr., "Philadelphia's *Catholic Herald*: The Civil War Years," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 103 (1979): 198–99.

convincing demonstration that Catholics were no friends of abolitionists. He even agreed to close a school for free black children recently established by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.[32]

Five years later, England issued the definitive U.S. Catholic statement on "domestic slavery" in a series of letters addressed to Secretary of State John Forsyth, formerly the governor of Georgia. Drumming up Southern support for Martin Van Buren's reelection in 1840, Forsyth had linked the Whig challenger, William Henry Harrison, to an international antislavery movement that included Pope Gregory XVI, whose *In Supremo* had recently hit the presses. Bishop England responded swiftly, fearing the toxic effects of a fusion between anti-papal and anti-abolitionist paranoia, particularly in the midst of a campaign that had attained the fervor as well as the appearance of a religious revival. He argued that *In Supremo* had merely condemned the slave trade, not the institution of slavery where it already existed. More importantly, he sought to prove that the Catholic Church had never once pronounced slaveholding a sin or suggested its incompatibility with natural law. England's epistolary style took a turn for the ponderous as he combed patristic sermons, Justinian law codes, canonical disputes, conciliar decrees, and other historical documents for Forsyth's enlightenment. Ill health forced him to abandon the project after eighteen lengthy letters that barely made it through Christianity's first millennium. But his contemporaries and successors among the nation's Catholic literati embraced the unfinished correspondence as a sort of textbook. North and South they cited it as an authoritative treatment of the subject, particularly on occasions when the faithful might be tempted to think slavery at odds with Catholic morals.

One such occasion had been prompted by Daniel O'Connell in 1843. Hailed throughout the Irish diaspora as both a political hero and a devout Catholic—many other activists, like the Protestant William Smith O'Brien or the radical Thomas Meagher, could not claim as much—O'Connell had more than once upset stateside supporters by seeking to align his movement with

[32] Andrew Stern, *Southern Cross, Southern Crucifix: Catholic-Protestant Relations in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 145–146.

the mounting campaign against American slavery.[33] On May 9, 1843 he took an uncompromising stand, declaring "every man a faithless miscreant, who does not take a part for the abolition of slavery."[34] The speech scandalized the U.S. Catholic press. Louisville's *Catholic Advocate* at first thought the remarks an abolitionist forgery. Upon confirming his sources a week later, editor Martin Spalding called O'Connell "unwise and meddlesome."[35] William George Read brought a fresh edition of England's letters to press, so as to allow the late, "great apostle of this western world" to rebut O'Connell's "incendiary appeals."[36] England's posthumous arguments bore all the more authority in this case, since he had been a friend of O'Connell's and had once conveyed in person his opinion that the latter's feelings toward American slavery were "unwarranted and harsh."[37]

Repulsed by abolitionism and eager to avoid additional grounds for political suspicion, England and his admirers failed to appreciate the degree to which their opinions on slavery were drifting away from the main currents of ultramontane thought. Though he aimed *In Supremo* against slave-traffic in particular, Pope Gregory XVI clearly cast a disapproving glance on the entire legal and social apparatus that worked to treat "negroes, as if they were not men, but mere animals."[38] O'Connell's mode of antislavery rhetoric was bolder than the pontiff's but hardly eccentric within the Catholic Atlantic. France produced a steady stream of Catholic literature opposed to American slavery, not only from the pens of liberal laymen like Augustin Cochin but

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[33] For more on O'Connell and slavery, see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Rutledge, 1995), 6–31; Angela F. Murphy, *American Slavery, Irish Freedom: Abolition, Immigrant Citizenship, and the Transatlantic Movement for Irish Appeal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).

[34] Ibid., 122.

[35] CA July 1-15, 1843.

[36] William George Read, introduction to *Letters of the Late Bishop England to the Hon. John Forsyth, on the Subject of Domestic Slavery: to which are prefixed copies, in Latin and English, of the Pope's Apostolic Letter, concerning the African Slave Trade, with some introductory remarks, etc.* (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1844; New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), iii.

[37] England, *Letters*, 14-15.

[38] "Apostolic Letter of our Most Holy Lord Gregory XVI, by Divine Providence, Pope: Concerning the Not Carrying on the Trade in Negroes," trans. and reprinted in England, *Letters*, xi.

also from the pulpits of such pro-papal clerics as Bishop Félix Dupanloup.[39] And in the deeper American south, Mexican ultramontanes found the persistence of slavery among the foremost proofs of *yanqui* barbarism. Insofar as they mustered church resources to the aid of proslavery politics—a dynamic noticeably without parallel among their Cuban or Brazilian counterparts—U.S. Catholic apologists were exposing a weakness in their ultramontane credentials.[40]

Much like Protestants who vindicated slavery from scripture, they bore the stronger argument when it came to citing texts. The New Testament failed to condemn slavery and indeed, made concessions to its existence, as countless exegetes had recently pointed out. The same was true of Catholic tradition, England and his acolytes argued—never had the church condemned slavery as a *malum in se*. And just as, for many evangelicals, a more exegetically nuanced position seemed to undermine the literal inspiration of scripture, so too did doctrinaire opposition to slavery appear threatening to the authority of the Roman Magisterium.[41]

Like romantic Catholics throughout the transatlantic revival, many U.S. ultramontanes now framed their apologetics from a historical perspective. History, not merely philosophy, offered them proof of the church's singular claim upon revealed truths. And history showed them that the church had approached the perennial issue of human bondage with wisdom and patience, laboring successfully to end "white slavery" and serfdom throughout the Middle Ages while eschewing blanket condemnations and "avoiding all extremes of fanaticism."[42] In keeping with this view of authoritative church precedents, many prominent Catholics supported schemes for gradual emancipation or colonization—that is, the creation of colonies for freed slaves in West Africa. Archbishop Blanc of New Orleans belonged to L'Institut d'Afrique, a colonization society

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[39] See Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 133–155 for these and other examples.

[40] Eugene Genovese notes that Catholic churchmen in Latin America were tolerant of slavery but less accommodating towards it. See Eugene D. Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), 100.

[41] For the former argument, see Holifield, *Theology in America*, 494–504.

[42] *CA*, March 10, 1849; *NYFJ*, May 25, 1850, quoting a recent lecture by Jeremiah Cumming s on "Slavery and the Union."

based in Paris.[43] Chief Justice Roger Taney had manumitted his own slaves and served for a time as an officer of the American Colonization Society. The U.S. hierarchy dispatched two priests to Liberia in 1841 for a brief and disheartening term of missionary labor in that colony of freed Americans. On the home front, several religious orders devoted themselves to the education of free black children, including pioneering congregations for women of color such as Baltimore's Oblate Sisters of Providence and Henriette DeLille's Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans. But despite these approving gestures toward eventual emancipation, *immediate* abolition proved an untenable position for U.S. Catholics. Premised upon the conviction that slavery was necessarily evil—a proposition foreign to scripture or tradition—abolitionism appeared to the ultramontane mind as a concession to the creeping infidelity of the age.[44]

Indeed, it was a visceral disdain for abolitionism, more than a positive attitude toward slavery, that allied Catholics with Southern interests throughout the sectional crisis. Not a single U.S. Catholic of any notoriety—no clergyman or religious sister, editor or educator, soldier or statesman who spoke as a Catholic in the public sphere—identified with the abolitionist agenda prior to 1862.[45] Such unanimous rejection of outright abolition was exceptional among U.S. denominations, as it was within the broader Catholic world. What explains it? Theological concerns about the authority of tradition and church history supply only part of the answer. Economic factors came into play as well. Irish laborers had developed a violent hostility toward their free black counterparts and feared that abolition would only intensify the competition for work among them. The political realignments of the 1850s also played a role. Following the collapse of the Whigs and the attendant rise of the Know-Nothings, Catholic voters came to suspect any non-Democratic party of being infected with nativist elements, including the rising

[43] Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-g, UNDA.

[44] For abolitionists as "infidels," see *CTA*, February 5, 1859.

[45] Stern provides an excellent summary of antislavery opinion among U.S. Catholics in *Southern Cross, Southern Crucifix*, 158–162. None of the figures he mentions supported *abolition*, however, with the intriguing exception of Richard Realf, who had resided in the United States for only a short time.

Free Soil and Republican coalitions that served as abolitionism's political arm.[46] Thus is was that Frémont, who may once have been a Catholic himself, and Lincoln—whose record was clear of anti-Catholic statements or activities—owned the instinctive distrust of the Catholic electorate.[47] Sherwood Healy, a biracial priest in Boston, found himself caught in the political quagmire familiar to many of the faithful—as much as he abhorred slavery, there was no escaping the fact that those "who pity the negro, hate the church."[48]

Among literary Catholics, however, opposing abolition was more than a matter of theological integrity or political expediency or economic survival. It was a matter of faithfulness to their account of the nation's origins and identity, a commitment already written into their competing narrative of American history. Abolitionism was the fruit of "self-righteous, self-complacent Puritans," who claimed to be the fountainhead of American liberty but had in fact introduced only intolerance, instability, and "fanaticism."[49] It was the latest "ism" to spring from New England, "the land of isms" and revolutionary tendencies.[50] Attempts to uproot slavery by force marked one more instance in which "Puritans" sought to impose a tyrannical, socially meddlesome and divisive form of government upon the tolerant, socially restrained, and unifying mode of republicanism first established by the planters of Catholic Maryland.

Molded as it was into the basic contours of their historical imagination, anti-abolitionism transcended geography for American Catholics. "If to be a Northern man one must believe in the priest-killing, Quaker-banishing, witch-burning, Indian-robbing Puritans," the Cincinnati *Catholic Telegraph* concluded, then "sensible people, this side of Mason's and Dixon's line, will

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[46] See Hochgeschwender, 250–251.

[47] J.V. Huntingdon laid out the logic that seems to have guided many Catholic voters in 1856 and 1860, a line of reasoning that presupposes the alliance of abolitionism and nativism. "In opposing the fusionist party and casting their votes for the Democratic ticket in this approaching struggle, Catholic citizens will, in our judgment, be killing two birds with one stone: they will be helping to save American nationality from a violent and premature rupture of North and South—a fatal catastrophe; and they will crush out Know-Nothingism." St. Louis *Leader*, October 27, 1855. For similar interpretations of the ballot, see *USCM*, August 16, 1856; *NYFJ*, December 1, 1855.

[48] O'Toole, 85.

[49] *CTA*, March 20, 1852.

[50] *NYFJ*, November 24, 1855.

have to lose their local habitation."[51] Thomas Low Nichols, son of New Hampshire and resident of Ohio, did precisely that, embarking on an extended tour of the South—where, according to his regular updates in the *Telegraph*, he found life most congenial. He had joined the Catholic Church in part because it was "the only Church in these United States…which forbids Abolitionism."[52] Such sweeping statements enjoyed wide acceptance in the Catholic press as the sectional conflict intensified. James Corcoran's blunt assertion in the *Miscellany* that "no man, whether in Louisiana or Massachusetts, can be an Abolitionist and a Catholic together" went without rebuttal among his peers.[53]

This rhetorical consensus against abolitionism naturally resonated with proslavery apologists. The tonal harmonies of the ultramontane and Southern nationalist presses reinforced the notion, frequently suggested by commentators both within and outside the church, of a certain Catholic affinity for things Southern. Thus, even as the center of U.S. Catholic population shifted north of tobacco-growing country during the forties and fifties, the general impression that American Catholicism bore a Southern character grew arguably stronger.

The association of Catholic culture with "southern" climates and customs came instinctively to mid nineteenth-century minds. Catholicism was, after all, the religion of southern Europe and the southern expanse of the western hemisphere.[54] It conjured images of a landscape and lifestyle that many readers also associated with the U.S. South, for better or for worse: a more

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[51] *CTA*, January 7, 1860.

[52] *USCM*, April 24, 1858.

[53] *USCM*, December 31, 1859. See also Louisville *Guardian*, January 28, 1860.

[54] Charles Eliot Norton, among other antebellum New Englanders, found the South reminiscent of Italy in its climate, its "social arrangements," and a certain "fine air of age…which invests whole streets with the venerableness of the past." Southerners made similar comparisons themselves, but less frequently. See Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810–1860*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), I:157–8.

Still more seldom did Southerners identify their region with Latin America and the Caribbean. The parallels drawn by outsiders and later historians, particularly between the U.S. South and the slave societies of Brazil and Cuba, were too unflattering for Southerners to entertain seriously. The "Southern dream of a Caribbean empire," as Robert May called the late-fifties visions of filibusters and fire-eaters, was premised more on a sense of superiority than a sense of commonality. O'Brien concludes that "if Southerners had known the Americas to their southward as well as they had known Europe, they might have known themselves better." (I: 211).

tropical climate and traditional economy, sustaining a more leisurely rhythm of labor; a more colorful population, marked by racial diversity and admixture; a more rigid social hierarchy and elaborate code of manners. Indeed, some Yankee travelers depicted the South as a "backward" region not unlike Mexico or the Caribbean or the semi-civilized lands of the orient.[55] Catholics, however, were inclined to take a more favorable view of the region's peculiarities, perceiving in them—as they had in their wartime observation of Mexican customs—a preservation of Christian virtues that the northern states had sacrificed to puritanical avarice. Two travelogues from the late fifties offer an instructive comparison on this point: Frederick Law Olmsted's *Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States* (1856) and Thomas Low Nichols's impressions of the South as penned for the *Catholic Telegraph* in 1858.[56]

Olmsted was, like Nichols, a New Englander of varied accomplishments and some repute. A far different set of convictions carried him into Dixie, however. As an abolitionist more convinced of the inefficiency than the immorality of slavery, he set out to observe the deficiencies of an outmoded southern economy. His portrait of the semi-civilized South resembles in several respects the depictions of Mexico that U.S. readers had absorbed from war correspondents a decade earlier. Softened by a temperate climate, Southerners failed to make the most of their natural resources; their religion tended toward "a miserable system of superstition"; the whites among them had been enervated by prolonged social—not to mention sexual—interaction with racial inferiors. They shared, it seemed, in the typically "southern"—and typically Catholic—traits that kept underachieving peoples across the Atlantic World from matching the industrial progress of northern Europe and the northern United States.[57]

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[55] John D. Cox, *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 2.

[56] *Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States* became part of the two-volume *Cotton Kingdom* (1861), arguably the most influential southern travelogue of the era. Nichols re-published his *Telegraph* columns in *Forty Years of American Life* (1864), a series of lectures delivered in London during his self-imposed wartime exile.

[57] Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, with remarks on their economy* (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856), 114, 139–140, 520–523.

Nichols sketched out many of the same contrasts between North and South that Olmsted had drawn but colored them in far more favorable light. Just as wartime Catholic writers had inverted negative characterizations of Mexico, redirecting them into critiques of Yankee Protestantism, Nichols used his southern experience as a whetting stone for barbs aimed at the "Puritan" heritage of the northern states. Venturing through a boisterous Sunday market in New Orleans, he found the non-sabbatarian atmosphere refreshingly suited to a "religious holiday." When his host in Memphis indulged slaves with passes and pocket-money to see the traveling circus, he took it as a welcome token of the human tenderness that "harsh and inhuman" New Englanders withheld even from family members. Olmsted had looked over Tidewater Virginia from his railcar window and wondered at its lack of mechanized development; Nichols surveyed lower Alabama from his steamboat deck and marveled at the riches that old-fashioned agrarian labor could reap. Becoming Catholic had entailed, for Nichols as for many of his contemporary converts, a conscious rejection of what the Puritans had wrought upon American shores. This theological and historical reorientation involved a geographical reorientation as well. As one traveled south—first across the Ohio, still more across the Rio Grande—the Puritan experiment gave way, in gradations, to a more traditional order. An economy geared solely toward profit turned into one centered on domestic relations; the coldness and austerity of social life blossomed into fashionable tableaux full of color and gaiety; a climate of intolerance and suspicion thawed into a liberality of spirt and congeniality amid diversity. So Nichols told it, at least, to approving nods throughout the Catholic press. No one found it strange that turning his religious convictions toward Rome had also meant turning his political and social sympathies southward.[58]

The same dynamic held true in reverse: building a national consciousness for the South meant, among many of its architects, cultivating a sense of respect for, even kinship with, the Roman Church. The well-known Southern affinity for things medieval—as expressed in courting rituals and jousting tournaments—had more to do with Walter Scott than with scholastic

[58] Nichols, *Forty Years of American Life*, 130, 164, 196.

theology, to be sure. But the self-understanding evinced by this chivalric mindset drew even hard-shell Southern Protestants into alliance with Catholic apologists. Southerners, too, were busy writing themselves out of the New England narrative of American origins. They claimed to have descended from the loyal aristocrats who settled the Chesapeake, rather than the Puritan troublemakers who landed farther north. This "Cavalier Myth" corresponded neatly—and consciously—with the "Maryland Pilgrims" tradition that Catholics promoted as an alternative to Plymouth.[59] As sectional tensions deepened, some partisans even ventured the theory of a separate "Southron" race, more "Anglo-*Norman*" than "Anglo-Saxon." The former bloodline preserved the ancient habits of the feudal nobility, while the latter carried forward the anarchic legacy of the English Reformation.[60]

Indeed, Southerners were not entirely uncomfortable seeing themselves as travelers often depicted them—as holdovers from a pre-Protestant culture. Their leading thinkers provided intellectual ballast for such imaginings. Historians like George Frederick Holmes and Thomas Roderick Dew, both Episcopalian, took a more sympathetic view of the Middle Ages than did many of their colleagues to the north, crediting medieval churchmen with the achievement of a humane and stable agrarian civilization. George Fitzhugh, the leading proslavery provocateur of the fifties, pined for the social and literary aesthetics of the sixteenth-century—for "a world not

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[59] Ritchie Devon Watson, Jr., *Normans and Saxons: Southern Race Mythology and the Intellectual History of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 75. The *Southern Literary Messenger* included Maryland's "British or Irish Catholic" immigrants among the noble progenitors of the South's distinct identity. The author did note that Maryland's pilgrims were "misguided" in matters of faith, though their sincerity was to be commended.

[60] Ibid., 89–90. For more on the anti-Puritan dimension of Southern intellectual life, see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 660–670.

