Rendering Unto Caesar: Catholics, the State, and the Idea of a Christian Canada

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The recent Canadian federal election was filled with many surprises, including the marking of a shift in traditional voting patterns among Canadian Christians. On April 23rd, one week before the vote, an Angus-Reid Survey for the *Toronto Star* indicated that "50 per cent of self-described English-speaking Catholics outside of Quebec" would vote for the Conservative Party on 2 May 2011. The Liberals, who historically had been the party of choice for Roman Catholics, and who had boasted at least four Catholic prime ministers since 1968, would glean only twenty-five percent support from English-speaking Catholics. The NDP and Greens could count on the support of nineteen percent of Catholics and four percent respectively. While the poll only surveyed 2,269 English-speaking Catholic adults, it still claimed a margin of error of plus or minus 1.8 percent. These numbers aside, it appeared that Catholics within Canada were not less interested in engaging in Canadian politics and the myriad of issues at play in the public square; they were simply moving to the right and placing their trust in a prime minister who was openly an evangelical Christian and whose party, at least in some quarters, proposed a more socially conservative agenda, informed by traditional Judaeo-Christian values.[1] Therein, in the larger national debate about "What Canada Is, or What Canada Must Represent," this poll signals, perhaps, that one of Canada's largest religious groups is holding firmly to a more traditional notion of Canada as a Christian country and seeking new partisan ways to achieve this vision.

There is little doubt, historically, that Catholics believed that Canada was intended to be a Christian country. Not surprisingly, where they differed from their Protestant "separated Brethren," was the belief that the country was intended by Divine providence to be Catholic. Yet, even with a common assumption that they might be part of an evangelizing presence in Canada – which could be loosely described as a *gestae dei per catholicos* – Catholics themselves disagreed on the manner by which this Catholic Canada was to be accomplished. Until the mid-twentieth century the Catholic Church was openly divided along clear cultural and linguistic lines, between the majority of Francophone Catholics who lived in the province of Quebec and in small linguistic enclaves in other provinces, and Scottish and Irish Catholics who dominated the Church outside of Quebec. While each of these groups could demonstrate unity if not uniformity on matters of doctrine, morals, and obedience to the Church's magisterium, there was considerable disagreement on how the Catholic faith could best be represented and transmitted in Canada. When tens of thousands of Catholic immigrants from southern, eastern and central Europe began to arrive in Canada in the early twentieth century, the two charter Catholic groups feared a complete upset of the fragile ethno-linguistic balance that had been created in the Canadian Church. For their part new Catholic Canadians – Germans, Italians, Poles, Slovaks, Hungarians, Portuguese, Ukrainians, and the Syrians, to name just a few – had their own sense that their new home was a receptive Christian county, if not a Protestant one, and more to the point that in face of this Protestant dominance their Catholicism was best preserved by their own languages and cultural traditions. This paper merely outlines how Catholics identified and professed their loyalty to Canada as a Christian nation, but could not agree among themselves the manner in which Christianity could most effectively complement the variety of Catholic visions and expectations of the nation.

The French Canadian Catholic vision of Canada, and the role of their communities in it, possesses the richest historiography of all of the Catholic traditions. From the first arrival of the Catholic French during the explorations of Jacques Cartier in 1534, it has always been acknowledged in the historical literature that the Catholic Church was an integral part of French colonization and settlement in North America. In a mirror of *Ancien Regime* France that promoted emigration to and trade in Acadia and the St. Lawrence Valley, the French of the New World were aggressive in their evangelization of the First Nations whom they found living in

their newly explored and claimed lands, and were conscious of reconstructing parish, institutional structures, and the episcopate they had known in the old world.[2] In 1641, the colonists travelling with the Sieur de la Maisonneuve, who founded Montreal, were clear in their resolve that they were building a New Jerusalem in the North American forest. The Company of the Holy Sacrament, was linked with the post-Tridentine Catholic revival in seventeenth-century France and its members were confident that they would transform this new *terra incognita* and its indigenous peoples into a strong Catholic Christian kingdom, focused at Ville Marie, the city of Mary, now Montreal.[3]