The Southern abstention from the growing notion of an "Anglo-Saxon" identity mirrored a similar move among Catholic intellectuals, who asserted themselves against this racial category either by identifying with an alternative (i.e., the "Celtic" race that Thomas D'Arcy McGee championed early in his career) or by ridiculing the "Anglo Saxon" as a figment of the Protestant imagination ("There is no such race in existence," the *Telegraph* assured its readers on June 23, 1846). The exception was Brownson, who in a notorious 1853 essay extolled the purported virtues of the Anglo-Saxon (or "Teutonic") stereotype against the vices associated with the Celtic type, thus earning the near universal opprobrium of his colleagues.

yet deadened and vulgarized by puritanical cant."[61] He judged the growing esteem for the Catholic Church among his fellow Protestants to be a good sign for the Southern cause, a "salutary reaction" to northern decadence.[62] Even the Presbyterian divines *par excellence*, James Henley Thornwell and Robert Lewis Dabney, though unwavering in their commitment to Reformed theology, found much to admire in past Catholic achievements and much to respect—perhaps even envy—in the strength of Catholic conviction on present political issues.[63]

As the fractious fifties wore on, conservative social instincts drew Catholic apologists and Southern apologists into editorial concerns of widening overlap. There remained degrees of separation and mutual suspicion—even amid his severest anti-Northern polemics, James McMaster could not easily be mistaken for James DeBow. Ultramontanes uniformly opposed many of the fire-eaters' schemes, such as filibustering through the tropics or attempts to revive the Atlantic slave trade.[64] But on the whole, they regarded Southern partisans as steadfast allies against the revolutionary tendencies of the times. They noted the coolness with which Southern editors had treated Louis Kossuth, and the Know-Nothings' failure to gain traction in Southern sheets.[65] And they offered, in turn, reliable backing on the succession of sectional crises that arose during the decade. Ultramontane editors denounced Bostonians who defied the Fugitive Slave Act, seeing such civil disobedience as yet another symptom of Yankee lawlessness.[66] They circulated the false rumor that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had been placed on the Papal Index of Forbidden Books (not only for its abolitionist agenda but because Tom "gets religion" at a camp-

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[61] "Since the Reformation the world has as regularly been retrograding in whatever belongs to the departments of genius, taste and art, as it has been progressing in physical science and its application to mechanical construction." George Fitzhugh, "Sociology for the South," in *Antebellum: Writings of George Fitzhugh and Hinton Rowan Helper on Slavery*, ed. Harvey Wish (New York: Capricorn Books, 1960), 93. For a more detailed assessment of Fitzhugh's ambivalent appraisal of the Protestant Reformation, see Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, 191–194.

[62] Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 634.

[63] Dabney would in retrospect lament that the Catholic Church had provided a more faithful witness to the gospel than had the Protestant Churches during the crises of mid-century. Ibid., 635.

[64] For opposition to reopening the slave trade in the Catholic press, see *NYFJ*, March 13, 1858; *USCM*, October 2, 1858.

[65] See, for instance, *USCM*, April 10–24, 1852, February 3, 1855.

[66] Brownson compared his fellow Bostonians to Narciso López's band of filibusters. *BQR* 6:1 (January, 1852): 95; *NYFJ*, January 25–February 22, 1851; *USCM*, November 30, 1850.

meeting.)[67] They advocated popular sovereignty in the western territories and, with the notable exception of Orestes Brownson, gladly deferred to the judgment of the nation's ranking Catholic in the Dred Scott case.[68] From the abolitionist perspective, ultramontane nationalists and Southern nationalists formed a common enemy. Horace Greeley and Theodore Parker, among others, perceived the Catholic press and clergy as sturdy bolsters of the slaveholding power.[69]

The fateful election of 1860 made it clear that Catholic literati held an unsustainable commitment to both national unity and Southern sentiments. Brownson alone cast his lot with the winning candidate, earning the scorn of his peers and speeding his extradition into the broader ultramontane consensus. The rest of the U.S. Catholic press met Lincoln's victory with a mixture of shock, anger, and apprehension. Nichols envisioned "Goths and Vandals" descending upon Washington in his wake; for Corcoran, as for many other Charlestonians, the election amounted to an illegitimate *coup*.[70] The "Black Republican" from Illinois, backed by New England fanatics, now threatened the Catholic foundations of enduring nationhood in the United States no less than

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[67] *USCM*, October 29, 1853; *NYFJ*, May 3, 1857. Even within the Catholic press, there was some confusion over *Uncle Tom*'s status. The Pittsburgh *Catholic* openly questioned McMaster's assertion that Rome had officially censored the novel. (*PC*, June 6, 1857. This need not be taken as evidence of anti-slavery sentiment in Pittsburgh, however; the *Catholic* had lampooned *Uncle Tom* as a Protestant "Sunday School book" upon its publication—see *PC*, January 15, 1853).

Hubert Wolf clarifies the issue in a recent essay. Local censors in Bologna had denounced the Italian translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a heretical, pro-revolutionary novel—"typical Protestant poison." The Cardinal Prefect in Rome, however, refused to place it on the Index, having been persuaded by another consultant that the book's principle aim—to condemn America's "inhuman," race-based system of slavery—was in harmony with church doctrine. See Wolf, "Bücher vor dem Tribunal der Römischen Glaubenswächter. Vom 'Knigge' über 'Onkel Toms Hütte' zu Hitlers "Mein Kampf,'" in *Verbotene Bücher: Zur Geschichte des Index im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hubert Wolf (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008), 47–59.

[68] Brownson thought the Court had reached beyond its competence: "The doctrine that persons of the Negro race are not included in our political community, and cannot be citizens of the United States, we are not yet prepared to accept." He attacked Justice Taney's infidelity to Catholic morals as well as his faulty jurisprudence. "We regret that in giving the opinion of the Court the learned Judge did not recollect what he is taught be his religion, namely, the unity of the race, that all men by the natural law are equal, and that negroes are men…The opinion of the Court belongs to an epoch prior to the introduction of Christianity, and is more in accordance with the teaching of Aristotle than with that of the Gospel." *BQR* 2:2 (April, 1857), 275–76. For more on Brownson's reaction to the Dred Scott case, see Carey, *Orestes Brownson: American Religious Weathervane* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 266–267.

[69] Gjerde, 255. See Greeley's not-so "friendly letter" to John Hughes in the *New York Daily Tribune*, July 9, 1863, reprinted in Kenneth J. Zanca, ed., *American Catholics and Slavery: An Anthology of Primary Documents* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 81–82.

[70] Nichols, 320; *USCM*, November 10, 1860.

did Republican forces elsewhere in the Atlantic world. But could a sincere Catholic countenance the calls for secession that resounded through the Cotton States? In allying themselves with the architects of a slave-based social order—in aligning their own anti-Puritan narrative with the Southern variant—ultramontane nationalists had hitched their vision for the country to a political momentum now tending toward disunion. Despite their best intentions, the Catholic basis for national cohesion that they had long advocated now stoked, rather than dampened, the flames of sectional fissure.

"Those Two Obnoxious Words"
The Fragmentation of Ultramontane Nationalism

"The whole civilized world has been, and is in a state of revolution," James Keogh, editor of the Pittsburgh *Catholic*, declared in a Cincinnati lecture-hall in 1862. "Our own country has not escaped." Keogh went on to cast Southern Confederates as the revolutionaries in question, guilty of instigating a "causeless uprising."[71] Most of his audience no doubt concurred; the Queen City, despite its geographically ambivalent situation, was a Union stronghold, among Catholics no less than Protestants. But even those who harbored Southern sympathies could not have argued with Keogh's basic premise. The Atlantic world remained a state of political unrest. Across Europe and the Americas, the aborted revolts of 1848 erupted with renewed vigor in 1860. Garibaldi's successful uprising in Sicily spilled onto the Italian mainland, once again threatening the Pope's governance in the Papal States and even Rome itself. Louis Kossuth remained in exile, but Hungarian rebels continued to challenge the church-sanctioned authority of the Austrian crown. In Colombia, civil war broke out between liberal forces and the church-backed conservative coalition. Mexico's protracted crisis over the 1857 *Reforma* continued to simmer; after two years of fierce fighting, Benito Juárez's liberal government regained national power in 1861, but only

[71] James Keogh, "Catholic Principles of Civil Government: A Lecture" (Cincinnati: Catholic Telegraph, 1862), 1, 19.

temporarily. And in the United States, armies were gathering for what would prove to be the bloodiest of all conflicts over the meaning of American nationhood.

In the aftermath of Lincoln's election, Catholic editors across the U.S. agreed on at least one aspect of their country's political crisis: that it was a revolutionary moment, the domestic advent of Atlantic radicalism. Since 1848, when rebellions upended Europe and anticlerical violence marred the *yanqui* occupation of Mexico, Catholic intellectuals had pledged themselves to the international defense Christian civilization against all forms of liberal disorder. Various mutations of transatlantic lawlessness had encroached upon the United States in the intervening years—from Know-Nothingism to filibusterism to urban gangsterism—but none had yet threatened the nation's very existence. In the winter and spring of 1861, however, it became clear to U.S. ultramontanes that their greatest fears were realized: the revolution had arrived. "How forcibly we are reminded of French terrorism in 1793," Corcoran opined from blockaded Charleston; in Pittsburgh, Keogh wrote of a "lawless conspiracy" that had infected America with the spirit of Garibaldi.[72] South and North, Catholic clergy and commentators mourned the radical turn that life had taken since the November elections. But try as they might, they could not blame the present turmoil on Protestants or socialists or any other common foe. For the first time in this post-1848 world, which marked the Church's enemies with apocalyptic precision, U.S. ultramontanes simply could not agree on who the revolutionaries were, or where the danger to Christian civilization lay, or which side of the schism upheld the Catholic cause.

One camp readily condemned secession as the revolutionary threat facing the country. When Southern states began, one-by-one, to detach themselves from the Union—the Lower South, led by South Carolina, in the winter of 1861, and the Upper South, led by Virginia, later that spring—many Catholic voices decried the measure as an unconscionable act of rebellion. Not surprisingly, it was Brownson, Lincoln's lone ultramontane supporter, who took the most vehement stand against secession, calling for the federal government to use whatever force

[72] *PC*, June 1–8, 1861

necessary to "arrest the revolution…vindicate the insulted flag of the Union, and assert the majesty of law."[73] Keogh's rhetoric was more subdued but equally unequivocal. He expected that "the habitual respect for the legal action of constituted authorities, which religion has taught them," would prevent Pittsburgh Catholics from showing any hint of support for the South's "armed rebellion." As the crisis unfolded, Keogh proved the peskiest Unionist in the mainstream Catholic press (Brownson having already been marginalized, though hardly ignored, as a rogue blowhard). He continued to equate secessionists with Italy's anti-papal insurgents, chided Baltimore's Catholic establishment for its deference to Southern manners, and even began attacking slavery as the "corner stone" of the new confederacy.[74] Though careful to maintain a distance from abolitionism, Keogh insisted that Catholic conscience forbad seeing slavery as a social good, the notion clearly upheld by architects of Southern nationhood. By the fall of 1861, Brownson was calling attention to the Pittsburgh *Catholic* as the only major Catholic newspaper decidedly loyal to the U.S. government.[75]

Brownson exaggerated the extent of Catholic support for secession. Several other publicists denounced the revolutionary act in unambiguous terms; several prelates organized unprecedented demonstrations of loyalty to the government in response. In Buffalo, Bishop John Timon ceremoniously raised the U.S. flag above his residence and urged assembled onlookers to perform their patriotic duty, prosecuting "with vigor" whatever conflict proved necessary to restore the Union.[76] In Pittsburgh, flags were hoisted atop several parish churches, St. Michael's Seminary, the Passionist Monastery, and the mighty Cathedral, where Bishop Miguel Domenec reminded the gathered crowds of their allegiance to the U.S. government, particularly those who, like himself, had taken the oath of naturalized citizens.[77] Similar scenes unfolded in other cities, including New York, provoking chatter and controversy among Catholics heretofore

[73] *BQR* 2:2 (April, 1861), 266.
[74] *PC*, April 20, 1861; August 10, 1861; November 15, 1861; March 2, 1861.
[75] *BQR* 2:4 (October 1861), 522.
[76] Reprinted in *PC*, May 25, 1861.
[77] *PC*, April 27, 1861.

unaccustomed to seeing their churches adorned with national flags.[78] Immediately after the attack on Fort Sumter, the Catholic Institute of Cincinnati hosted a citywide meeting "to express sentiments of loyalty to the Union." The *Catholic Telegraph* supported this effort and published alongside its announcement an editorial paean to the Star-Spangled Banner. Even as his brother and fellow-convert William was assuming command as a general in the U.S. army, *Telegraph* editor Sylvester Rosecrans was doing his best to stoke the patriotism of Cincinnati Catholics. Though the *Telegraph* acknowledged the legitimacy of Southern grievances—just as it had admitted the justness of Mexican claims against the United States prior to the last war—it conceded no possibility of rallying to another standard. The Stars-and-Stripes represented, for Rosecrans, not only the triumphs of the battlefield but "the triumphs of religion" in a unified nation. "We know no other flag."[79]

Other Catholic sheets also sought the difficult balance of maintaining pro-Southern sentiments while opposing secession. The Boston *Pilot,* published in the hub of abolitionism, despised "fanatics" as much as any other paper but declared itself a "Union-loving and Union-sustaining journal." It called upon its Irish-born readers to remember their "solemn oath to be loyal to America," yet refrained from branding as traitors those naturalized Irish of the Southern states who supported secession of "absolute necessity."[80] A similar position prevailed in the dioceses of Philadelphia and New York. John Duffy, the grizzled editor of the Philadelphia *Herald and Visitor*, a veteran of Fort McHenry and the Barbary coast who supported states' rights and hated abolitionists, lent no sympathy to secessionists after Lincoln's election, branding them "revolutionists of the modern school." Though thought to be a pro-Southern agitator—so much so

[78] For instance, James Brooke of Sulphur Springs, Mississippi, wrote to James McMaster that he was "pained to see" the flag flying from Catholic Churches in New York. "I was in hopes that the old mother of Churches would never degrade herself by having flags hung on the cross of Christ…if the house of God is not complete without a flag, I think we are in a fair way to commence a new reformation." Mr. Brooke hardly seems to have been a fire-eater; unlike some Southerners, he elected not cancel his subscription to the *Freeman's Journal* after hostilities commenced. James R. Brooke to James McMaster, 6 June 1861, McMaster Papers I-1-m, UNDA.

[79] *CTA,* April 20, 1861.

[80] *Pilot,* April 27, 1861.

that a patriotic street gang deemed it necessary to coerce the hoisting of a U.S. flag above the *Herald* printing office—Duffy repudiated secession in biting terms, perceiving it "in Hungary, as in Italy, as in South Carolina" to be the work of "loquacious lawyers, mad theorists, needy adventurers, irresponsible journalists of the sensation school, and others of similar propensities."[81] Nonetheless, Bishop James Wood, newly appointed and a "peace man" above all else, feared that Duffy might fuel Southern resentments and relieved him of his editorial duties in October 1861.[82]

In New York, Archbishop Hughes had already removed his imprimatur from the *Freeman's Journal* in 1859 due to McMaster's Democratic partisanship. The new archdiocesan paper, John Mullally's *Metropolitan Record,* pledged political indifference. As it turned out, McMaster and Mullally followed much the same course in their commentary on the crisis, voicing strong opposition to secession and initial support for federal attempts to put down the Southern rebellion. When the war expanded in scope and purpose, however, enhancing executive powers and adopting emancipation as its aim, both editors became such antagonists of the Lincoln administration that they were at different points arrested for sedition, McMaster famously jailed without *habeas corpus* for six weeks and his paper suspended for eight months.[83] In light of such later episodes, the principled anti-secessionism of these editors is sometimes overlooked. "We go in for ten years' civil war, rather than admit the right of any state to secede from the Union," McMaster avowed on the eve of Lincoln's election. For nearly *one* year, he remained true to his word, promoting the Union as a "solemn marriage of the states" rather than a "free-love affair," casting Jeff Davis as a "petty military dictator," and tracing the deadly contagion of

[81] *Catholic Herald,* November 17, 1860. For more on Duffy's position, see George, "Philadelphia's *Catholic Herald*: The Civil War Years," 197–221.

[82] Wood had no personal regard for "miserable Puritan fanaticism," as he admitted in a letter to Bishop Patrick Lynch of Charleston, but he was clearly uncomfortable with the intensity of pro-Southern sentiment in Philadelphia. He wished for a restored Union or a peaceful separation, with a minimum of public agitation in either direction. James Wood to Patrick Lynch, 25 January 1861, CDCA 25Y3.

[83] See Joseph George, Jr., "'A Catholic Family Newspaper' Views the Lincoln Administration: John Mullaly's Copperhead Weekly," *Civil War History* 24:2 (June, 1978): 112 –132; Kenneth J. Zanca, "The Lion Who Did Not Roar…Yet: The Editorials of James A. McMaster—May 1860 to May 1861," *American Catholic Studies* 122:3 (Fall 2011): 1–29.

"South Caroliniaism" to that state's many Huguenot descendants, who had reverted to "French revolutionary models."[84] His opinions, though expressed more colorfully, were in accord with Mullally's and with the Archbishop's. Indeed, the ailing Hughes had agreed, at the request of his friend William Seward, to travel abroad in hopes of dissuading the French Emperor Louis Napoleon and Pope Pius IX from recognizing the Southern Confederacy. Though known to be anti-abolitionist, Hughes interpreted the sectional crisis as a clear-cut choice between fidelity and rebellion. "The North have not been required to do anything new, to take any oath, to support any new flag," he wrote in May, 1861. The Southern states had adopted the posture of revolutionaries, leaving any Catholic who supported them in a theologically "dangerous position."[85]

Hughes aimed this last admonition at Patrick Lynch, Bishop of Charleston, who was emerging as the Anglophone spokesman for Catholic secessionists (Napoleon Perché, editor of *La Propagateur Catholique*, vied for that title among those who could read French). To a large extent, Lynch's public voice was in fact the voice of James Corcoran, editor of the paper lately known as the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, whose political opinions the bishop at times found too ardent but never deemed fit for correction. Corcoran's insistence upon the fact of a new Southern nation fairly represented Lynch's own views. Despite pleas to reconsider, Lynch supported his editor's decision "to expunge those two obnoxious words"—*United States*—from the *Miscellany*'s masthead, along with the text of the First Amendment, which would eventually give way to the wording of a similar guarantee in the South Carolina state constitution [figure 4].[86]

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[84] *NYFJ*, November 3, 1860; November 17, 1860; December 29, 1860; January 5, 1861.

[85] "Letter of Archbishop John J. Hughes to a Southern Bishop on Catholics and the War, 1861," in Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 246.

[86] *USCM*, December 29, 1860. Corcoran was possibly provoked by a *Freeman's Journal* editorial in which McMaster had noted the jarring effect of finding secessionist polemics in a paper with "United States" in its very title (*NYFJ*, December 8, 1860). More likely, he took the official act of secession on December 20 as his cue to change the masthead. He regretted that an illness had prevented him from fashioning a brand-new heading, but expressed satisfaction that he had at least managed to knock off the "United States" in time for the December 29 press run.

John Murphy, Baltimore's prolific Catholic printer, mourned the change in a private letter to Lynch. "During the whole excitement, I can refer to no incident that had a more serious effect on me than

For Lynch, as for Corcoran, the separation was a *fait accompli*. To reflect his new geographic reality, he tore away the northern portion of a U.S. diocesan map from the 1845 *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac* [figure 5]. Fellow bishops from Richmond to Galveston now looked to him for leadership within what Mobile's John Quinlan provocatively called "the Southern hierarchy."[87] As the unofficial patriarch of Confederate Catholicism, Lynch considered numerous proposals in the months following secession: which loyal "Southron" cleric to recommend for the vacant see of Savannah, whether to start a new "national" Catholic review tailored to Southern tastes, whether to extend sacramental faculties to chaplains of the invading U.S. army.[88] This position of acknowledged leadership would later lead him on a covert diplomatic mission, an unsuccessful last-ditch effort to secure papal recognition for the Confederate States.[89] But already in the early months of 1861, ultramontane *southern* nationalists turned to Lynch as a vindicator of their conviction that, far from lawless rebels, the seceded states were actually the faithful remnant of a nation besieged by revolutionaries.

The burden of proof in this argument certainly seemed to weigh upon the secessionists: they had made the formal act of separation; they had fired—from within view of the *Miscellany* printing office—the first shots at Fort Sumter. But for Lynch, Corcoran, and their Southern associates, it seemed clear that the election of a "Black Republican" president amounted to a revolutionary *coup* that loyal Catholics were bound to resist. Was this not precisely the fate that the Catholic press had unanimously dreaded through a long decade of filibustering, nativist rioting, and abolitionist rallying? Was this newly formed Republican Party not a patently revolutionary faction, anchored in puritanical New England and supported by exiled German

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to see the U.S. left off the head of the Miscellany. This oppressed more to my mind than some of the lengthy articles and speeches read in the papers." John Murphy to Patrick Lynch, 9 March 1861, CDCA 26A5.

[87] John Quinlan to Patrick Lynch, 18 May 1861, CDCA 26D7.

[88] Ibid.; John McGill to Patrick Lynch, 25 April 1861, CDCA 26C3; John McGill to Patrick Lynch, 18 May 1861, CDCA 26D4.

[89] David C. R. Heisser and Stephen J. White, *Patrick N. Lynch, 1817–1882: Third Catholic Bishop of Charleston* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), 94–113.

"forty-eighters" in the Old Northwest? When Kansas began to bleed in 1856, McMaster had issued an ominous forecast:

> Does any plain, sober man of common sense doubt that this country has for a number of years been steadily tending towards revolution? Is it necessary to cite the evidence? Shall we mention the writings of Garrison and Gerrit Smith, the abolition journals, the rank sectionalism of the *Tribune* and the *Times*, the Uncle Tom of Mrs. Stowe, the philippics of Theodore Parker, the Creed of the Know-Nothings?[90]

In the minds of Catholic secessionists, McMaster's nightmare scenario was unfolding. The aftershocks of 1848 had at last reached North American shores, and there could be little doubt that the radicals now in power would, after subduing the South, apply the sort of anti-Catholic coercion that their Native American and Know-Nothing predecessors had imagined. Even a staunch Unionist like Keogh admitted that he was "strengthening the hands of a fanatical party, which in the past sought to proscribe us" and would likely do so with renewed force once the sectional conflict had passed.[91] His colleagues to the South took this threat as a warrant for resisting radical, anticlerical politics, just as Catholic states were already doing throughout the Atlantic world. From their perspective, Northern Republicans were the true Garibaldians in this American theater of the *Risorgimento*.[92]

Some Catholic secessionists set out to justify their opinion on constitutional grounds: in New Orleans, Perché's interpretation of the federal compact rendered secession "not merely a right but a duty," while at Georgetown, a sophomore named John Dooley, soon to serve as a

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[90] *NYFJ*, June 7, 1856.

[91] *PC*, August 17, 1861.

[92] Catholic secessionists were vindicated in this assertion when the Lincoln administration reportedly offered command of a U.S. army to Garibaldi, a story that caused the Pittsburgh *Catholic* a great deal of embarrassment. A transatlantic soldier of fortune, Garibaldi had already led one successful army of American republicans in Uruguay's *Guerra Grande*—see James E. Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World: Creating Modernity, Nation, and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 24–28. He considered accepting Lincoln's offer but only on the condition that the war be fought for the abolition of slavery, a step that the administration was at this point unprepared to take. See Howard R. Marraro, "Lincoln's Offer of a Command to Garibaldi: Further Light on a Disputed Point of History," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 36:3 (September, 1943): 237–270.

Confederate officer, laid out the legal basis for the separation in his class notebooks.[93] But the Confederacy's most prominent Catholic apologists made their case primarily by underscoring the revolutionary aims of the opposition. On January 4, 1861, Augustin Verot preached a sermon on "Slavery and Abolitionism" in St. Augustine that would soon win renown as a Southern manifesto. Printed as a "Tract for the Times" in Baltimore and smuggled south under the nose of the pacific Archbishop Kenrick—who wished no extra tinder added to the Monument City's incendiary atmosphere—the sermon came into Charleston through the hands of James Henley Thornwell, Bishop Lynch's friend and the South's leading Protestant apologist, and from there gained a wide readership.[94]

It is worth remembering that Verot's sermon was at least as much an admonition as a vindication for slaveholders. He reproached those who clamored to reopen the slave-trade, or refused free blacks the rights of citizens, or denied slaves the opportunity to marry and maintain a stable family. Part of Verot's intention was to "acknowledge and confess" the South's failings and to promote a humane "servile code" for the newly forming Confederacy. But another of the tract's ambitions was to provide religious justification for Southern political independence, and this the bishop did by tracing "the nefarious machinations" of a radical party bent on destroying both the Catholic Church and the United States. Verot perceived an unbroken continuum between the burning of the Charlestown Convent in 1832, the Philadelphia riots of 1844, the "cruelty and barbarity" of Know-Nothing activism in the mid-1850s, and the triumphant abolitionism of Lincoln's Republicans, "that same party, which, baffled in its attempts against the Catholic Church…has now turned its weapons against the South." This "conspiracy against justice and

[93] *Le Propagateur Catholique,* December 8, 1860; "A Few Words upon the Right of a State to Withdraw from the United States," in Robert Emmett Curran, ed., *John Dooley's Civil War: An Irish American's Journey in the First Virginia Infantry Regiment* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 4–8.

[94] Augustin Verot to Patrick Lynch, 7 May 1861, CDCA 26D1.

truth," led by "fanatical preachers," posed a threat to social order and religious liberty that could no longer be endured.[95]

Three years later, in an attempt to win Roman sympathies for the Southern cause, Martin Spalding, now Bishop of Louisville, published a "Dissertation on the American Civil War" to the Jesuit periodical *La Civilta Cattolica*. He too presented abolitionism and anti-Catholicism as inseparable aims of the "program of modern progress" pursued by "blind fanatics" in the North. Having been among the principal fashioners of a distinctly Catholic account of American origins and institutions, Spalding now regionalized this narrative and set it at odds with the New England mythology in an antagonism of quasi-eschatological intensity. "The chiefs of the movement of the North *hate* the Catholic religion with an almost satanic hate," Spalding reported— their intention was almost certainly to attack the church once they finished subduing the South.

Still fond of comparative colonialism, Spalding also brought up the English proclivity to annihilate "inferior" races rather than dwell among them, as had America's Spanish settlers. This hypothesis too he had regionalized by 1864, integrating it into vague notions of a separate Southern race, more Latin than Saxon and thus better equipped to live among people of color. Spalding feared that the Northern descendants of "the proud Protestant English race" would "exterminate the poor Negroes" after abolishing slavery, just as they had exterminated the Indians. The conflation of a beleaguered Southern identity with a beleaguered Catholic identity— toward which U.S. ultramontanes at all latitudes had been tending in the antebellum decades— reached its fullest expression in Spalding's wartime treatise.[96]

Bishop Lynch also stated his case to European audiences in 1864, disseminating an anonymous essay on Confederate slavery in advance his blockade-running diplomatic mission. That he felt it necessary to prepare such a lengthy apology indicates his awareness of the

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[95] Verot, *A Tract for the Times: Slavery and Abolitionism, being the substance of a sermon, preached in the church of St. Augustine, Florida, on the 4th day of January, 1861, day of public humiliation, fasting and prayer* (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1861).

[96] David Spalding, "Martin John Spalding's 'Dissertation on the American Civil War,'" *Catholic Historical Review* 52:1 (April, 1966): 66–95.

unfavorable disposition toward the peculiar institution among his continental colleagues. He thus appealed to their shared ultramontane concern for social order. Lynch conceded that slavery was an unfortunate inheritance from Protestant England—like Spalding, he gave the Spanish an alibi from its introduction to the future United States—but considered it the most effective and charitable means of maintaining order among a semi-civilized labor force. By enforcing an abolitionist agenda, the U.S. government was inciting nothing less than a massive servile insurrection. An inherent "Antagonism of Races"—which Lynch, like Spalding, thought especially "fierce and inexorable" among the Anglo-Saxon population of the United States—meant that emancipation could only lead to a race war "of cruelty, of rapine, murder, tortures and countless horrors." Where freed slaves gained superior force, "the atrocities of San Domingo would be re-enacted," and where whites triumphed, vengeance would be exacted "until the negroes approached extinction."[97]

Lynch's fears that the horrors of Saint-Domingue (Haiti) would recur on Southern soil were shared not only by Verot and Spalding but by ultramontanes throughout the sundered United States. Such visions contributed to the anti-Lincoln invective of McMaster, Mullally and other Catholic "Copperheads" in the North. It caused misgivings even among Unionists like Brownson and Keogh, who prayed for no "barbarities perpetuated by the semi-savages" at the South's expense.[98] One can hardly exaggerate how tenaciously the specter of the Haitian revolution haunted the minds of white Americans in the nineteenth century.[99] It haunted white Catholics to an exceptional degree, for exiled Saint-Dominguans filled the pews of their churches in seaboard cities and were especially prominent in the early Catholic communities of New Orleans,

[97] David C.R. Heisser, ed., "A Few Words on the Domestic Slavery in the Confederate States of America by Bishop Patrick N. Lynch," 2 parts, *Avery Review* 2:1–3:1 (Spring, 1999–Spring 2000): 64 – 103; 93 –123.

[98] *PC*, December 21, 1861.

[99] Haiti inspired black Americans just as insistently. For more on its effect on U.S. imaginations, see Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 8–10, 302–306; Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

Charleston, and Savannah. Having from a young age heard firsthand accounts of large-scale slave uprisings instilled literal nightmares in Lynch that Lincoln had recently reawakened.[100] He and his fellow Catholic secessionists feared that Republicans planned to reenact on North American soil the terrors not only of the French Revolution but of its Caribbean cognate.

European ultramontanes found such arguments compelling but not ultimately convincing. Pope Pius IX, whose distaste for "progress, liberalism, and modern civilization" would by the end of 1864 become notorious, could not approve of Republican politics but neither did he acknowledge the Confederate States. For *Pio Nono* and his supporters, all angles of the American conflict served merely to demonstrate the inherent instability of popular government, and the insufficiency of Protestant theology as a basis for social cohesion. Ultramontane commentators in Bavaria and Rome believed the North was largely to blame and echoed Catholic secessionists on many points; even so, they distanced themselves from any positive valuation of slavery, condemned Anglo-America's uniquely severe racial code, and subordinated sectional vindication to a larger lesson on the perils of materialism and individualism.[101] Southern sympathies ran deepest in Ireland, where "Union" was an anathematized utterance in many circles and Catholics had long been struggling to secede, in their own way, from the United Kingdom. According to Father John Bannon, the Missouri chaplain sent to Dublin as a Confederate envoy, Archbishop Paul Cullen had declared his support for the Southern cause, as had many other clergymen.[102] Though unwilling to extend formal support, European clerics took seriously the anti-revolutionary rhetoric of Catholic Confederates.

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[100] "Letter of Bishop Patrick Lynch of Charleston, SC to Archbishop Hughes in Reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation, 1862," in Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 248–9. See also "Letter of Rev. Etienne Rousselon to Bishop Odin on the Emancipation Proclamation, New Orleans, 1862," in Zanca, 188. Rousselon, the French-born vicar-general of New Orleans, saw a "signal for cataclysm" in the Emancipation Proclamation. "A new Santo Domingo is expected," he fretted to his Archbishop. "Already, there are signs."

[101] See Noll's summary of the arguments presented in *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* and *La Civilta Cattolica* in *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, 138–155.

[102] Joseph M. Hernon, Jr., *Celts, Catholics, and Copperheads: Ireland Views the American Civil War* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1968), 105–6. For more on Bannon, who preceded Lynch in presenting the Confederate case to the Pope, see Phillip Thomas Tucker, *The Confederacy's Fighting Chaplain: John B. Bannon* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992).

In the end, the crisis over secession would create a rift not only in the national allegiances but in the national imaginations of ultramontane visionaries throughout the formerly united states. Over the next four years, as Catholics mustered to rival armies and fought under separate flags at the pious promptings of chaplains loyal to different constitutions, an acute dissonance developed within their once shared visions for a Catholic America. In the summer of 1863, the *Catholic Telegraph* announced its support of abolition and fully endorsed the government's evolving wartime objectives. "If the question of American slavery was to be submitted tomorrow to a general council of the Church, the institution would perish," Rosecrans wrote in overdue deference to the worldwide *sensus fidelium*. "The voices in its favor would be as few and small as those which hesitated…when the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was discussed."[103] There would be no turning back. Led by Archbishop Purcell—and by the still vexing but vindicated Brownson, who awaited them several steps ahead—Northern ultramontanes began to abandon the Southern accent that had so long shaped their rhetoric, refashioning the church's future to befit an industrialized nation of free white laborers. Secessionists were not only political traitors but obstacles to the "prosperity and elevation of the white laborer" and the long-term interests of the church.

In the South, meanwhile, the arrival of U.S. troops only deepened suspicions that that a revolutionary program of abolition and anticlerical violence was underway. As it had in Mexico, Yankee occupation led to the occasional looting and destruction of Catholic Churches, incidents that loomed large in the minds of Southern ultramontanes.[104] One correspondent even suggested that Archbishop Purcell was, through his close friendship with General Rosecrans, supervising the desecration of sacred furnishings in Chattanooga. Rumor had it that a confiscated parish in

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[103] *CTA*, August 26, 1863. *Telegraph* editors elsewhere described this turning-point not as a pragmatic decision, but as a true spiritual anagnorisis: "There are moments in life when, as if by a special Providence, the mind is taken by storm, and the prejudices and antipathies of years are swept away before the power and majesty of Truth…Such has slavery been for us." *CTA*, July 15, 1863.

[104] See, for example, the account of army activities in St. Augustine and Jacksonville, which hardened Bishop Verot's anti-unionist sentiments. Gannon, *Rebel Bishop*, 66–73.

Jackson, Mississippi would be repurposed as "a Methodist meeting house or a school for freed negroes."[105] And in occupied New Orleans, the unflagging Father Mullon, who had once stirred controversy by reportedly preaching against the invasion of Mexico, now turned on the uniformed *yanquis* who had invaded his own pews, using Sunday prayers as an occasion to invoke God's wrath upon "abolitionists, puritans, fanatics, Mayflower shippers" and the like.[106] The onset of total war strengthened the Catholic secessionist conviction that their church could only endure in spite of, rather than in cooperation with, the revolutionary ambitions of the U.S. government.

Bold as they may have been in their printed exchanges, ultramontane correspondents privately mourned the unity, vitality, and shared ambition that had marked their agenda over the previous two decades. Years of expansion and progress—at both the national and the ecclesial levels—had culminated in bickering, division, and a loss of coherent identity. The Catholic Church was not triumphing over American discord, as so many had hoped, but rather regressing in the face of it. Upon receiving news of secession at the North American College in Rome, John McCloskey, soon to be Cardinal-Archbishop of New York, regretted that the church in the United States would be "thrown back where she was years ago."[107] Despite his deep Southern loyalties, Texas missioner August Gaudet could not help but wonder whether the whole ordeal was "a hidden trap tendered to the Catholics of the United States by the enemy of everything good."[108] In the lull between secessionist speeches and unionist cannon fire, ultramontane nationalists had occasion to take stock of their failures. The curative sense of catholicity with which they had hoped to imbue the nation had never been less manifest.

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[105] E.B. Boutwell to James McMaster, 22 February 1864, McMaster Papers I-1-m, UNDA.

[106] Anonymous to James McMaster, 21 January 1863, McMaster Papers, I-1-m, UNDA.

[107] John McCloskey to John Baptist Purcell, 15 January 1861, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Collection II-5-a,UNDA.

[108] Augustine Gaudet to John Mary Odin, 26 June 1861, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection VI-2-d, UNDA.

As late as January 5, 1861, shortly after the secession of South Carolina, James McMaster maintained his conviction that "the *United States*"—that political communion in which James Corcoran and many other ultramontanes no longer believed—"have a destiny, and that destiny is yet to be wrought out." As late as May 4, 1861, following the bombardment of Fort Sumter, he held out hope that the keys to that destiny, "Catholic sentiment and Catholic principle," might "soar away above the contemptible passions and prejudices that dominate the hour." If Catholics did not respond faithfully, however, he warned that the nation would "become *Mexicanized*" and give way to the civil and religious proscriptions that, in his eyes, had accompanied the recent rise of the liberal Juarez government.[109]

McMaster was not the only commentator to express concern that the U.S. had gone the way of discordant countries to the South. The *Telegraph* warned against attempts "to '*Mexicanise*' this Republic" by dissolving it into warring factions.[110] Verot contended that northern radicals were replicating in the United States "the disturbances and agitations of the Governments of Spanish origin."[111] Others took the association in a more constructive direction. Though he finally decided against it, Perché pondered the merits of annexing the Southern states to Mexico.[112] One of McMaster's correspondents hoped that France, rumored to be plotting an intervention in Mexico's civil war, might also "Latinize the Southern Confederacy," thereby forming a Gulf Coast bloc of Catholic states powerful enough to resist the aggressive Puritans to the North.[113]

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[109] *NYFJ*, January 5, May 14, 1861. Italics original.

[110] *CTA*, March 9, 1861. Italics original. Juarez had triumphed, *Telegraph* editors asserted, with the aid of a Buchanan administration that was beholden to proslavery filibustering organizations like the Knights of the Golden Circle, whose pledge to confiscate Mexican Church property aligned neatly with liberal priorities. *CTA*, February 26, 1862.