The dreams of the *Compagnie de Saint-Sacrament* were unrequited as merchants, politicians, military personnel, landholders, and agriculturalists, and even other missionaries, pushed their own agendas to the fore. The Church still maintained a central place within the popular cultural life of New France and more formally in its institutional structures, but it never had the strength accorded it by such historians as Francis Parkman. Squabbling between bishops and priests, clergy and bureaucrats, numerous absentee bishops after 1700, and differing views of Catholic practice between laypersons and the clergy, weakened the power of the Church in the day-to-day life of the colonies; nevertheless, how ever tenuous Mass attendance might have been or how indifferent the classes and masses may have been to the dictates of the Bishop, few would argue that the Church was not part of the fabric of French culture, in the old world or the new.[4] With the formalization of the British Conquest in 1763 under the Treaty of Paris, French Catholicism was allowed to persist "so far as the laws of Great Britain permit," which meant in practice that Catholicism survived in what became known as the Province of Quebec and over time Catholic leaders developed important links to the Protestant governors of the colony, who, in the early period of the conquest, turned a blind eye to the Church's survival and expansion.[5]

The possibility of a Catholic presence in a Christian Canada was given a greater degree of promise and permanence by the Quebec Act (1774). Under the terms of the Act, Catholics were accorded religious freedom in Quebec and rights and privileges to the liberal professions and public office unknown to Catholics elsewhere in the Empire, where the Penal Laws were still operative.[6] Regarded by the neighbouring Anglo-Protestant colonies as one of the "intolerable acts," because it accorded rights to "popery" in America and potentially blocked the expansion of the tidewater colonies into the Mississippi valley, it was at best a unique

experiment in toleration or perhaps, at worst, a crass attempt to keep Quebec loyal in the face of a potential political disruption in other British American colonies. Regardless of the British intent behind the legislation, over time the Quebec Act became in reality a *magna carta* for all Canadian Catholics. The rights accorded to Catholics in 1774 became the basis upon which Catholic rights in the central and western colonies would be grounded and made an ongoing friendly relationship necessary between the Canadian state and the Catholic hierarchy. By 1791, Catholics were able to vote in provincial elections, stand for election to the legislatures, rise in the legal profession, sit on the bench, and aspire to political equality with their non-Catholic neighbours. In Lower Canada (now Quebec) new generations of Catholic liberal professionals and politicians arose, creating for themselves a loud a powerful voice in provincial affairs. Such rights and dignities were not secured for Catholics in the Maritime colonies until Catholic Emancipation in 1829, and one year later in Newfoundland. In the province of Upper Canada, carved out of the old Province of Quebec in 1791, the Catholic minorities, both Francophone and Anglophone, would also be able to avail themselves of the rights and privileges that could be traced back to the Quebec Act.[7]

Circumstances both domestic and international transformed the French Canadian Catholic Church and its view of Canada in the mid-nineteenth century. First, the political and constitutional changes of the creation of the United Province of Canada in 1840, which merged the Upper and Lower provinces into one political entity, was perceived as a threat to French and Catholic culture, which was relegated to minority status in the new Union. With the weakening of the French liberal professions and civil leaders as a result of the failed rebellions by the *patriotes* in 1837-38, the Catholic clergy quickly filled the leadership void.[8] This new generation of churchmen was deeply influenced by the growing Ultramontane Catholic revival in Europe, a movement brought forcefully to Quebec in 1840-41 by the enthusiastic preaching of the exiled Bishop of Nancy and Toul, Charles-August Forbin-Janson.[9]

Ultramontane Catholicism worked at several levels: it re-invigorated the laity to embrace the Catholic devotional and sacramental life; it prompted a greater clerical presence in political life, actively defending Church teachings and positions against potentially harmful government policies; it reawakened a strong sense of Catholic distinctiveness from the world around; it re-established a rather firm hierarchy of authority which enhanced clerical control of the Church from the desk of the bishop right

down to the curé's pulpit. The Church came to view itself as playing a bigger role in the public square whether in its public pronouncements of faith in architecture, processions, the public calendar, and the rhythms of daily life, or by exerting its influence in the civil corridors of power.[10] For good or for ill, this brand of French Canadian Catholicism left its indelible imprint of popular perceptions of the Catholic church in Canada, while carving out a distinct place in the power structures of Quebec, which was created as a province in the Dominion of Canada by the British North America Act of 1867.