[111] Verot, *A Tract for the Times*, 9. In a polemical twist, Verot argued that the failings of South American republics had nothing to do with religion, as the "invidious comparison" often suggested, but that the similar downfall of the U.S. *was* brought on by the religious bigotry of liberal northern preachers.

[112] *Le Propagateur Catholique*, March 30, 1861.

[113] This particular schemer was a Protestant, but one who hated Puritanism and believed the present conflict to be "nothing but a Puritan war." Anonymous to James McMaster, [1862?], McMaster Papers 1-2-e, UNDA.

Ultramontane wordsmiths did not draw these connections flippantly. They kept themselves well informed of Juarez's falling and rising fortunes and the progress of the War of the Reform in Mexico. Updates from that civil war, in its later stages, often appeared on the same pages as their opinions on the United States' internecine strife; and however they interpreted the revolutionary threat to their own country, they viewed Mexico's ordeal as a closely related episode in the transatlantic struggle against anticlerical chaos. Faced with the contingency and fragility of their own young American republic, they viewed the fate of Spanish America not simply as a point of apologetic debate but as potential reflection of their immediate reality. In the spring of 1848, the bustling commerce and newly constructed churches along U.S. railways had supplied them with a vision for what the ceded territories of Mexico might one day become. In the spring of 1861, the battle-scarred hills and clerical protests of the Mexican interior provided them with a vision of what the southern United States might soon look like.

Such visions were shaped not simply by telegraph dispatches but by personal encounters. Clerical refugees, whether fleeing pockets of guerrilla violence or preferring exile to the demands of a liberal government, poured into the tenuously united States in early 1861. Father Gaudet housed the Bishop of Monterrey just across the Texas border in Brownsville. The Archbishop of México and his entourage resided for some time in New Orleans, attracting reverence as "confessors of the faith." On the eve of Fort Sumter, Spalding entertained the Bishops of Guadalajara and San Luis Potosí in Louisville; a month later he took in the Bishop of Linares along with three of his priests. In a letter full of fret over Kentucky's strained neutrality, he related a poignant scene: his most recent contingent of Mexican guests spending the night on a ferry dock upon their arrival, due to miscommunication with an omnibus driver. One cannot but wonder whether Spalding saw in them an image of himself, a churchman stranded on the Ohio River without a proper country, despite his best efforts and highest hopes.[114]

[114] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, 18 May 1861, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Collection II-5-a, UNDA.

Chapter Six

LA UNIDAD CATÓLICA

In Mexico, with a white population nominally Catholic, arbitrary power, amalgamating spiritual with temporal functions, has brought religion to decay and made political life impossible.

—New York *Freeman's Journal*, March 6, 1858

Nueva Orleans was, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the *norteamericano* city Mexicans knew best, their initial point of encounter with that northeasterly land so proximate yet so remote, at once admirable and repulsive. Nearly all Mexican diplomats, businessmen, and travelers with literary ambitions passed through the Crescent City on their way into the U.S. interior, often commenting on its odd mixture of Latin and Yankee sensibilities.[1] The *Vieux Carre* occasionally played host to Mexican governments-in-exile, welcoming banished statesmen and clergy, activists and journalists until a more favorable political climate took hold back home. At the same time, it served as a staging ground for U.S. soldiers and speculators, missionaries and memoirists bound for Mexico or points farther south. The Gulf route between New Orleans and Veracruz, always churning with steamer traffic, was never busier than in the spring of 1848, when *yanqui* troops were making their way home from the conquest, uprooted Mexicans following in their wake, and diplomats, reporters, and entrepreneurs from the warring republics crossing the waters on urgent business. Among the many travelers stopping over in New Orleans on their way into Mexico that spring was one Tomás Valero, whom Bishop Antoine Blanc received on the recommendation of Miguel Domenec, the Catalonian seminary rector in Philadelphia. Valero

[1] See, for example, Luis de la Rosa, *Impresiones de un viaje de México a Washington en octubre y noviembre de 1848* (New York: W.G. Stewart, 1849), 40–41; Lorenzo de Zavala, *Journey to the United States of North America*, trans. Wallace Woolsey (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2005), 16 –24; Justo Sierra O'Reilly, *Impresiones de un viaje a los Estados Unidos de América y al Canada* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2012), 80–83.

was, Domenec vouched, "a Spanish gentleman of great respectability" whose object in New Orleans was "to procure a printing press, and some French books on controversy, having the intention to start in Mexico a Catholic newspaper to defend the tenets of our holy religion."[2]

A few months later, a periodical called *La Voz de la religión* began circulating in Mexico City. For readers who had visited New Orleans, this new weekly might have looked familiar. The format and typesetting bore a striking resemblance to prior issues of *Le Propagateur Catholique*; a nearly identical emblem of a bucolic cross and Decalogue graced the masthead of both magazines [figure 6]. Though it is unclear exactly what role, if any, Tomás Valero played in the founding of *La Voz*, it is not unreasonable to suppose that his mission to New Orleans had been a success.[3] The newest ultramontane journal in Mexico's Federal District had likely come to light with the aid of ideas and printing plates borrowed from one of the most successful Catholic papers in the United States. Within a year, *La Voz* had won the hard-earned praise of James McMaster, who commended it in the *Freeman's Journal* as a paper "eminently imbued with Catholic sentiments," a bulwark against "the shock of the new order of ideas" that was threatening Christian civilization in Mexico no less than in New York and the rest of the Atlantic world.[4]

To the extent that it serves as a link between public voices of clerical conservatism in neighboring American republics, *La Voz de la religión* demonstrates that, despite the recent hostilities between their respective nations, ultramontane intellectuals in Mexico and the United States regarded themselves as allies in a larger struggle against a common foe. The expanding Catholic presses of both countries revealed a shared set of interests at midcentury, from the

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[2] Miguel Domenec to Antoine Blanc, 27 February 1848, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection V-5-i, UNDA.

[3] Valero's identity is a mystery; he was possibly a cleric from Zaragoza who had been exiled earlier in the decade due to disputes with civil authorities. Castro, et al. do not mention him among the editors of *La Voz*, a group that included Francisco Pomar, Tomás Gardida, and the renowned Spanish *letrado* Anselmo de la Portilla. Still, circumstantial evidence suggests that Valero, fresh from New Orleans, played some role in setting up the *Voz de la Religion* printing office at no. 13 San José el Real. See Miguel Ángel Castro, et al., eds., *Publicaciones Periódicas Mexicanas del Siglo XIX: 1822–1855* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2000), 461–463.

[4] *NYFJ*, March 3, 1849.

alarming progress of the European revolutions to the encouraging prospects of high-church Anglicans returning *en mass* to Rome, to the exciting labors of missionaries in the Pacific islands. North and south of the Rio Grande—that national demarcation newly discerned by force of arms—ultramontane publicists positioned themselves as chroniclers of the global Catholic revival. More urgently, they crafted for their respective peoples a distinct vision of Catholic nationhood in a climate of intense political self-scrutiny. To an even greater degree than in the United States, Catholic spokesmen in postwar Mexico staked themselves to the center of a violent controversy over national identity. The "Invasion of '47" had set both republics down the path to bloody civil war, a process that ultramontane nationalists on both sides sought to stem through appeals to *catholic* unity but ultimately exacerbated by aligning the church with a fractious, coercive, and unsustainable mode of imagining the social order.

Ultramontane Publishing in Mexico at Midcentury

The ultramontane press arrived in Mexico around the same time as U.S. troops and began to flourish once their destructive work was done. Religious themes, spiritual poems, and ecclesiastical news had long been fixtures in Mexican papers, but only in the second half of the 1840s did periodicals appear that made their sole concern "the defense of the Catholic religion" and bore the triumphal, antagonistic tenor of the transatlantic revival.[5]

Several factors contributed to the emergence of the Mexican religious press at this particular moment. The ultramontane mentality was just now acquiring a recognizable and, thanks to new communication technologies, easily exportable shape, allowing Europe's controversial literature and devotional trends a new accessibility to American readers. The Mexican press, like its U.S. counterpart, was experiencing a general boom, with newspapers proliferating and catering to a variety of political and cultural interests. Although literacy rates in Mexico remained low—perhaps less than five percent—those who could read did so

[5] Such was the announced intention of *El Católico* in its premier issue, August 30, 1845.

voraciously.[6] Reading also retained a social, performative function well into the nineteenth century; in pulquerias and church porticos, people gathered to hear the latest news or novels or religious pamphlets, extending the audience of printed material far beyond the formally educated.[7] The final elements necessary for a vibrant ultramontane press were a steady supply of literature and a skilled, enterprising printer. Several concentrations of pro-clerical eloquence—Morelia seminarians under Clemente Munguía's tutelage, for example, and the circle associated with José Maria Andrade's *librería* in the Portal de Agustinos, off Mexico City's central plaza—were prepared to supply the former.[8] The latter arrived in the person of Rafael de Rafael y Vila, the typographical genius and transnational provocateur who catalyzed a new generation of Catholic apologetics in Mexico.

Rafael de Rafael had come to Mexico City from Barcelona by way of New York, where he had the learned the printer's trade and helped to produce a newspaper for Cuban and Spanish immigrants called *El Eco de ambos mundos*. In 1843, he left a comfortable life in Manhattan at the invitation of Ignacio Cumplido, one of Mexico's most influential journalists and editor of the liberal organ *El Siglo diez y nueve*. Though his exact motives are a matter of speculation, Rafael's decision to forsake the United States for Mexico might have been a form of personal protest against expansionist politics.[9] After two years of typesetting and engraving for Cumplido, Rafael acquired his own press and went into business at no. 13 Calle de Cadena [figure 7]. Funded in part by a lucrative contract to print lottery tickets on the side, this new publishing house quickly became the central communications office not only for the Federal District's ultramontanes but

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[6] Costeloe, *The Central Republic in Mexico, 1835-1846:* Hombres de Bien *in the Age of Santa Anna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 12. Lilia Guiot de la Garza estimates the literacy rate in Mexico City to have been ten percent at midcentury—see Guiot de la Garza, "Las Librerías de la Ciudad de México," in *Tipos y Caracteres: La Prensa Mexicana, 1822–1855*, ed. Miguel Ángel Castro (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2001), 35–48, here 46.

[7] Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World*, 13–14.

[8] See Guiot de la Garza, 44.

[9] So speculates Javier Rodríguez Piña, drawing on the work of Montserrat Galí. See Piña, "El Proyecto de Rafael de Rafael en México, 1843–1855," in *Españoles en el periodismo mexicano, siglos XIX y XX*, ed. Pablo Mora and Ángel Miquel (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2008), 21–40, here 26.

also for conservatives in general. Here Rafael began printing, along with his weekly religious journals, the daily newspaper *El Universal*, which under the inspiration of Lucas Alamán would quickly become the leading voice of the Conservative Party (and the principal antagonist of Rafael's old mentor Cumplido). *El Universal*'s caustic criticism of the liberal president Mariano Arista forced Rafael into exile in 1851.

When Santa Ana regained power in 1853—this time as a champion of conservatism—Rafael returned to favor as the printer of a loyally *santanista* sheet. He accepted a diplomatic post to the United States and played a key role in negotiating the Sale of Mesilla, known north of the border as the Gadsden Purchase. When the reforming government of Comonfort and Juarez begin its ascent to power in 1855, Rafael fled to Havana, where he eventually took charge of *La Voz de Cuba*, the daily paper of the pro-Spanish *integrista* party and a leading voice of opposition to Cuban independence.[10] Before leaving Mexico, he sold 13 Calle Cadena to Andrade and his trusted associate Felipe Escalante, who would use it to publish *La Cruz*, a three-year run of pro-clerical periodicals that made the most impressive case extant against the reform laws. Many of Rafael's typesetting devices and engravings—admired by contemporaries and future art historians alike for their extraordinary quality—found their way into *La Cruz*'s widely circulated pages.[11] Even from afar, Rafael's skill and ingenuity continued to drive the engines of ultramontane opinion.

Although other printers introduced successful Catholic periodicals to the capital city—most notably *La Voz de la religion*—Rafael's succession of handsomely arranged weeklies bore the standard for ultramontane thought. The first was *El Católico*, a "religious, scientific, Christian-political, and literary periodical" that appeared in August 1845. Its issues regularly

[10] For more on Rafael's life and political intrigues during Santa Anna's final presidency, see Piña, 21–40; for glimpses of his later career in Cuba, see Inés Roldán de Montaud, *La Restauración en Cuba: El fracaso de un proceso reformista* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2000), 150–52, 237–254.

[11] For a recent appreciation of Rafael's talents as an engraver, see Ma. Esther Pérez Salas C., "Rafael de Rafael como ilustrador," in *Españoles en el periodismo mexicano, siglos XIX y XX*, 41–56.

featured dogmatic expositions, essays concerning Christianity's influence on society, sermons, biographies of illustrious Catholics such as Chateaubriand and O'Connell, book reviews, devotional poems, and an assortment of church-related news clippings, both local and global. Soon afterward, Rafael began supplementing *El Católico* with a midweek periodical called *El Ilustrador católico mexicano*, which focused more narrowly on theological controversies and Catholic apologetics. The former journal appeared each Saturday and the latter each Wednesday until the spring of 1847, when U.S. occupation and political turmoil in the capital rendered the project unfeasible. Rafael cranked up his presses again a year later, debuting *El Observador católico* with hopes of consolidating Catholic sentiment in the war's aftermath. Though it too contained poems, reviews, and news items, *El Observador* functioned largely as an extended editorial essay on postwar political debates. It was succeeded, once these controversies had subsided in 1851, by *El Espectador de México*, a somewhat more domestic magazine that gave expanded attention to the place of poetry, literature, and fine arts in the ultramontane mind.

The wordsmiths who edited and contributed to these periodicals were among Mexico's foremost *letrados*—those "lettered" elites who viewed themselves as the nation's custodians of law and curators of "civilized" discourse.[12] Like their counterparts in the United States, they took their cues from across the Atlantic, aspiring to both the eloquence and the polemical effectiveness of intellectuals such as Jaime Balmes and journalists such as Louis Veuillot. Their ranks included clerics—Basilio Arriaga, for instance, the sometime Jesuit superior who edited *El Observador católico*—but consisted primarily of laymen. Some of them were members of the *Academia de San Juan Letrán*, a circle of writers preoccupied with the formation of a national literature. It was within this predominantly liberal workshop that the poets Manuel Carpio and José Joaquín Pesado first bonded over their reverence for the church and love of scripture—a shared interest that led them at one point to construct an elaborate papier-maché model of Jerusalem for the

[12] See Ángel Rama, *The Lettered City*, ed. and trans. John Charles Chasteen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

public's edification in Pesado's parlor.[13] Their partnership, along with the acquaintance of José María Roa Bárcena and the young Clemente Munguía, who had joined the *Academia* prior to his ordination, proved invaluable to the cause of ultramontane eloquence. For these pious associates of the *Academia*, who formed the core of Andrade's literary salon in the Portal de Agustinos, questions of national identity loomed large; they were well equipped to help craft the ultramontane response to the postwar crisis of faith and nationhood.

Rafael's cadre of Catholic apologists in the Federal District by no means spoke for all Mexicans who took the clerical side in postwar politics. Conservatives in the provinces had their own reasons for defending the rights of the church, which often had more to do with local customs than with transatlantic battle-lines. And although it stood at the center of Mexico's literary and political life, the Federal District held only a tenuous ability to direct the nation's course, as conservatives, liberals, and monarchists alike would discover in the coming years. (With fewer than 200,000 inhabitants at midcentury—roughly the same size as Baltimore, less than half as large as New York—Mexico City was a sizeable metropolis but hardly the urban colossus it would later become.)[14] Still, the strong ultramontane voice resonating from the capital city served as a rallying point for other Mexican conservatives—whose concerns, when projected at a national scale, largely overlapped with the clerical interest—and for Catholic partisans across the Atlantic world, who, applying a version of the "domino theory," saw Mexican resistance to liberal reforms as key to the church's fate throughout Spanish America.

The Crisis of 1848

By the time U.S. troops evacuated the capital in 1848, the central drama in Mexican politics had shifted decisively away from constitutional disputes between centralists and federalists—which

[13] David Allen Gilbert, "'Long Live the True Religion!': Contesting the Meaning of Catholicism in the Mexican Reforma (1855–1860)," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Iowa, 2003), 85–88.

[14] See Guiot de la Garza, 35, who cites Mexico City's population as 170,000. She draws this estimate from the 1833 edition of the *Calendario de Galván*.

had in large measure defined the first quarter-century of independence—and toward a more intense ideological divide between conservatives and liberals. Partisans on both sides of this rift built their agenda upon the sobering facts of the nation's recent failure. The outnumbered northern invaders had not merely secured title to half of Mexico's landmass. They had starved and shelled its principal port beyond recognition, submitted its cities to martial law, and paraded foreign colors through its capital; they had stabled horses in churches, evicted nuns from cloisters, stolen and desecrated sacred furniture; they had inflated prices, severed trade networks, and left thousands of families homeless. Most disturbingly, they had exposed the inability of a squabbling government, a lopsided economy, and a sometimes uninterested *pueblo* to mount an effective response to such affronts. The *yanquís* had come with Bancroft in their knapsacks, fancying themselves successors of Cortes; they left behind them a populace humbled by the aptness of the analogy. The aging statesman Carlos María Bustamante entitled his memoirs of the war *El Nuevo Bernal Díaz del Castillo*, in allusion to the chronicler of the Spanish conquest.[15] This "new" conquest had been a trauma so sudden and acute that some wondered whether it was proper to speak any longer of a Mexican nation. Those who retained faith in this matter, whether liberal or conservative, found it imperative to reconstruct the foundations of the nation's identity with a renewed vigor.[16]

While responses to the Crisis of 1848 were by no means binary—the pragmatics of national survival prevented an impermeable separation between parties, neither of which monopolized the ambition to "modernize" the country[17]—Mexican elites generally fell into two

[15] Brading, *The Origins of Mexican Nationalism*, 86. The comparisons proved irresistible, on both sides of the conflict. In his *Recuerdos de la Invasión Norteamericana*, Roa Bárcena reflected on the likeness between Genera Winfield Scott and Cortés in their respective advances from Veracruz into the Valley of Mexico. The ambition of the U.S. Army seemed to be "to repeat here the works of the Spanish conquest." Roa Bárcena, *Recuerdos de la Invasión Norteamericana (1846–1848)* (Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1986), 279. Franchot, 39, gives evidence that Scott, inspired by Prescott's bestseller, deliberately sought to emulate the Spanish conquistador.