This revitalized French Canadian Catholicism was not exclusive to Quebec. As Canada grew territorially and as new immigrants arrived, many French Canadian Catholics became assertive of their religious and linguistic rights in other parts of Canada. While Quebec might be regarded by French Canadian Catholics as their homeland, it became clear that such comfort could not be accorded to their compatriots elsewhere in the country. In 1869-70, French Canadians and francophone Métis at Red River took up arms against what they perceived as Canadian aggression, from the "beachhead" of Anglophone and Protestant settlers who had made their way to the Great Plains; similarly, in New Brunswick, the Protestant-dominated provincial government summarily cut off funding to French Canadian Catholic schools, principally on the grounds that the government was not obliged "by law" to finance Acadian separate schools.[11] New French Canadian Catholic leaders, such as Bishop A.A. Taché of St. Boniface, Manitoba, and, later, nationalist politician Henri Bourassa, came to regard Canada as a country that ought to ensure equal rights for Anglophones and Francophones, Catholics and Protestants, *a mare usque ad mare*, in every part of Canada.[12] Raymond Huel has argued persuasively that French Canadian settlers from Quebec, and the bishops and priests who led and served them, carried with them a *gestae dei per francos*, a sense that as Francophone Catholics they were ordained to spread "the things of God" to the rest of Canada by means of the French language and culture. In one sense, the Quebec Church regarded itself as the saving francophone remnant of the Faith, particularly after the French Revolution had destroyed the Church and secularized mother France.[13] By 1900, this vision of Canada appeared to be coming to fruition, the Quebec Church was vibrant and confident,[14] while francophone bishops and clergy, both Canadian and French-born, many of whom belonged to the religious order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, dominated the territory stretching from Lake Superior to Vancouver Island and as far north as the

Arctic Ocean.[15]

The fact of the matter, however, was that while French-speaking Catholics dominated the Canadian Church numerically, historically, territorially, and in terms of power and influence, by 1900 they were not alone. From colonial times there had been sizeable minorities of Scottish Catholics in Cape Breton, eastern Nova Scotia, PEI, and eastern Upper Canada, and Irish Catholic communities in Newfoundland, the Maritime Colonies, parts of Lower Canada and in the town and rural areas of Upper Canada.[16] By the late nineteenth century, these Anglophone (and in some cases Gaelic-speaking) communities had set down roots, produced new Canadian-born generations, absorbed American Catholics who had departed the Republic to the south, and constituted about one third of all of British North America's Catholics.[17]

It should be pointed out, however, that although numerically a minority among Catholics in British North America when counted in aggregate terms, these Anglophone Catholics were often the primary Catholic group in provinces and colonies outside of Quebec, comprising significant minorities of the total population in Newfoundland, PEI, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and sections of Ontario. In his landmark essay "The Problem of the Double Minority,"[18] historian John S. Moir referred to English-speaking Catholics as a double minority – a linguistic minority in their own Church, and a religious minority among Canada's largely Protestant Anglophone population. Moir suggested that this "double minority status" may have developed the specific religious and social character of English-speaking Catholic communities, depending on the intensity of their multiple minority status in a given region of Canada at any given time. Surprisingly, few historians of Canadian Catholicism have taken up Moir's invitation to investigate the relevance of double minority status for specific Anglophone groups, although his hypothesis may go a long way in explaining why Catholics of Irish and Scottish descent broke ranks with their Francophone co-religionists and Protestant rivals, siding with one majority or the other on specific issues, so many times over the course of modern Canadian history.

As Irish Catholics become the predominant group of non-Franco-phones by the middle of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that their voice emerged strongly as a counterbalance to the French Canadian ecclesiastical establishment, and the expression "les Irlandais" was often accompanied by a colourful adjective to describe those Catholics who provided stumbling blocks to French Canadian ambitions and vision of the

Church in Canadian society.[19] Although there have been no thorough scholarly studies exploring the idea of Irish Catholic providentialism in Canada, there are shards of evidence that suggest that part of the Irish self-image in Canada was coloured by a greater sense of divine mission. In one of his many St. Patrick's Day addresses, clerico-nationalist Archbishop of Toronto, John Joseph Lynch, referred to the contemporary mission of the Irish Catholics to convert the world, just as St. Patrick had done centuries before.[20] Over thirty years later, the Catholic Church Extension Society, the Canadian Church's chief fundraising agency for home missionary activity, referred to their mission as that of the conversion of Canada. Its founders, Father Alfred E. Burke of Prince Edward Island, Sir Charles Fitzpatrick, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, entrepreneur Eugene O'Keefe, professionals Michael Haney and Michael Davis stood behind Archbishop Fergus Patrick McEvay of Toronto when he explained to his French Canadian colleagues:

> We have been striving to do our best in a most disinterested and what appeared to be the most practical way. The foreign element, the main object of our solicitude can in the opinion of some of us at least, be reached only in one of two ways, either through the medium of men who speak their own language, or through the offices of those who speak the English language which is that of the majority of the West and which is the language the foreigners must learn of necessity if they are to procure a livelihood in the places in which they live . . .[21]

At that time, Bishop Michael Francis Fallon of London Ontario, the son of Irish-Catholic immigrants, clearly identified the advantageous position of Catholics who spoke English as being perhaps the most effective agents of evangelization directed at the Protestant majority in Canada. Such views were not lost on Rome's representatives in Canada, who paid attention to Anglophone Catholic claims, and often supported the causes of Scottish or Irish Canadian candidates for Episcopal nominations, particularly in Episcopal sees where there was a distinctive ethnic or linguistic mix.[22] The impression that Anglophone Catholics were gaining force within the Church was confirmed by the successful domination by 1930 of the western Canadian sees by Anglophones (most of whom were Ontarians or Maritimers) and even the acclaim given to the words of John Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, when he rather imprudently spoke at the International Eucharistic Congress in Montreal in 1910: "it is plain that English will be the language of the West as French is the language of the

East; and it is hoped that the splendid example of those who did settle in days gone by in Quebec . . . will be followed by a new English-speaking race of settlers."[23]

What emerged by the early twentieth century was an English-speaking Catholic vision of Canada that could be characterized by the following: a dedication to Canadian and British institutions and law; a strong sense of loyalty, though not uncritical, to the Crown and the British Empire; a communal drive to seek economic and political respectability, head and shoulders with other Canadians; and, a strong identification with Canada, its history, its landscape, and its potential.[24] In some measure, French Canadian Catholics might agree with many of these aspirations, except for their co-religionists' disposition to see the English-language as the primary vehicle for Catholic success.

The collision of these differing visions of Canada can be made clearly in three examples for the early twentieth century: the school questions, the aforementioned challenges brought by immigration and the settlement of the Canadian West, and engagement in Britain's Imperial wars. In Ontario and Quebec, and subsequently the Territories, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Newfoundland, publicly funded separate denominational schools for Roman Catholics were protected by the Federal government under section 93 of the British North America Act. At Confederation when the newly created provinces assumed authority over education, and religious minorities – Catholics in Ontario and Protestants in Quebec – feared for their educational rights in the face of a potentially hostile majority, it was deemed necessary to protect minority education rights as they existed in law prior to federation.[25] Over time, the gentleman's agreements, as opposed to enshrined legal rights, that allowed the existence of separate Catholic schools in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia proved to be dead letter. In 1890, Manitoba's Protestant majority eliminated Catholic schools with virtual impunity. [26]

In Ontario, the case was less that of Catholic schools, but of bilingual schools, most of which were French-language separate schools, but had no constitutional guarantees to deliver the curriculum other than in the English language. In 1910, the provincial government, under Regulation 17, prohibited French language education after the second grade; Regulation 18 mandated that any school board disobeying Regulation 17 would cease to receive its educational grants from the province. To their horror, French Catholics could not count on support from their Anglophone co-religionists who supported the measure.

English-speaking Catholics resented the fallout that resulted from the French assertions and public agitation for extended language privileges; Ontario's Anglo-Celtic bishops blamed the controversy prompted by ACFEO, the Franco-Ontarian Education Association, for the renewed assault by many non-Catholics on the concept of separate schools generally. For their part, Anglophone Catholic leaders left little negotiating room for their French coreligionists when they claimed that bilingual schools were inefficient and were handicapping Francophone children intellectually, thereby depriving them of the opportunity to succeed in Ontario. In addition, there was also a sense among Anglophone Catholic leaders that they must assert their own sovereignty and power over the Church in Ontario. While the bitterness within the Catholic community was palpable and lingered below the surface for generations, the educational crisis revealed clearly that the English-speaking Catholic vision for a Christian Canada was at loggerheads with the views of Francophone Catholics, some of whom were ardent French Canadian nationalists.[27]