[16] One group of *letrados* in the spring of 1848 went so far as to say, "There is not now that which one calls national spirit, because the nation does not exist." Quoted in Sanders, 62.

[17] As Erika Pani observes, "Despues de 1848, la consolidación del Estado nacional se volvió cuestion de vida o muerte para los hombres públicos mexicanos," a question that, in the shared urgency of

camps. Some interpreted the recent calamity as a mandate for a stronger liberal state, while others read it as a verdict against democratic experimentation and in favor of a return to more aristocratic, perhaps even monarchical, arrangements. Opposition to the push for a sovereign liberal state arose from various camps: army officers reluctant to surrender military privileges, "provincial conservatives" concerned with retaining their corporate lands and ancient customs, and ultramontane advocates of ecclesiastical autonomy, among others.[18] The church's cause bled easily into other modes of anti-liberal argumentation. Though not all conservatives were ultramontane, or even especially devout, the several strands of the nascent Conservative Party rallied behind the church because it offered the most deeply rooted and compelling alternative to a liberal vision for Mexico. During the decade of debate between the Invasion of '47 and the Reform of 1857, the question of the Church's role in national life became the key to all others, from immigration policy to land ownership. In general terms, Mexico's shapers of public opinion portrayed the church either as Mexico's most obstinate hindrance to economic progress and efficient government, or as its strongest remaining preserve of national unity and purpose.[19]

It was thus a propitious time to win Mexicans over to the ultramontane mentality, in part because of the surging momentum of the transatlantic Catholic revival—which attained a new coherence in response to the revolutions of 1848—and in part because the disorientating quality of postwar life was turning many citizens more resolutely toward the Church. The U.S. invasion had stirred those deep-seated instincts that linked Catholic faith with national flourishing. While Mexicans of a more liberal bent tended to interpret the war as a contest of mismatched economic and political machinery, conservatives remembered it on precisely the terms that U.S. Catholic

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its various proposed solutions, defied many of the liberal-conservative polarities imposed by future historians. See Pani, *Para Mexicanizar el Segundo Imperio: el imaginario politico de los imperialistas* (México: Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 2001), 360.

[18] Benjamin T. Smith defines and chronicles the development of "provincial conservatism" in *The Roots of Conservatism in Mexico: Catholicism, Society, and Politics in the Mixteca Baja, 1750–1962* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012).

[19] See Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, *Poder, Politico y Religioso: México Siglo XIX*, vol. 1 (México: Universidad Nacional Autonóma de México, 2010), 350–1.

commentators sought to disavow: namely, as a religious crusade, an invasion of barbaric northern heretics not unlike those who had hastened the demise of the Roman Empire.[20]

In the eyes of ultramontanes and other conservatives, Mexico had bravely defended Catholic civilization from the descent of a people who were not only uncouth—their insatiable thirst for liquor and savage eating habits, such as devouring pineapples whole, made quite an impression on the conquered *letrados*[21]—but unlearned in Christian charity, as their retention of slaves and inhumane punishment of deserters attested. The branding, flogging, and hanging of the *San Patricios*, for whom the clergy begged clemency, confirmed for many Mexicans that they were at the mercy of an uncivilized and un-Christian enemy.[22] The response of Lucas Alamán and other architects of postwar conservatism was not to emulate the U.S., as their liberal opponents seemed to be suggesting, but to form an even stronger contrast: a Hispanic, Catholic, and aristocratic counterweight to the lawless excesses of Anglo-Saxon, Protestant democracy. This was a project well-timed to coincide with the transatlantic swell in ultramontane sentiment. For Roa Bárcena and many others, the abiding lesson of the U.S. invasion was that Mexicans must rally behind "the only proper and traditional flag of their race"—not the tricolored standard of the republic, but rather the flag that had turned back barbarians from Rome and Turks from the heart of Europe, "the flag of Catholicism."[23]

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[20] Thus did memorials and rituals of remembrance for lost Mexican soldiers take on the character of a "cult of martyrs" in the postwar decade. See Michael Scott Van Wagenen, *Remembering the Forgotten War: The Enduring Legacies of the U.S. –Mexican War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 56. Apart from such commemorations, Van Wagenen argues that Mexico sank into a state of "collective amnesia" after the war, repressing its memories of the painful conflict (42). Not surprisingly, his sources for this claim include none of the authors soon to be associated with the pro-clerical, anti-*Reforma* movement. Ultramontane *letrados*, on the contrary, cultivated vivid and provocative memories of the war, having been convicted that a cause larger than national pride was at stake.

[21] See Guillermo Prieto, *Memorias e mis tiempos*, trans. Gustavo Pellón as "Mexican Account of the Fall and Occupation of Mexico City," in *The U.S.-Mexican War: A Binational Reader*, ed. Christopher Conway and Gustavo Pellón (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010), 101-102), also Roa Bárcena, *Recuerdos*, 246–7.

[22] The fate of the San Patricios was a religious matter for many Mexicans, not primarily because of the religious identity of the deserters themselves but because of a different understanding of what Christian charity demanded in such cases. Mexican observers found it hard to believe that a "civilized" republic would punish its defectors so severely. See Sanders, 67–72.

[23] Roa Bárcena, *Recuerdos*, 641.

Beneath this desire for vindication lay a profound crisis of faith for many Mexican Catholics. The postwar turn toward ultramontane nationalism was a matter of mourning as well as self-assertion, confusion as well as confidence. Theodicy became a motif in postwar sermons and pastoral letters.[24] Why had God allowed Mexico to be so humiliated at the hands of impious invaders? Why had God abandoned the people uniquely assured of divine favor by the Virgin of Tepeyac, who bore as their motto the promise that "he has not done thus with other nations"? Carpio's psalm of lament, "México en 1847," captured the mood of his devout countrymen, who had watched as barbarous foreigners, "armed with sacrilegious swords," invaded the city, and who had filled their "offended temples" with incense and tearful supplications—but "all in vain…Heaven, indignant, forsakes Mexico in her anguish,/ and the terrible Jehovah turns his face." As they had to Rome centuries before, "the terrible battalions of the North submitted [Mexico] to law with bloody sabres."[25] But Carpio's religious imagination, like that of the clergy and other literary Catholics, was steeped in Old Testament imagery. In the history of Israel and the words of the prophets, Mexico could find its way forward. A revival of faithfulness to the covenant—a recommitment to God's law, as in the days of Josiah—would cause God's favor to return. The ultramontane re-imagining of postwar Mexican nationhood would draw heavily upon this experience of the invasion as a divine chastisement, locating the promise of restoration in a renewed fidelity to the *culto divino*.[26]

Finally, the U.S. invasion had set the stage for a decade of ultramontane activism by igniting civil unrest over the issue of ecclesiastical property rights. For all their anxiety about

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[24] See, for instance, the letter of Bishop Zubiría of Durango, quoted in García Ugarte, 351.

[25] Manuel Carpio, "México en 1847," *Poesias*, ed. José Joaquín Pesado (Mexico: M. Munguía, 1849), 135–141.

[26] For a somewhat later but singular example of this sort of postwar typology, which interpreted the *Guadalupana* tradition to place Mexico in the role of Israel, see *Sermon predicado por el P.D. José M. del Barrio y Rengel, presbiterio de la V. Congregación del Oratorio, en la solemne función que el comercio de México dedicó á Maria Santisima de Guadalupe, su augusta patrona, el martes 6 de Enero de 1857, en la iglesia de N.S.P.S. Francisco* (México: José Mariano Lara, 1857). This call to national repentance was heartily applauded in the pages of *La Cruz*. Farther north, James McMaster had a hard time stomaching its national messianism and its implicit chastisement of the United States, which played the role of pagan conqueror to the Chosen People; see *Freeman's Journal*, March 6, 1858.

yanquis pillaging sacristies and quartering troops in convents, it was at the hands of their own government that devout Mexicans faced their greatest wartime challenge in protecting church property. In January 1847, acting president Valentín Gómez Farías, a *puro* liberal and anticlerical federalist, authorized the appropriation of 15 million pesos from the Church in order to finance the war effort. The bishops loudly opposed his plan to mortgage church-owned real estate. Conservative commentators protested in the press, and a coalition of the president's political opponents orchestrated a rebellion within the National Guard. This so-called "*Polkos* Revolt" in the Federal District, which was tacitly supported by the clergy, weakened Mexico's military resources at a critical juncture in the war. It also served as a landmark battle in a much longer war—both figurative and literal—pertaining to questions of ecclesiastical property and, more significantly, ecclesiastical autonomy.

Mexico was thus well prepared at midcentury to contribute its own vibrant strain of ultramontane nationalism to the transatlantic front against liberal statecraft. An army of sacrilegious conquerors, aided by the anticlerical measures of its own government, had left it searching anew for its Catholic roots. It was to this situation that Rafael's periodicals spoke, forging an account of Mexican identity that accentuated the benefits of Spanish evangelization and focused on religious unity as an imperative for national survival.

The Ultramontane Counternarrative in Mexico

The spring of 1848 found *El Observador católico* urging Mexico's exiled congress to accept the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Although U.S. demands were unjust, continued resistance would only delay the difficult work of national restoration. For the sake of "our nationality, our religion, our race," it was necessary to accept defeat from external foes and set about confronting internal threats to Mexican prosperity. The ultramontane *letrados* for whom *El Observador* spoke would not have long to wait before encountering the first major obstruction to their vision of a chastened and revitalized postwar society. Liberal politicians and commentators, pressing forward with their

own agenda for rejuvenation, had resolved to pursue a highly controversial path to economic modernization: *tolerancia de cultos*, that is, legal tolerance of non-Catholic religions.

The question of tolerance in Mexico was closely tied to immigration policy, which required—at least on paper, if not always in practice—that naturalized citizens adopt the Roman Catholic religion. Liberal reformers, enchanted by the "Jeffersonian dream of agrarian democracy," hoped that religious tolerance would attract more foreign farmers to cultivate Mexico's sparsely settled frontiers, which remained vulnerable to *yanqui* expansionists.[27] Shortly after ratifying the treaty and conceding nearly half its territory to the U.S. in 1848, the Mexican government formed a commission to promote the establishment of agricultural colonies, hoping to populate and protect what remained of the republic's northern borderlands. When the commission recommended a policy of religious tolerance so as to attract Protestant colonists from countries such as Scotland and Prussia, a storm of protest erupted.[28] *Tolerancia* became the leading preoccupation of ultramontane *letrados* in Mexico City. Across the country, in large cities and remote *pueblos* alike, scandalized churchmen preached against the proposal, and delegations of concerned citizens issued anti-tolerance pamphlets and petitions. It was in response to the prospect of religious tolerance that the emerging conservative coalition began to rally behind a distinctly ultramontane account of Mexican nationhood.

One side of the argument against tolerance was outwardly focused, feeding off fears of Protestant barbarism that recent encounters with *yanquis* had only exacerbated. To seek out non-Catholic immigrants would be, according to one Jaliscan pamphleteer, to commit cultural and religious suicide. An influx of foreigners would "smother…the Catholic population." Once a policy of tolerance was introduced, it would only be a matter of time before native Mexican

[27] Brading, *The Origins of Mexican Nationalism*, 70.

[28] Estela Roselló Soberón, "Entre el sentido común católico y la opinion pública: el debate mexicano sobre la tolerancia religiosa en 1856," in *Polémicas intelectuales del México moderno*, ed. Carlos Illades and Georg Leidenberger (México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa, 2008), 241.

Catholics became the "tolerated" rather than the "tolerating."[29] The loss of Texas served as a cautionary tale against giving way to Protestant colonists. Fresh memories of military occupation under a largely non-Catholic army, meanwhile, brought to life a nightmare scenario of what Mexico might like without a state-supported church.[30] With its stance of continuing appeasement toward Protestant outsiders—whom ultramontanes took to be inherently anarchic and avaricious—the tolerance proposal failed to acknowledge the "severe lessons" of the recent past.[31] It would allow future Protestant invaders to draw support from a fifth column within Mexico; the result would inevitably be "the coming of another Taylor, another Scott, and the necessity of another peace treaty."[32] Rafael's columnists at *El Observador católico* situated Mexico's internal battle over tolerance within the transatlantic war for Catholic civilization. The "dogma" of tolerance, so fashionable among so-called "civilized" nations, often proved a ruse for persecuting Catholics.[33] In response to liberals who pointed to the immigrant-fueled success of the U.S. economy, *El Observador* noted that Yankee productivity was due largely to *Catholic* immigrants, driven abroad by the poverty and oppression visited upon them by Protestant governments.[34]

The other side of the anti-tolerance argument focused inwardly, drawing on a remarkably pro-Hispanic retelling of Mexican history and isolating Catholic faith as the key to a cohesive national identity. "What hidden force sustains this society and prevents it from shattering into a

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[29] Anonymous, *Tolerancia* (Guadalajara: Rodriguez, 1848), 7.

[30] According to one pamphleteer, the adoption of tolerance in Mexico "concluirá con la venida de otro Taylor, de otro Scott, y la necesidad de otro tratado de paz." Anonymous, *Los que quieren tolerancia, o no saben lo que quieren, o no son católicos* (Guadalajara: Rodriguez, 1848), 15–16.

[31] *Tolerancia*, 7.

[32] *El Observador católico*, April 15, 1848.

[33] *El Observador católico*, June 2, 1849.

[34] *El Observador católico*, April 15, 1848. The anti-tolerance literature of the late-forties could at times echo the xenophobic rhetoric of contemporary U.S. nativists. Many conservatives made a point of clarifying that they were not opposed to colonization schemes *per se*, only to the courting of non-Catholic immigrants. "Propose your colonization project in terms that do not tamper with religion," one petitioner requested, pointing out the role that Catholic immigrants, "with their industry and diligence," had played in the development of North America. Surely, this pamphleteer reasoned, the embattled Catholic inhabitants of Ireland, Switzerland, and Russia would prefer to relocate to an *in*-tolerant country, one where their religion was exclusively practiced and peacefully protected.

thousand pieces?" *El Observador* demanded. "What general idea, what conserving principle, has continued to subsist in it? One only: religious unity." Catholic unity had allowed Europe to survive the ancient barbarian invasions, the advent of Islam, and, most recently, the Napoleonic revolution. With bellicose "heretics" continuing to encroach from the north, it remained the one reserve of strength now capable of saving Mexico from "extermination, the total loss of our nationality and independence."[35] Rafael's editors and other protesters against tolerance held religious concord to be the cornerstone of social order. In a country precariously seeking to bind together such a variety of indigenous ethnicities, languages, and customs, the Catholic Church alone offered a common vocabulary, a common calendar, and a common school of virtue. Conservative Mexicans feared that religious tolerance would sever the only shared habits and beliefs that bound the disparate constituencies of the *patria* together. Despite the political discord and factionalism that had plagued its three decades of independence, Mexico remained, not merely a homeland (*patria*) but a nation (*nación*) because of its nearly uniform adherence to the civilizing faith of its first Spanish settlers.[36]

Such an appeal to the Spanish foundations of Mexican civilization marked a distinct rerouting of nationalist sentiment by the ultramontane *letrados* and others among their conservative allies. Much as their U.S. colleagues were seeking to uproot the "black legend" from Anglophone historical consciousness, Rafael and company sought to rehabilitate the reputation of Mexico's sixteenth-century conquerors, crediting them with the creation of a uniquely faithful people in the New World. This effort was arguably more discordant with conventional rhetoric in early republican Mexico than in the United States. For nearly two centuries, Mexico's nationalistic ambitions had been propelled by a "creole patriotism" that sought its roots in America rather than Iberia, cultivating a sense of continuity with pre-Hispanic civilizations. Creole patriots accentuated the degree to which Christianization had occurred independently of

[35] *El Observador católico*, March 25, 1848.
[36] *Tolerancia,* 1–2.

Spanish colonizers, whether by activating latent traditions received in antiquity—one legend identified the Mexica people with the lost tribes of Israel, another placed the apostle Thomas in Mesoamerica, possibly under the guise of the god Quetzalcoatl—or, more significantly, by promoting the apparition at Tepeyac as a special mode of revelation tailored to the American people.[37] In ecclesiastical affairs as well as secular, the late colonial period had witnessed an intensifying resentment of *peninsulares*, or Spanish-born citizens, among the creole, or American-born, population. Mexican independence had finally occasioned the outright expulsion of most Spaniards.

By midcentury, however, the transatlantic revival had marked out a new set of shared enemies and laid such tensions largely to rest, at least among the ultramontanes. Creole nationalists like Carpio and Roa Bárcena proved simpatico with *peninsulares* like Rafael and Anselmo de la Portilla. Galvanized by the tolerance proposal, Mexican conservatives now turned to the Spanish past for vindication of the Church's work as a civilizing presence and a pioneer of national cohesion. As one pamphleteer pointed out, the Mexican Church predated the independent Mexican state by exactly three centuries—Mexico's social integrity was thus primarily a religious matter rather than a civil or political one. Long before "the nation" (*nación*) existed as such, Spanish churchmen had laid the foundations for its existence by uniting into "a religious society" those individuals from which it would later take shape.[38] *El Observador católico* praised Spain as a country uniquely imbued with "religious sentiment," which was evident in its artistic heritage, chivalric traditions, and missionary accomplishments.[39] Spain had proven its "invincible adherence to religion" most recently in its resistance to the Napoleonic conquest, yet another

[37] For the development of creole patriotism in New Spain (Mexico), see Brading, *The First America*, 293–313; for the St. Thomas legend, see Brading, *Mexican Phoenix*, 115–116; 200–206.

[38] Anonymous, *Error capital de los que profesan la tolerancia* (Guadalajara: Rodriguez, 1848), 10.

[39] *El Observador católico*, March 25, 1848.

instance, in the eyes of the *Ilustrador católico mexicano,* in which Iberian fidelity alone had saved Christian civilization in Europe.[40]

It was this imported strain of religiosity, rather than any indigenous variety, that animated the "social spirit" necessary to keep Mexico from coming unglued. Tolerance threatened to unravel the accomplishments of this Spanish sentiment, not only in redeeming Mexico from paganism but also in the intimately related antecedent work of cleansing Iberia from infidelity. Anti-tolerance literature brimmed with anxiety that the new legislation would reverse the *Reconquista* as well as the American conquest, welcoming "Jews and Turks" into the heart of Mexico. [41] This instinct to dot the imagined post-tolerance horizon with synagogues and mosques suggests that Mexican conservatives had internalized a narrative of Spanish crusading, viewing themselves as heirs to the hispanic Christianization of the Old World as well as the New.