As mentioned earlier, hundreds of thousands of immigrants poured into Canada in the early twentieth century and after the Great War. Many of these new Canadians were Catholics, who had arrived without priests, without disposable incomes, but with expectations that, as in their former homelands, the state would somehow accommodate their religious needs. Implicit in these desires was the immigrant acknowledgment, that even if Protestant outside of Quebec, and Catholic in patches, Canada was a Christian country. For Francophone and Anglophone Catholics the new arrivals necessitated new efforts to recruit clergy with linguistic gifts, build or purchase houses of worship, negotiate cultural Catholicisms that were described in some cases as exotic, given Canadian precedents, and create canonical parishes that were national in focus and not "territorial." Perhaps the fragile entente already reached between the charter cultural groups in the Canadian Church facilitated the easy conception and formation of national parishes, without much of the rancour associated with similar actions in the United States. On the Prairies, however, the situation appeared more urgent as the region was more akin to mission territory in which Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Catholics, and the Orthodox were all competing for the souls of the newcomers. For Catholics the question was twofold: keep the foreigners Catholic for the sake of a Catholic Canada and, depending on the charter linguistic group, make them cultural allies. The challenges posed by western immigration serious strained the already complicated relations between Anglophone and

Francophone Catholics. From 1890 to 1915, the Canadian-born Arch-bishop Adélard Langevin of St. Boniface insisted that new Canadian Catholics fall under his watchful eye, while the Catholic Church Extension Society, which was headquartered in Toronto, became an exponent for evangelization either in the language of the immigrant, or by Anglo-Celtic priests who had the requisite language skills. Langevin and his successor, Arthur Beliveau, had little time for these *Irlandaises* who threatened the *gestae dei per francos* west of the Great Lakes.[28]

The immigrants themselves, however, were content to be agents of their own destiny. Ukrainian Catholics of the Byzantine-Greek Rite insisted on their own priests, their distinctive churches and liturgies, and their own Eparchy. They feared the Latinization and, in some cases, the *Francisation* that they suspected of their Canadian Catholic hosts.[29] Similarly, other new Canadian Catholics – Poles, Italians, Slovaks, Czechs, Portuguese, Hungarians, Slovenes, Maltese, Lebanese Maronites, Syrian Melkytes, Iraqi Chaldaens, Germans, and Chinese – all insisted on preserving their distinctive languages, group identities, and popular religious cultures over the course of the twentieth century. In this way, the Catholic Church in Canada came to accept diversity as a way of life, making perhaps the emergence of official multiculturalism in the 1960s not too surprising for many Catholic Canadians.[30]

Disagreements between the charter partner groups in the Catholic Church in Canada over issues such as education and immigration were exacerbated by how English-speaking Catholics in many regions of the country came to understand themselves as active members of the British Empire. The participation of Irish Catholics, in particular in the South African War, 1899-1902 and the Great War, 1914-1918, widened an already large gulf between French and English speakers in the Church. Like many of their relatives in Ireland, Canada's Irish Catholics did not hesitate in their support of Britain's campaign against the Dutch Calvinist Boer minority in Orange Free State and Transvaal. Although at times critical of British unilateral decision making, warmongering and jingoistic politicians, and a grudging respect for the plucky resistance of the Boers, the Catholic press was generally supportive of the war effort as were such leading politicians as Charles Fitzpatrick, Federal Minister of Justice, and prelates like Archbishop Cornelius O'Brien of Halifax, who was a proud member of the Imperial Federation League. Father Peter O'Leary from Quebec City became the first Roman Catholic chaplain to serve with Canada's overseas contingent. Rank and file Irish and Scottish Catholics,

particularly in Ontario and Nova Scotia, joined with Canadians from all Protestant denominations in fighting in South Africa. Irish Catholic participation was not a case of shovelling out the unemployed and paupers, since only forty percent were blue collar workers, and few left cities and towns where the economy was not robust. Moreover, of those Irish Catholics serving in the Canadian contingent, over seventy-five percent were Canadian born, compared to sixty-three percent of the contingent overall.[31] Although some French Canadian Catholics served in South Africa, most took the lead of nationalist and ardent Catholic politician Henri Bourassa who broke with Sir Wilfrid Laurier's government and condemned the war as merely an imperialist venture and none of Canada's business. His position was gainsaid by Fitzpatrick, Laurier's Minister of Justice who asserted:

> I say that the time had come . . . when it was necessary for the whelps of the lion to rally to the defence of the old land. The time had come when every man must be made to understand whether on the European continent or in South Africa, that blow for blow, whensoever the blow might come, must be struck back by the British, and would be struck as freely from Australia and Canada as from the heart of the Empire itself.[32]

South Africa merely set the stage for further controversy between French and English Catholics when Britain declared war on Germany and the Central powers in 1914, placing Canada automatically at war. Canada's Anglophone Catholics and many Francophone bishops were very supportive of Britain's war effort. English-speaking politicians, lay leaders, fraternal associations, religious orders, clergy, and bishops openly support the war effort and facilitated recruitment of men.[33] Non-francophone Catholics enlisted commensurate to their numbers in the early stages of the war. While some could be found in the Canadian Expeditionary Force because of weak economy in 1914, others were enraged by alleged German atrocities, the capture of Catholic Belgium and the looting of its churches and Louvain University, and the prospect of the Empire being shattered. Some regarded recruitment as a sign of the firmness of Catholic resolve as loyal Canadians and Imperial citizens. On the other hand, French Canadian Catholics were subject to an anglicized military structure, poor recruitment techniques, and compelling rhetoric from Bourassa and others that the best defence of Canada was at home in Canada.[34] Fellow politician Olivier Asselin claimed that in the context of

Regulation 17, why should French Canadians fight in Europe for the self-determination of peoples, when one knows that the "Prussians" are next door in Ontario.[35] When the federal government mandated national registration of men and resources in 1916 and later legislated conscription in 1917, French Canadians resisted, and although they had some support from a few English-speaking Catholics, the weight of the non-Francophone Church was squarely in the Imperial camp. For many French Canadians, *les Irlandaises* had been transformed into *les orangistes.*

The Great War and, in the minds of many English Canadians of many religious stripes, the Christian values for which it was fought, demonstrated clearly how the charter groups in the Catholic Church had drifted from each other on issues of national vision. It clearly brought to the fore how the vision of Anglophone Catholic Canadians had taken shape. Anglophone Catholics had found common cause with Protestant Canadians on issues of Canada's role in the world, the potential of Canada economically and politically within the Empire and the necessity to make better lives for themselves through their economic, political and social integration into the fabric of Canadian life. They would share strong religious bonds with their French-Canadian co-religionists and would defend Catholic rights to the bitter end, regardless of language or ethnicity, but they would also underscore, throughout, that the future of the faith outside of Quebec rested in the leadership exercised by the Anglophone Catholic bishops. Their Canada, outside of fortress Quebec, would be a Christian Canada, but one in which the Catholic Church would prevail under the agency of the English language.

By mid-century there appeared to be a more formal entente between the two charter members of the Catholic Church in Canada. While the scholarship on the period still requires much development, there are a number of events that suggest how this rapprochement took shape in the 1930s through the 1950s. First, immediately after the Great War, Archbishop Neil McNeil of Toronto took an active leadership role in the *Bonne Entente* movement, which was an attempt by Anglophone and Francophone elites to mend fences through a series of conferences and private meetings. Secondly, the Ontario Government, in response to some positive recommendations and bilingual school reforms prompted by Senator Napoleon Belcourt, relaxed the notorious Regulation 17 and it was finally removed from the books in 1947, thereby dissipating the "open sore" which had been Catholic educational politics in Ontario.[36] This previously explosive situation was perhaps further ameliorated by the

deaths of so many of the protagonists on both sides of the question. Thirdly, in the 1920s and 1930s, an assault on Catholic educational rights in Saskatchewan during the administration of Premier James Thomas Anderson and at the grass roots level by the Ku Klux Klan, prompted a greater degree of Catholic unity, regardless of language.[37] Fourthly, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, in 1917, the subsequent Red Scare throughout North America in the 1920s, and the advance of Communist internationally in the 1930s, drew Catholics together against the threat of a potentially devastating common enemy. Led by the uncompromising denunciations of Communism by Pius XI and Pius XII, Catholics in Canada firmly positioned themselves as defenders of a Christian culture and its values as the bedrock of Canadian society.[38] Fifthly, although World War II brought yet another conscription crisis, the period 1939-1945, did not witness the bitter division evident in the first global war, a generation previous, but witnessed heightened Catholic involvement, French and non-French in the war effort, both in the corridors of power and on the ground.