Pre-hispanic Mexico accordingly loomed in the ultramontane imagination not as a monumental civilization perfected through Christian faith, but as a primordial nightmare redeemed by heroic friars and tamed by noble *conquistadores.*[42] The introduction of tolerance threatened to shatter the foundation of social order that the Spaniards had imposed upon Mexico's barbaric past. A fear of pagan recidivism permeated the literature of the opposition. Tolerance would give license to Aztec rites of human sacrifice, reawakening the "bloody, unclean cult of Huizilipotchli."[43] Such worries seemed to present a tacit admission among the ultramontanes that the work of Christianization had not, in fact, been as thorough as their rhetoric of religious uniformity suggested. They stemmed such potential reproaches by appealing to a version of the "comparative colonization" argument that *norteamericano* colleagues like Martin Spalding had employed. If pockets of Mexico remained insufficiently schooled in Christian civilization, it was

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[40] *Ilustrador católico mexicano,* January 13, 1847.

[41] See, for example, *Tolerancia,* 4; *Los que quieren tolerancia,* 18.

[42] Roa Bárcena's *Catecismo elemental de la historia de México*, an educational endeavor parallel to those of ultramontane historians in the United States, taught schoolchildren that the religion of pre-Hispanic Mexico was "blind superstition." See Roa Bárcena, *Catecismo Elemental de la historia de México*, 6th ed (México: F. Diaz de Leon, 1888), 17. The textbook was first published in 1862.

[43] *El Observador católico*, April 15, 1848.

because the benighted indigenous peoples there had survived Spain's benevolent form of conquest and evangelization. The English approach to settlement had yielded more efficient but more tragic results—one could walk across the entire United States and never see a single trace of Indian life, *El Observador* quipped, unless one paid good money to stand in line at a museum. And even now, "as sad as the condition of our Indians is, it is preferable a thousand times to that of the millions of beggars that the Protestant Reformation has condemned hopelessly to the horrors of hunger in the British Isles."[44]

In their campaign against religious tolerance, Mexico's postwar ultramontanes revealed a striking degree of commonality with the apologetic aims of their U.S. counterparts. Both groups of *letrados* sought moorings in the Spanish past, setting forth alternatives to prevailing narratives of national development that rested, to differing degrees, on variants of the "black legend." Both inserted their nationalistic imaginations into the narrative of Spanish colonization (and for this reason admired Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, while at the same time lambasting his analogies between pre and post Hispanic religious practices). Meeting head-on popular assertions of Spanish American backwardness—employed by Mexican liberals and Yankee expansionists alike—the ultramontane presses of both nations attributed Anglo-America's economic advancement to a superior Protestant capacity for genocide. Both shored up the theologically shaky grounds of their recent independence movements by casting them as acts of Catholic defiance against ungodly secular authorities. Hidalgo, the parish priest who had midwifed the Mexican nation, was not, according to the ultramontane account, a liberal revolutionary but a devout pastor who had secured his people the liberty to serve God more fully; Washington, similarly, was less a champion of worldwide republican aspirations than the leader of a Catholic alliance that had freed the United States from an oppressive Protestant empire.[45] Finally, much

[44] *El Observador católico*, April 8, 1848.

[45] See *El Ilustrador católico mexicano*, October 21, 1846; also, *Error Capital de los que profesan la tolerancia*, which asserts that the maintenance of a Catholic state was a precondition of independence for Mexican patriots during the revolt from Spanish rule."

like their northern associates did when struggling against the centrifugal tendencies of their own young republic, Mexico's ultramontanes upheld Catholicity as the only force capable of fashioning "one people" (*un pueblo*) from America's mottled demography.[46]

Despite their many areas of their common concern, the two neighboring schools of Catholic nationalism parted ways when it came to applying their Hispanophilic imaginations to the recent redrawing of the North American map. The U.S. Catholic press, while ambivalent at toward many aspects of the expansionist platform, at times inclined its readers to envision themselves as the heirs of the conquistadors, tasked with rejuvenating the Spanish legacy of the newly annexed territories. For Mexican ultramontanes, it was precisely this legacy—the Spanish vanguard of Christian civilization, fortified in the *Reconquista* and transplanted to the New World—that was being threatened by the northern front of *yanqui* barbarians. Among much else at stake in speculations over the future course of America's "Manifest Destiny" were competing interpretations of which continental arrangement would best serve the ultramontane cause: a map dominated by the eagle of a fledging U.S. empire, or a map adorned by the equally robust eagle of a revived Mexican empire. As the postwar decade wore on, however, it became clear to Mexico's pro-clerical *letrados,* as it did to U.S. ultramontanes, that the most formidable enemies to their national vision lay not beyond their borders but within.

The Ultramontane Counterrevolution in Mexico

Clemente Jesús de Munguía, Morelia's bookish and jaundiced seminary rector, signaled that a new era of ecclesiastical defiance had commenced upon his election as bishop in 1851. When asked to take the customary oath of loyalty to the Mexican constitution and the laws of the state, Munguía refused, claiming that the ambiguous wording of the formula "compromises the rights

[46] *El Observador católico*, March 25, 1848.

and liberties of the church."[47] His protest became a national sensation, bringing to a boil the many simmering, still unresolved debates over the relationship between church and civil government in republican Mexico.

The contours of the conflict were familiar. The church had persistently denied that the royal *patronato*—the privilege of making ecclesiastical appointments, which Rome had granted to Spanish monarchs—transferred to the Mexican state upon independence, a position that only hardened with the increasing ultramontane emphasis on Roman supremacy. In 1833, the radical federalist cabinet of Gómez Farías had pushed for wide-ranging legislation to reduce the church's footprint in public life, secularizing and selling off mission lands (most notably the Franciscan holdings in Alta California) and taking control of public education. The church had managed to escape further reforms by backing Santa Anna's centralist coup of 1834. During the U.S. invasion, Gómez Farías had again incensed the bishops by seeking to expropriate church funds to finance the war effort; the church, meanwhile had infuriated liberals by not voluntarily surrendering its wealth for the patriotic cause. Each of these flare-ups issued, at bottom, from the question of ecclesiastical autonomy. But never before had the question been put so forcefully and succinctly. Munguía represented a new, more radical generation of clerical dissenters who, shaped by the ultramontane mentality, would insist on the church's absolute immunity from civil authority.

They would meet their match, during the fractious fifties, in a new generation of liberals, more determined than ever to build a Mexican state free of clerical privilege and interference. Melchor Ocampo, elected governor of Michoacán shortly after Munguía's appointment, countered the new bishop's sensational obstinacy with a publicity stunt of his own, spreading the account of a local peon who had been refused a church burial for inability to pay the published

[47] García Ugarte, 402. For more detailed accounts of this episode, see Gilbert, 27–28; Brading, "Ultramontane Intransigence and the Mexican Reform: Clemente de Jesús Munguía," in *The Politics of Religion in an Age of Revival*, 115–117.

fee.[48] In figures like Ocampo, Guillermo Prieto, Ignacio Ramirez, Francisco Zarco, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, and Benito Juarez, the conservatives associated with 13 Calle Cadena faced a persuasive, shrewd, and ambitious opposition. The goal of these liberal *letrados* was to press forward the aborted federalist reforms of 1833: among other measures, to abolish the *fueros*, or separate courts of jurisdiction that placed clerics and military officers outside the civil law; to end corporate landholding and sell off church possessions; to do away with sacramental fees and establish a civil register for marriage; and to make provisions for religious freedom, which had been proposed in 1848 but quickly dropped due to fierce opposition.

Though decidedly anticlerical—insofar as they blamed a corrupt and too powerful church for impeding Mexican progress— none of the new liberals, with the notable exception of the atheist Ramirez, were anti-religious in the manner of the radical French *philosophes*. Most of them regarded themselves as conscientious Catholics who hoped to align the church with a more efficient, modern, and democratic mode of governance.[49] In the renewed debates over tolerance, for instance, liberals would recast the proposal not simply as a means of attracting immigrants, but as a truly Catholic principle that a Christian nation was obliged to uphold.[50] While this argument offered an intriguing parallel with the apologetics of Catholic *yanquis*, it offered little possibility of common ground with the new breed of Mexican ultramontanes, whose zeal for

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[48] In calling it a "publicity stunt," I do not discount the validity of the story but agree with Margaret Chowning's contention that Ocampo was deliberately drawing attention to this case as an opportunity to confront Munguía's challenge to civil authority. See Chowning, *Wealth and Power in Provincial Mexico: Michoacán from the Late Colony to the Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 233–234.

[49] The convictions of many Mexican liberals were rooted in *piedad ilustrada* or "enlightened piety," a strain of Catholicism more accommodating to the political and philosophical shifts of the eighteenth century. For background on this mentality, which is closely related to what Dolan has identified as "enlightened Catholicism" in the United States, see Pamela Voekel, *Alone Before God*; see also Gilbert, 152ff.

[50] See, for example, José María Mata's speech before the Constitutional Congress: "Este principio no es solo una verdad filosófica, es una verdad cristiana. El Redentor del mundo no solo no prohibió al hombre la libertad de consciencia, sino que á ella apeló para fundar su doctrina: fué la predicácion, fué la persuacion el medio que empleó para difundir la nueva ley, la ley de gracia, y no podia hacer de otro modo el que primer precepto decia: 'Amaos los unos á los otros.'" Quoted in Emilio de Castillo Negrete, *Galería de oradores de Mexico en el Siglo XIX*, vol. 2 (México: R.I. Gonzales, 1878), 243; Francisco Zarco made similar arguments before the congress—see Negrete, 210.

ecclesial autonomy demanded that the state accommodate itself to the church, rather than the reverse. For both sides, it seemed, the point of compromise had passed. The lines were drawn for a war of words that would soon rumble beneath increasingly general exchanges of gunfire.

Liberals rallied behind the Plan of Ayutla in March 1854 and by the following summer had toppled Santa Anna's brief, conservative-backed dictatorship, sending the mercurial *caudillo* into exile for good. Once in power, the liberals wasted little time implementing their reforms. The so-called Ley Juarez, which abolished *fueros*, took effect in November 1855; the Ley Lerdo, mandating the redistribution of church landholdings, and the Ley Iglesias, revising the schedule of sacramental fees, followed soon afterward. Hostility ensued on several fronts. Bishops threatened excommunication of clerics who forfeited their *fueros* or laypeople who purchased ecclesiastical property. State troops laid siege to Puebla, where soldiers and citizens had rallied to protect the church's privileges. In the Indian *pueblos* of the Mixteca Baja, battles erupted over the seizure of lands traditionally held by religious confraternities.[51] In the Federal District, the violence mostly took place within the press, restored to freedom by the new liberal regime. Anticlerical satires and polemics, stifled under Santa Anna, now rushed into the market once more, bolstering support for the controversial reforms.

But conditions were also favorable to protests from the pro-clerical camp. Ultramontane *letrados* were now more motivated and, due to liberal takeovers in the provinces, more geographically concentrated in the Federal District than ever before. Rafael had fled with Santa Anna and *El Universal* had folded, leaving the presses at 13 Calle Cadena free for "exclusively religious" purposes. Munguía, banished by Ocampo, was at large in Mexico City, rallying his colleagues to make good use of Rafael's old printing house. Under the patronage of Andrade, he set into motion the production of an unrivaled series of ultramontane manifestos in the form of a

[51] For the conservative revolt and liberal siege in Puebla, see Jan Bazant, *Alienation of Church Wealth in Mexico: Social and Economic Aspects of the Liberal Revolution, 1856–1875* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 41; for conflicts in the Mixteca Baja, see Smith, *Roots of Conservatism*, 146–147.

weekly magazine called *La Cruz*. Later overseen by Pesado, *La Cruz* would run to seven volumes in the two and a half years between the liberal ascent and the onset of widespread civil unrest. In its pages, the postwar generation of Catholic apologists attained the summit of their shared eloquence, uniting in a last-ditch attempt—panicked but still poised, distressed but not yet disillusioned—to define the Mexican nation in ultramontane terms.

In several respects, *La Cruz* carried forward the agenda of Rafael's postwar periodicals, albeit with a heightened sense of urgency. It touted the Church as the nation's sole hope for social cohesion and political stability.[52] It decried tolerance as an affront and an absurdity in Mexico, a needless provocation among "a people Catholic in the utmost."[53] It vindicated the country's Hispanic foundations and squarely attacked the liberal sense of moral inferiority to the Anglo-American world, above all by returning to that familiar juxtaposition, by now well-rehearsed on both sides of the *Rio Bravo*, of the fruits of Spanish and English colonization in the Americas. The former, according to *La Cruz*, had been a process of cultivation and civilization, one that elevated but did not destroy the language and customs of indigenous people, binding together for the common good the lives of the conquerors and the conquered. The latter had been a process of dispossession and annihilation that succeeded in prospering agrarian "fanatics" but not in establishing a viable Christian culture. Where there was any sign of "true civilization" in the New World, whether in the Christianized pueblos of Mexico or in the immigrant communities of the United States, it was "uniquely and exclusively" a Catholic accomplishment. Pesado and company epitomized the story of America's settlement in dualistic terms that their U.S. colleagues would have whole-heartedly endorsed by the mid-fifties: "Catholicism has established, Protestantism has destroyed."[54]

Since first setting forth such polarities a decade earlier, Mexican ultramontanes had refined and elaborated what was at stake in comparisons between "Catholic countries"—that is,

[52] See, for instance, *La Cruz*, August 7, 1856.
[53] *La Cruz*, November 1, 1855.
[54] *La Cruz*, December 27, 1855; June 10, 1858.

countries in which the church's prerogatives were respected and traditional social fabrics remained in tact—and "Protestant countries," meaning liberalized economies and secularized governments, in the mode of Great Britain or the United States. In their contributions to *La Cruz*, the pro-clerical *letrados* shifted their rhetoric noticeably from the defensive to the offensive. By 1855, it was no longer a matter of providing apologies for the church's cherished position in Mexican life; with a vigorous liberal government in place, it was now time to demonstrate the ways in which a *laissez-faire* approach—toward religion, as toward political economy—actually impeded human progress and worked to society's detriment. Whether in the form of studious essays such as Pesado's "Los paises católicos y Los paises protestantes" or biting satires like Roa Bárcena's serial novella *La Quinta modelo*, readers constantly encountered some version of the argument that liberal states amassed material wealth at the cost of social dissolution, moral dissipation, and widespread anomie (one of Pesado's preoccupations, in common with many other social commentators, was the alarming prevalence of suicide in the nineteenth century).[55] Bereft of the means to restrain passion or instill virtue, such systems tended toward the "brutalization of men…the enslavement of the poor, and the vilification of women."[56]

For proof, the *letrados* pointed repeatedly to the Anglosphere: to the grinding poverty of industrial Britain, unknown in the supposedly backwards nations of Southern Europe; to the chilling absence of indigenous peoples in America's English-speaking regions, thanks to an inhuman model of conquest that the British Empire was even now replicating in India; to the religious persecution that Irish Catholics faced in both the United Kingdom and the United States; to the political chaos that was inciting guerrilla warfare in Kansas and threatening to dismember the entire Union, the natural fruit, in *La Cruz*'s view, of embracing "tolerance without limits."[57]

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[55] For Pesado's colorful abridgement of Jaime Balmes's arguments about the relative merits of "Catholic Countries and Protestant Countries," see *La Cruz*, January 3, 10, 1856; Roa Bárcena's *La Quinta modelo*, perhaps the best known of *La Cruz*'s bequests to Mexican literature, began running in the May 21, 1857 issue.

[56] *La Cruz*, August 7, 1856.

[57] *La Cruz*, February 14, 1856; October 9, 1856.

Documenting the "Protestant intolerance of England and the United States" became one of the magazine's fixations. Anything that demonstrated the religiously coercive tendencies of these supposedly tolerant nations and the religiously liberating atmosphere of a Catholic monoculture—a petition received at the Mexican consulate in New Orleans, from a group of harried Irish Catholics seeking asylum further south; stories of *gringos* who voluntarily embraced the Catholic faith while on business or leisure in Mexico—was submitted to the public as evidence of the self-contradicting nature of liberal reform.[58]

In all this, *La Cruz* stood more or less in accord with the U.S. Catholic press. Though lacking the swell of confidence in a national conversion that possessed many of their northern contemporaries in the mid-fifties, Pesado and his associates tracked with admiration the success of Catholic missions in the United States and the respect with which the government generally treated church property in the conquered territories of the west (this in contrast to the contempt with which Mexican liberals had treated the California missions).[59] Their antagonizing of English Protestantism harmonized neatly with the manner in which U.S. Catholic apologists sought to repudiate their own nation's Puritan heritage. They catalogued in common the dreadful legacies of the French revolution and the manner in which those vestiges of pre-Christian barbarity had taken on new life since 1848.[60] They concurred in viewing the *filibustero* as an emissary of revolutionary chaos to Christian culture—a personification of civilization's decline rather than its extension.[61] Harsh as was its assessment of the U.S. political climate, *La Cruz* offered—in all but one crucial respect—a perspective no harsher than the self-diagnosis of *yanqui* ultramontanes.

That one exception cannot be overlooked, however, for it exposes with instructive clarity the most vulnerable point of the nationalistic vision held by U.S. Catholics at midcentury. In the mind of Mexico's ultramontane *letrados*, slavery was intrinsic to the misery wrought by liberal

[58] See, for example, *La Cruz*, October 9, 1856.
[59] *La Cruz*, February 14, 1856, others.
[60] *La Cruz*, November 22, 1855.
[61] See, for example, *La Cruz*, December 17, 1857.

economies and revolutionary governments.[62] Though human bondage was an ancient practice, its cruelest permutations—those that put it beyond the pale of conscionable Christian accommodation—were the creation of modern governments such as England's, which prized trade and mercantile success above any other good. This characteristically *liberal* form of slavery, honed to brutal and paradoxical perfection by the vaunted liberty of the United States, held a prominent place in *La Cruz*'s litany of the evils enabled by the collapse of a unified Christendom in the sixteenth century. It served as the chief point of contrast in Pesado's comparison of "profane civilization" and Catholic civilization. It was a topic, he noted, that Mexican liberals took great caution not to address too directly, for doing so would force them to admit how much the church—which ameliorated and eradicated ancient forms of slavery—had contributed to human progress, not to mention how sinister were the foundations of the Anglo-America's commercial achievements, which they upheld for emulation.[63] Gaspar, the parody of such liberal myopia in *La Quinta modelo*, admires the "Anglo-Saxon" work ethic of the United States, while overlooking the horrific mode of slave-labor that produces so much of its wealth. "What do trade balance and increased maritime exports matter if they come at the cost of slavery, as happens in the United States?"[64] *La Cruz* demanded, in a direct assault on the reformers' economic aspirations. "The riches accumulated in this manner are fruits of the unpaid labor of millions of wretches, subjected to incredible suffering."[65]

Thus, while U.S. ultramontanes were closing ranks against abolitionism, condemning it as a homegrown variant of transatlantic anticlerical chaos, their Mexican contemporaries were denouncing slavery as the foremost indicator of *norteamericano* hostility toward Catholic civilization. Where the Catholic counternarrative of U.S. origins eschewed the New England "fanatic" in favor of the Chesapeake slaveholder, the ultramontane account in Mexico joined

[62] *La Cruz*, November 22, 1855.
[63] *La Cruz*, February 11, 1858.
[64] *La Cruz*, May 21, 1857.
[65] *La Cruz*, December 11, 1856.

Puritan and cavalier together as inventions of the same English knack for unprincipled acquisitiveness. As U.S. Catholics allied themselves with Southern political interests and deepened their Southern accent in matters of national import, Mexico's clerical party was seeking, both geographically and culturally, to erect the firmest possible barrier between their nation and the slaveholding portion of the United States. The Anglo-American attachment to slavery had been, by Roa Bárcena's reckoning, at the root of the conflict in Texas, which had led to so much suffering at *yanqui* hands; and even now, the reestablishment of slavery in Mexico remained among the direst imaginable consequences of unchecked U.S. expansion.[66] Those U.S. ultramontanes who, fearing their own sort of *yanqui* conquest following Lincoln's election, momentarily fancied the Confederacy's annexation to Mexico were only voicing the extent of their ignorance as to where the church's sympathies lay abroad. Such an eventuality would have brought to life Pesado's nightmare scenario: "slavery for some, extermination for many, degradation for all."[67]

For those *norteamericano* Catholics able or inclined to listen, it was among their nearest neighbors that they would find the clearest indication of how far their attempt to imagine a nation in ultramontane terms had wandered into a peculiar form of moral heterodoxy. Like their partial accommodation to expansionist politics, the proslavery bent of U.S. Catholic *letrados* comes more clearly to light when encountered between the lines of Mexico's ultramontane papers. What makes this deviation all the more striking is its isolation from the broad areas of overlapping historical consciousness and social analysis set to print by these two fraternities of frustrated American Catholics, each of which was seeking in vain to provide religious ballast for a precarious national identity.

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[66] Roa Bárcena, *Recuerdos*, 630; *La Cruz*, December 24, 1857.
[67] *La Cruz*, May 27, 1858.

However much their visions for a Catholic America might have diverged on the issue of slavery, Mexican ultramontanes and disaffected Confederates would soon seek a common patron in Maximilian, the Austrian prince who, backed by a French army, proclaimed himself Emperor of Mexico in 1862. Mexican bishops returned from exile, hopeful that the nation's new Hapsburg ruler would repeal the Reform laws, establish a concordat with the Holy See and restore the Church to prominence in public life. Rafael de Rafael, who had aided the plotters of the French coup from afar, looked forward to "the true regeneration of our poor Mexico."[68]

Upon surrendering in 1865, several Confederates also removed to Mexico and prevailed upon the Emperor's friendship by inserting themselves into his conflict with the ongoing *Juarista* resistance. The Missourian general Joseph Shelby, having been granted a hacienda once owned by Santa Anna, pitched periodic battles with Liberal guerillas. The peripatetic Matthew Fontaine Maury, perhaps the foremost example of a hemispherically-minded slaveocrat, became a trusted adviser to the emperor and a zealous promoter of Southern colonization, envisioning the formation of a "new Virginia" in Mexico.[69] Among Maury's most notable agents in the colonization scheme were two Catholics whose reasons for defection were in part religious: Emile Loungemare of St. Louis, who had previously been appointed by Jefferson Davis to organize a secret network of anti-Union conspirators in the North; and William Anderson, lawyer and adventurer, yet another of Cincinnati's prominent converts, whose older brother Robert had surrendered Fort Sumter to the Confederacy.

In their dispatches from Mexico, Longuemare and Anderson exhibited the combination of ultramontane piety, tempered expansionism, and proslavery sympathies that had become so familiar in the voice of the U.S. Church since the mid-forties. An almost daily communicant, Anderson observed nothing in his tour of Mexican churches to make him doubt the "purity of the

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[68] Robert A. Naylor, "A Mexican Conspirator Views the Civil War," *Civil War History* 9:1 (March, 1963): 67–73.

[69] Andrew F. Rolle, *The Lost Cause: The Confederate Exodus to Mexico* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 96-98; 131ff.

priesthood" or the "piety of the people," and much that gainsaid the "popular prejudice…that the Mexicans are a weak and effete race…devoid of talent or genius."[70] But he also lamented the demise of slavery in Spanish America, which had in his view caused economic stagnation, and he happily surveyed land for dispossessed Confederates eager to find new cash crops to plant and new peons to reap them.[71] Loungemare prayed daily before Our Lady of Guadalupe, proclaimed the Mexicans unsurpassed in their Holy Week devotions, and fancied how easily Catholic *gringos* would find themselves at home there.[72] He also seized native lands without remorse in an admittedly "arbitrary proceeding."[73] When news of Lincoln's death reached him at Orizaba, he was "too excited to smile."[74] A kindred spirit and confidant, James McMaster took interest in the adventures of "Don Emilio" Longuemare, printing advertisements for relocation to Mexico in the *Freedman's Journal.* McMaster had clearly invested some of his own money in the project and was quite possibly considering a migration to Mexico himself. The Yankee revolutionaries having now secured victory in his own country, he rallied his fellow Catholic Copperheads to seek religious and political refuge in Maximilian's Mexico.

But James McMaster never made it across the border. Longuemare and Anderson quickly returned to the newly re-United States, along with nearly all of the other *Confederados*. A shared suspicion of Yankees was not enough to assimilate even the Catholics among them to the local population, who resented their attempts to introduce a "disguised form of slavery" to Mexico.[75]

Mexican ultramontanes, meanwhile, were equally disillusioned. Maximilian had ratified the Ley Lerdo, returned little of the church property that the reformers had auctioned off, and showed a disheartening lack of interest in courting the friendship of the papacy. Despite the prognostications of republicans and monarchists alike across the Atlantic World, Mexico's

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[70] Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, ed., *An American in Maximillian's Mexico, 1865-1866: The Diaries of William Marshall Anderson* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1959), 47, 73.
[71] Ibid., 32–3.
[72] Emile Longuemare to James McMaster, undated (1865), McMaster Papers I-1-m, UNDA.
[73] Emile Longuemare to James McMaster, 20 September 1865, McMaster Papers I-1-m, UNDA.
[74] Emile Longuemare to James McMaster, 26 April 1865, McMaster Papers I-1-m, UNDA.
[75] Rolle, 183–4.

"Second Empire" had proven itself an ally of neither the Southern slaveocracy nor the clerical conservatives.[76] This time a voluntary exile, Munguía abandoned his diocese and spent the short remainder of his life in Rome.

Mexican ultramontanes and Catholic *yanquis* thus went their not-altogether-separate ways, into futures not of their own making, each resigned to apprentice in lessons that the other had already acquired. Mexico's clergy and pro-clerical *letrados* would now learn how the church could function, even thrive, once severed from a supportive state; for their part, U.S. ultramontanes would now learn what it meant to establish a Catholic culture in a society that had left slavery behind. For each contingent of disenchanted nationalists, the other would remain an unsteady companion along the pathway to modernity, equal parts trailblazer and cautionary tale.

[76] Many observers saw the French intervention in Mexico and the Confederate revolt from the United States as conjoined expressions of the same movement—either retrograde or restorative, depending on one's perspective—to sabotage America's republican experiments and reintroduce more traditional aristocratic forms of government. See Sanders, 88, 95.

EPILOGUE

From his new home in Montreal, Thomas D'Arcy McGee paid close attention to the American Civil War. McGee, now a member of the Canadian parliament, did not think the contest in doubt; like other well-informed outsiders, he found its ferocity and duration surprising but regarded a Northern victory as inevitable. What interested him were the lessons to be drawn from the war, whenever it finally came to an end—for the United States and for other young, emerging nations. Indeed, McGee suspected that "much of the destiny of our *new*…world is hidden under the dust and smoke of this conflict." He hoped that his neighbors to the south would emerge from the fighting chastened and repentant of their "follies and bigotries"—most especially of their "ravenous 'Manifest Destiny.'" More urgently, he hoped that his fellow Canadians would take the U.S. tragedy as a cautionary tale against premature independence. According to McGee's diagnosis, the trials of the American democracy stemmed from its "too early, too angry, and too complete severance from the common body of Christendom." Having cast off too quickly the inheritance of Europe—the wisdom of tradition and the restraints of aristocracy—the U.S. had succumbed to a politics of the least common denominator: vulgar, sensational, pretentious, and inept. It had become McGee's life work to prevent Canada from following the same disastrous path to nationhood.[1]

By the mid-sixties, U.S. ultramontanes found themselves increasingly isolated within the shambles of their republican experiment and the harsh consequences of their hubristic national character. Colleagues elsewhere in North America had acquiesced to the perspective of Europe's leading Catholic apologists, who remained skeptical that the church could flourish apart from a monarch who defended its interests. In Canada, McGee stumped for a continued bond with the British crown, convinced that Quebec's Catholic institutions would suffer if exposed to the

[1] Thomas D'Arcy McGee, "The Present American Revolution: the Internal Condition of the American Democracy Considered" (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1863).

whims of an independent electorate. In Havana, Rafael de Rafael editorialized daily against Cuban independence, certain that a severance from Spain would mean slipping inexorably under the sway of a soulless *yanqui* materialism. In Mexico, ultramontane clerics and *letrados* vested their hopes—at least provisionally—in a neo-imperial avatar of bygone Hapsburg glories. If the shapers of Catholic opinion in the United States had sought to maintain a sense of exceptionalism in their national *imaginaire*, they now faced the difficult implications of having succeeded. Within the ultramontane Atlantic, they would remain politically eccentric—and for this reason, at times doctrinally suspect—for the better part of a century.

Their attempt during the middle decades of the nineteenth century to sustain both ultramontane zeal and national enthusiasm had required a series of difficult balancing acts that were perhaps impossible to sustain in the long-term. The invasion of Mexico had thrust them into a tangible and immediate quandary over their compatibility with the national project: did their religious commitments align them more properly with the belittled citizens of the occupied country than with the expansionist visionaries of the aggressor? Ultramontane voices had responded by vindicating Mexico's colonial past and its religious heritage while at the same time acknowledging racial and political weaknesses that made it susceptible to—and potentially poised to benefit from—the Yankee conquest. By inverting the "black legend"—lionizing the Spanish legacy and forswearing America's Puritan heritage—they laid the groundwork not only to defend Mexicans from Protestant prejudice but to insert themselves into the historical narrative, as heirs to the faithful Spanish conquerors and evangelizers whose work remained unfinished on the continent's frontiers.

Their position deftly managed to satisfy the demands of both ultramontane apologetics and expansionist ambitions. Ultramontane nationalists in the United States had, in effect, modified the tenets of "Manifest Destiny" in a manner palatable to Catholic interests. "Providence reserves a special mission for us," Archbishop Samuel Eccleston of Baltimore had declared to the Roman curia in 1846, adopting for ecclesiastical usage language that would not

have seemed out of place in John O'Sullivan's *Democratic Review* or other expansionist organs. "The designs of God are great and magnificent for our future existence."[2] Throughout the 1850s, as the church set about fulfilling those designs with remarkable speed, making the American landscape noticeably more Catholic, ultramontane intellects set about constructing a "counternarrative" of U.S. identity. The appropriation of the Spanish past, and the attendant renunciation of the Puritan heritage, remained central to this effort to re-conceptualize the United States as a country largely Catholic in origin, increasingly Catholic in demography, and potentially Catholic in predominance. But sensitive as they were to the reputed inferiority of "Catholic countries"—a charge that in some respects they chose not to deny but to redirect into racialized explanations—ultramontane Yankees took care not to carry their identification with the Spanish-settled portion of the hemisphere too far. Their counternarrative also provided a Catholic vocabulary for explaining the superiority of U.S. institutions—Catholics had, in fact, pioneered those cherished liberties that enabled the country's stupendous progress. Harmonizing once more the competing impulses toward ultramontane triumphalism and national hubris, they presented the United States as a nation uniquely equipped to showcase the genius of Catholicity.

The filibustering expeditions of the fifties, which carried the Manifest Destiny mindset to ugly if not illogical extremes, again drew U.S. ultramontanes into the position of defending Spain's past achievements and present interests in the New World. They also made more urgent the prayer that "a nation of rebels and filibusters," as Orestes Brownson had come to characterize his country, would soon find its way under the stabilizing influence of the Catholic Church.[3] As the fractious decade wore on, national conversion seemed the only hope for preventing a social collapse. "Filibusterism" had become a deadly contagion at home and abroad, one that revealed the worst aspects of the young republic's unfinished character. Still, there remained occasional

[2] Quoted in Pasquier, 129.

[3] Orestes A. Brownson to Isaac Hecker, 5 August 1857, in *The Brownson–Hecker Correspondence*, ed. Joseph F. Gower and Richard M. Leliaert (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 194.

hints in the ultramontane press that the results of Yankee land-snatching in the Caribbean might ultimately work to the church's benefit. Even in such clear cut cases of U.S. avarice, religious solidarity could not completely drown out the expansionists' creed. All would be forgiven if, like Nárciso Lopez, this nation of filibusters underwent a late-life conversion.

In the years after 1848, Catholic minds in the United States had demonstrated their ultramontane credentials by opposing the revolutionary movements arising throughout the Atlantic world. It was here that their nationalistic imaginations ran most consistently counter to the political instincts that prevailed in Young America. Ultramontane commentators had worried that Mexico would degenerate into a theater of anticlerical violence during the U.S. occupation. They condemned filibusters as Jacobin-style revolutionaries and dismissed European revolutionaries as filibusters in a different garb. They resisted every domestic movement that seemed to portend social disorder, none more fiercely than abolitionism. Their anti-Puritan account of American identity reinforced this tendency to obstruct social reform, leading them into increasing harmony with proslavery apologists and Southern nationalists. While the anti-revolutionary roots of this alliance were certainly in step with broader ultramontane concerns, its concrete implications—namely, bolstering the South's "peculiar institution"— were, in retrospect, clearly not. Aside from the always unconventional Orestes Brownson, however, Catholic commentators remained all but blind to this reality. When revolution did at last erupt in their midst, in the form of secessionist violence, ultramontane voices were powerless to prevent it—or even, in many cases, to recognize it as such.

The travails of 1861 made it clear that conversion was not imminent for the United States. The national destiny that seemed so bright to Catholic eyes at the beginning of the postwar period now faded beneath more pressing issues of mere national survival. Like their counterparts in Mexico, U.S. ultramontanes saw their hopes for a country anchored in Catholic virtue vanish beneath the smoke of a violent civil war and the final triumph of a political party that they considered antithetical to their interests.

But the national vision that they had crafted at midcentury did not disappear forever. Indeed, it has enjoyed a remarkable afterlife and even now asserts itself with surprising durability. Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Catholics continued to cultivate "their own traditions of national myth and memory," intertwining sacred and civic history along the paths first blazed by the likes of Spalding and Shea.[4] Later textbooks for Catholic schoolchildren continued to draw attention to Spanish colonial foundations, marginalize the more conventional myth of Puritan origins, highlight Maryland's decisive role in the American experiment, and catalogue Catholic contributions to the achievement of independence.[5] By 1898, when they were next summoned to war with fellow Catholics—indeed, to dismantle what remained of the Spanish empire they had been taught to admire—the Yankee faithful had a more highly elaborated and widely dispersed patriotic narrative to draw upon than had been available to the invaders of Mexico half a century earlier. By the middle of the twentieth century, that narrative had traveled all the way to the heart of Rome, through the influence of the Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray, who was largely responsible for the promulgation of *Dignitatis Humanae*. That document, the Second Vatican Council's declaration on religious freedom, signaled that Rome would no longer hold the American experiment at arm's length—that the universal church was prepared to embrace the religious argument for civic liberties that U.S. Catholics had been rehearsing for decades.

Broader cultural developments likewise provided some measure of eventual vindication for the nationalistic imagination of mid nineteenth-century Catholics. On both a popular and an intellectual level, even non-Catholic Americans began to embrace the Spanish religious past as a treasured part of their national patrimony. The rising prominence of mission-style architecture in the early twentieth century bears witness to this development, as does the enthusiasm that greeted novels such as Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* (1884) and Willa Cather's *Death Comes to the*

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[4] Robert A. Orsi, "U.S. Catholics between Memory and Modernity: How Catholics Are American," in *Catholics in the American Century: Recasting Narratives of U.S. History*, edited by R. Scott Appleby and Kathleen Sprows Cummings (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012): 11-42, here 15–16.

[5] See Joseph Moreau, "Rise of the (Catholic) American Nation: United States History and Parochial Schools, 1878-1925," *American Studies* 38:3 (Fall 1997): 67-90

Archbishop (1927), which featured nostalgic and sympathetic portrayals of the Catholic Church's role in settling the western borderlands. Following the lead of Herbert Bolton (1870–1953), meanwhile, academic historians began to pay closer attention to the Hispanic peripheries of American colonial history, rather than focusing predominantly on New England and other British settlements. Such long-term trends in the practice of American self-imagining would seem to indicate that, when stripped of its apologetic aims, there remained a fundamentally sound intuition in the historical vision of the original ultramontane nationalists.

However much popular consensus might have developed around certain of its tenets, the Catholic counternarrative remains a rhetorical device well suited for polemics and political conflict. U.S. prelates and pundits have employed it to these purposes most recently amid controversy over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which would have required Catholic employers to provide coverage for contraceptives. Protesting this measure as a violation of religious liberty, the U.S. hierarchy began in the summer of 2012 to convene an annual "Fortnight for Freedom," timed to conclude each Fourth of July, during which the church would celebrate its historical commitment to cherished American ideals, religious freedom foremost among them. Motifs central to the ultramontane orators of the expansionist era have hereby enjoyed a modest renaissance: the medieval scholastic foundations of constitutional guarantees, Maryland's role as the font of religious liberty in the New World, the basic compatibility between Catholic principles and the ideals of the founding generation.

On such occasions, U.S. Catholics show themselves to be still proudly obstinate in their beliefs and oddly possessive of the national past. Disappointment in the political sphere might once more await them. But history cautions us not to underestimate the resilience of this distinct construal of the national project, first forged in ambivalent response to the spirit of Manifest Destiny.

ILLUSTRATIONS

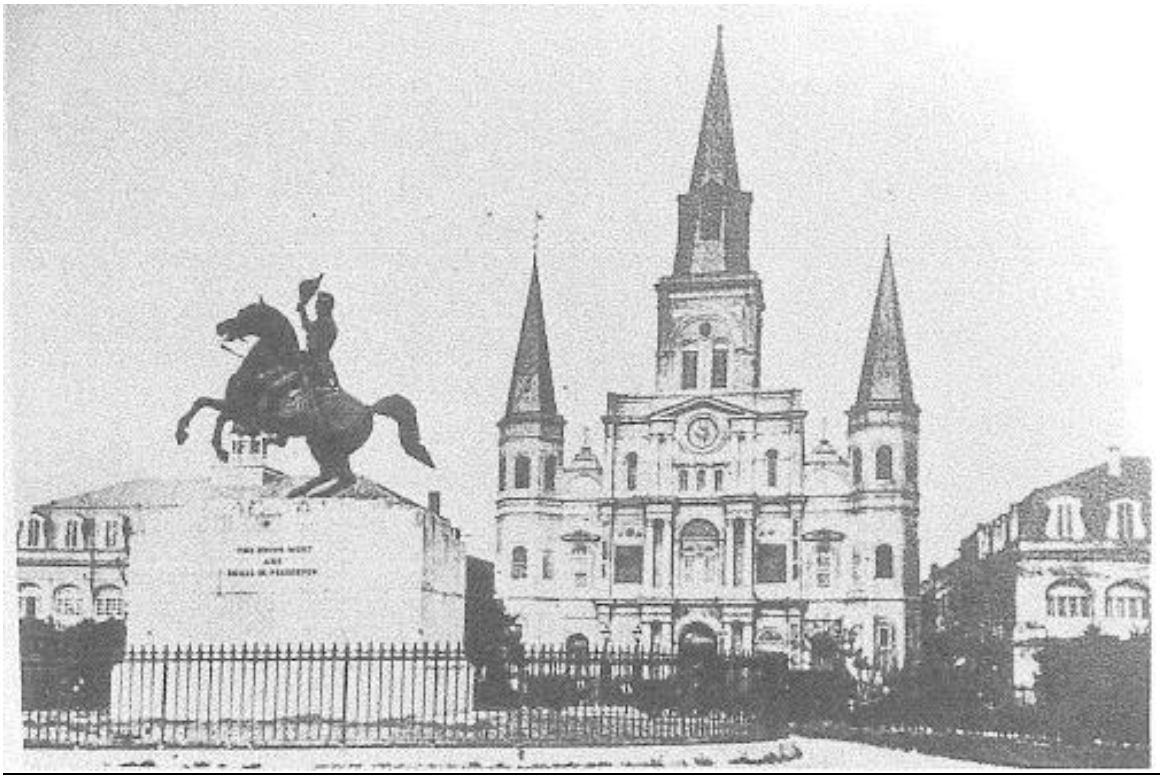
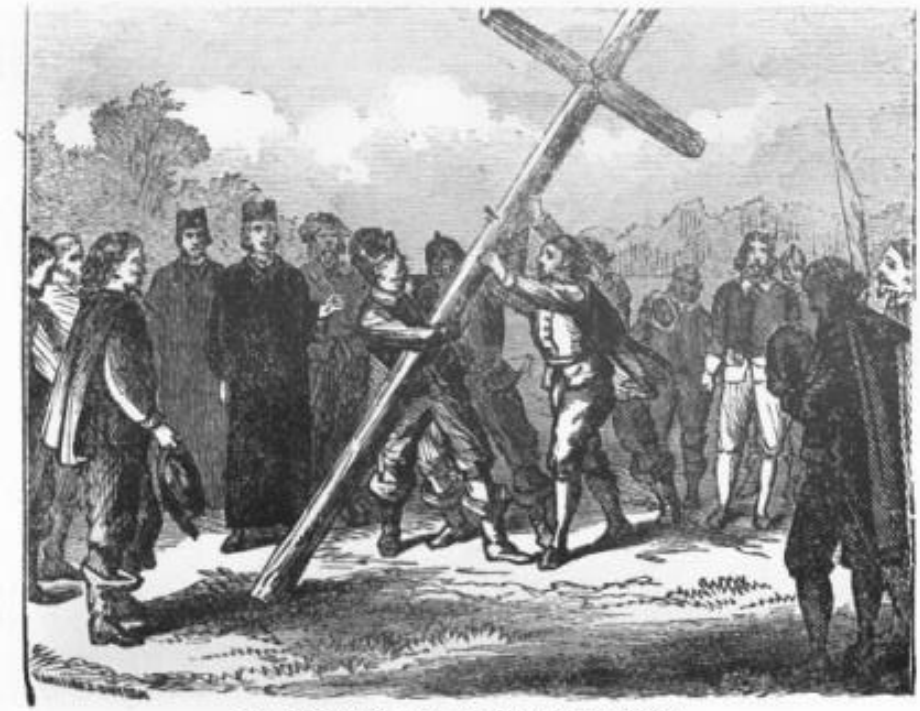


Figure 1. The *Caudillo* and the Cathedral: Place d'Armes (Jackson Square), New Orleans, c. 1864. Carte-de-Visite by McPherson and Oliver.

The landing.

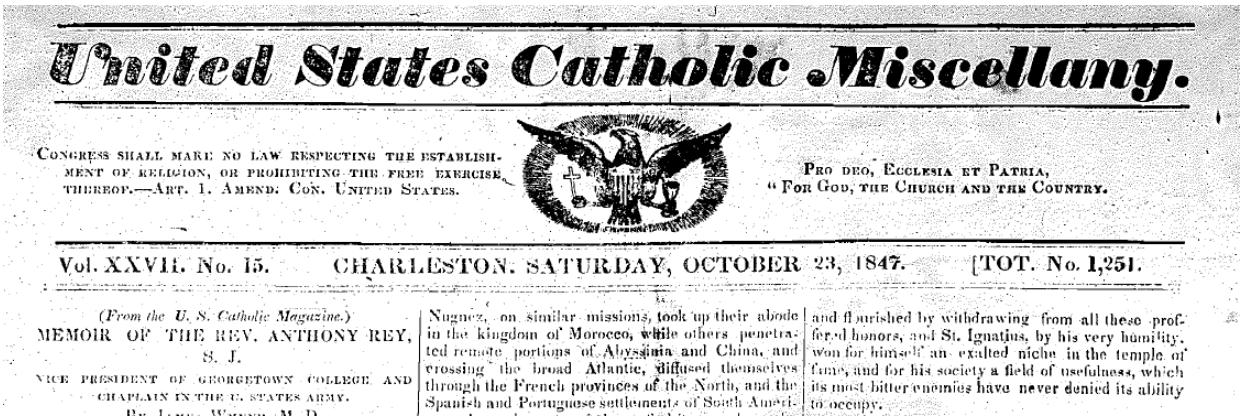


LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS.

Figure 2. Rival depictions of the nation's pilgrim origins, as taught to nineteenth-century schoolchildren. *Above*, the landing of the Puritan pilgrims at Plymouth, from Samuel Goodrich's *Pictorial History of the United States*, revised ed. (Philadelphia, Sorin & Ball, 1847)*; below,* the landing of Maryland's Catholic pilgrims, from Martin Kerney's *Catechism of the History of the United States* (Baltimore: Murphy & Co., 1850).

WALKER BEFORE HIS EXECUTION.

Figure 3. The contrition of a filibuster: William Walker's final moments, as depicted a generation later in *Cassell's History of the United States*, Volume 3 (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1874).



United States Catholic Miscellany.

CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF.—ART. 1. AMEND. CON. UNITED STATES.

PRO DEO, ECCLESIA ET PATRIA, "FOR GOD, THE CHURCH AND THE COUNTRY.

Vol. XXVII. No. 15. CHARLESTON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1847. [TOT. No. 1,251.

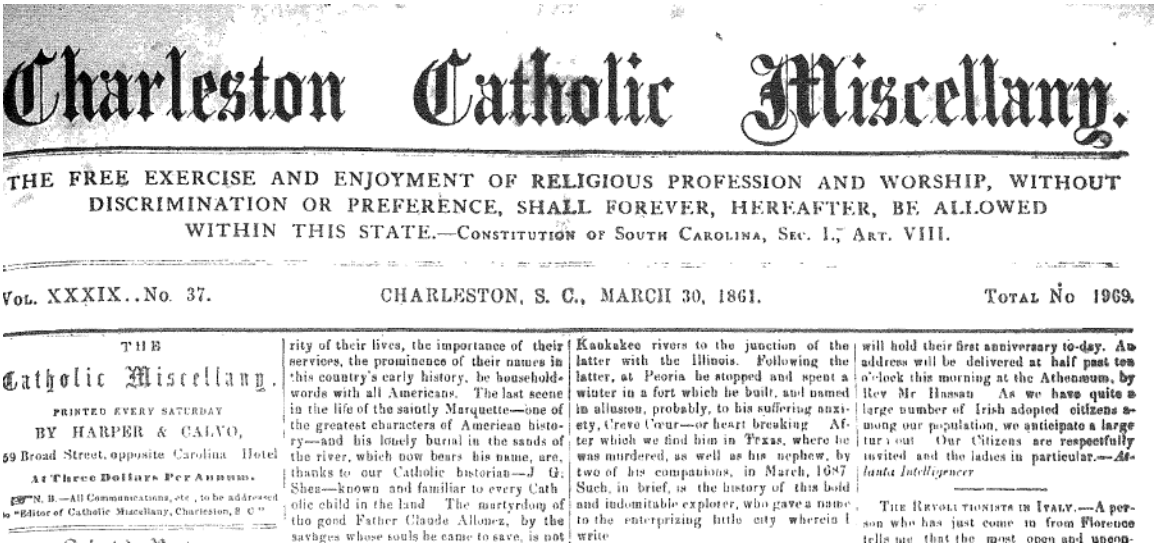
(From the U. S. Catholic Magazine.)

MEMOIR OF THE REV. ANTHONY REY, S. J.

VICE PRESIDENT OF GEORGETOWN COLLEGE AND CHAPLAIN IN THE U. STATES ARMY.

Nugnez, on similar missions, took up their abode in the kingdom of Morocco, while others penetrated remote portions of Abyssinia and China, and crossing the broad Atlantic, diffused themselves through the French provinces of the North, and the Spanish and Portuguese settlements of South Ameri-

and flourished by withdrawing from all these proffered honors, and St. Ignatius, by his very humility, won for himself an exalted niche in the temple of fame, and for his society a field of usefulness, which its most bitter enemies have never denied its ability to occupy.



Charleston Catholic Miscellany.

THE FREE EXERCISE AND ENJOYMENT OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION AND WORSHIP, WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION OR PREFERENCE, SHALL FOREVER, HEREAFTER, BE ALLOWED WITHIN THIS STATE.—CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA, SEC. 1, ART. VIII.

VOL. XXXIX..No. 37. CHARLESTON, S. C., MARCH 30, 1861. TOTAL No 1969.

THE Catholic Miscellany.

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At Three Dollars Per Annum.

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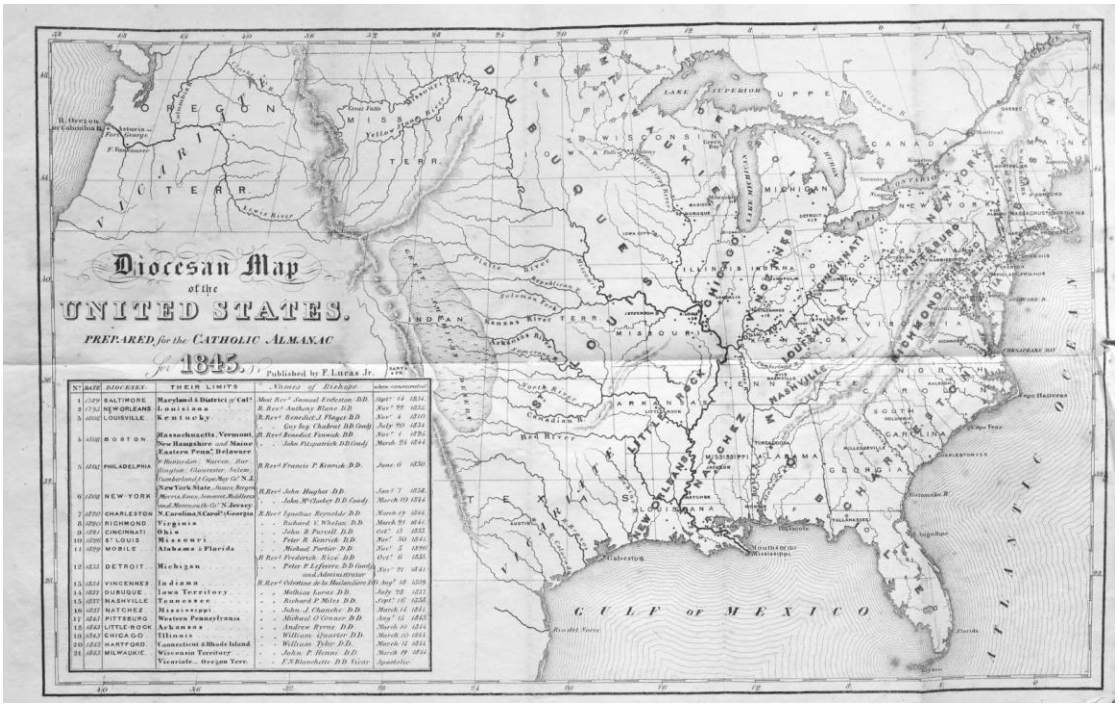
rity of their lives, the importance of their services, the prominence of their names in this country's early history, be household words with all Americans. The last scene in the life of the saintly Marquette—one of the greatest characters of American history—and his lonely burial in the sands of the river, which now bears his name, are, thanks to our Catholic historian—J. G. Shea—known and familiar to every Catholic child in the land. The martyrdom of the good Father Claude Allonez, by the savages whose souls he came to save, is not

Kankakee rivers to the junction of the latter with the Illinois. Following the latter, at Peoria he stopped and spent a winter in a fort which he built, and named in allusion, probably, to his suffering anxiety, Creve Cœur—or heart breaking. After which we find him in Texas, where he was murdered, as well as his nephew, by two of his companions, in March, 1687. Such, in brief, is the history of this bold and indomitable explorer, who gave a name to the enterprizing little city wherein I write

will hold their first anniversary to-day. An address will be delivered at half past ten o'clock this morning at the Athenæum, by Rev Mr Hassan. As we have quite a large number of Irish adopted citizens among our population, we anticipate a large turn out. Our Citizens are respectfully invited and the ladies in particular.—*Atlanta Intelligencer*

THE REVOLUTIONISTS IN ITALY.—A person who has just come to from Florence tells me that the most open and uncon-

Figure 4. Above: The front page of the *United States Catholic Miscellany* in 1847, complete with text from the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, along with a patriotic emblem of an eagle clutching a cross and a chalice. The *Miscellany's* masthead remained virtually unchanged from the paper's founding in 1822 until (below) South Carolina's act of secession occasioned the removal of *United States*—"those two obnoxious words"—the replacement of the First Amendment with text from the state constitution, and the abandonment of the national bird.



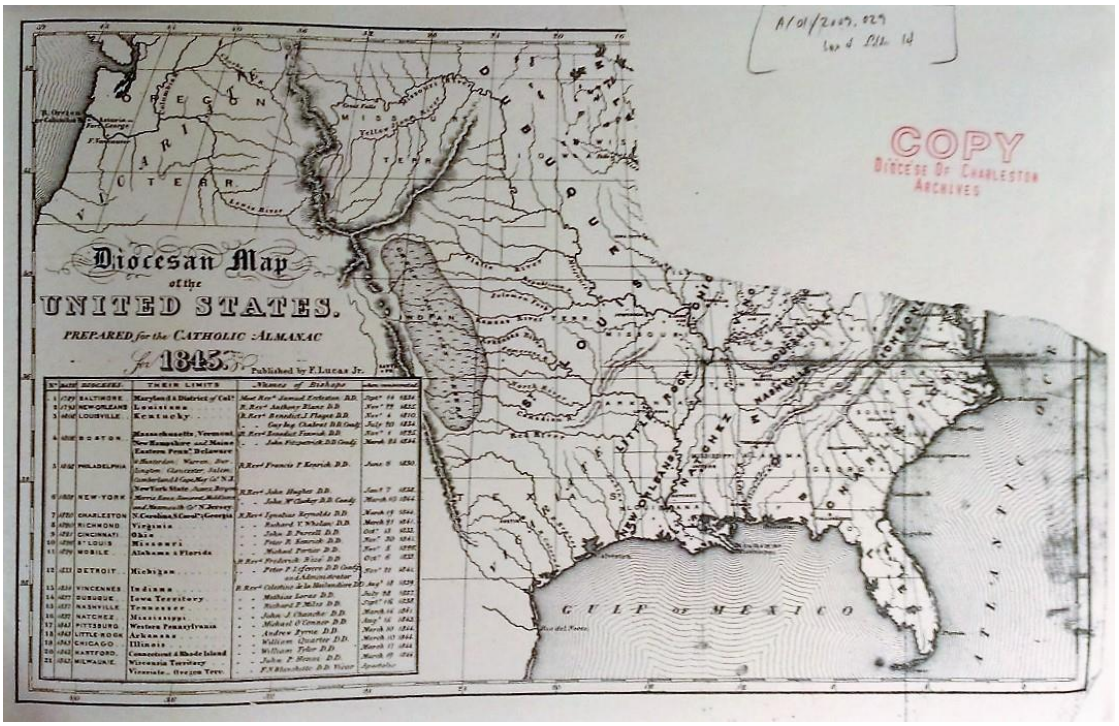


Figure 5. Above: The 1845 edition of the *Catholic Almanac* included a fold-out diocesan map of the United States, allowing readers to track the geographic expansion of the church as well as the nation. *The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory for the Year 1845* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Jr., 1845). Below: Patrick Lynch's personal copy shows evidence of a modification that could hardly have been accidental. Catholic Diocese of Charleston Archives, Episcopal Papers, Series 3: Patrick Lynch, Box 4, Folder 14. Used with permission.

Figure 6. The design of New Orleans' *Le Propagateur Catholique* and Mexico City's *La Voz de la Religión* bore a striking—and perhaps more than accidental—resemblance in the late 1840s.

Figure 7. Now a sporting goods store, Rafael de Rafael's printing house at 13 Calle Cadena (Calle Venustiano Carranza) was once the wellspring of ultramontane commentary in Mexico City. Photograph by R. Paul McClung.

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El Observador Católico (Mexico City)

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