In fact, with the war's end and the soon to follow declaration of the Cold War between the West and the forces of Communism, Catholics appeared united not only as a Church but also with non-Catholic Canadians. The most visible sign that Catholics were squarely aligned with Western political values and social aspirations came in 1947 at the Marian Congress in Ottawa. Organized by Archbishop Alexandre Vachon of Ottawa to commemorate the centennial of his Diocese and honour his personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Congress was a gathering of 200,000 Catholics from Canada and abroad, and all celebrations were carried out in both official languages. Pope Pius XII designated the freshly minted Cardinal, James C. McGuigan of Toronto, as his official legate. Politicians of all religious stripes, including Prime Minister Mackenzie King, were notable by their official presence at the Congress. Noteworthy, however, was the theme of the Congress and the undercurrent of the new cold war tensions between the West and the rising communist bloc. Dedicated to "Our Lady Queen of Peace," and echoing the messages of the apparition of Mary at Fatima, bishops and cardinals spoke about the "false liberty," errors, and threats to Christianity in the post-war period, and that only the "conversion" of Russia would usher in "an era of peace in the world."[39] The leaders of Canada's Catholics, English and French, had now publicly aligned themselves as Cold Warriors to push back the forces of "atheistic, militant, and materialistic" Communists. According

to Cardinal McGuigan:

> If the world turns away from Christ it turns away from truth and it
> delivers itself into bondage. We have seen this in great countries in
> our own day. If liberty is one of our traditions as Canadians, if British
> institutions to which we belong and from which we inherited our civic
> traditions are contrived to safeguard liberty and the sacredness of the
> human person, if we have been taught by our fathers to abhor political
> systems which treat the individual merely as a creature and instrument
> of the State, it is because we belong to a family of nations nourished
> in infancy on the milk of Christian truth and trained to maturity on the
> practice of Gospel precepts.[40]

Evidently, Protestant Canadians approved. The lone dissenting voice, at
least in public, was that of T.T. Shields and his Canadian Protestant
League, who formally objected to the presence of a Papal Army on
Canadian soil. A detachment of papal zouaves had formed an honour
guard as the statue of Notre Dame du Cap (from Trois Rivieres) had been
processed across the bridge from Hull, Quebec, down the Rideau Canal to
Lansdowne Park, the site of the Congress.[41]

By the 1950s, Catholics of all languages could be described as
churchgoing citizens who could be found in nearly every corner of Canada
and in every socio-occupational category. The new media, radio and
television, had their fair share of Catholic radio priests, elucidating matters
of faith, lecturing on academic subjects, and reporting on world affairs. In
the mid-1950s, American media dynamo and vociferous anti-communist,
Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, was as popular with French Canadian television
viewers in Montreal and Quebec City as he was with Catholics elsewhere
in Canada.[42] Catholics, both French and English-speaking could be found
in the corridors of power provincially and federally, in all political parties.
With the departure of Mackenzie King in 1948, the new Canadian Prime
Minister was Louis Stephen St. Laurent, a Quebec lawyer who had both
French Canadian and Irish ancestry. By 1961, Quebec was clearly only
one home to Canada's Catholics. Catholics were in excess of 45 percent
of the persons living in PEI and New Brunswick, and they were over 30
percent of the population in Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and
Nova Scotia. One in every four persons in Manitoba and Saskatchewan
was Catholic.[43] While not always appreciated or warmly welcomed by
non-Catholics in some Canadian regions, their churches, schools,
convents, hospitals, social services, and charitable networks were visible

in nearly every major centre of population in the country.

The calling of the Second Vatican Council in 1958, and its subsequent convocation from 1962 to 1965 marked a significant modern watershed in the Church's encounter with the secular world and the Council's impact was felt almost immediately in Canada. The sixteen constitutions, declarations and decrees from the Council changed the face and practice of Catholicism across the planet in the decades following their promulgation. The Church in Canada changed as well as the liturgies in the Roman Rite promoted vernacular languages, not Latin, and as worship moved from the Tridentine Mass, to a new Rite that gathered the priest and people around the table of the Lord. The former emphasis on clericalism and the hierarchical pyramid of power and control, from the episcopacy at its apex to the laity at is based was turned upside down. Beginning from the new Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, the Church was defined in less institutional terms as "the people of God" and each member – clerical, religious, or lay – was regarded as "co-responsible" for the Church by merit of their common baptism. Lay persons were called to be active as witnesses of the Gospel in the world, and new voices were heard in Catholicism for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. Clearly the Council had changed the course and disposition of the Church with regard to the world, while retaining its continuity with the sacred teachings it had nurtured for close to two millennia.

The discussion of secularization in Canada has been a subject that has preoccupied church historians in Canada for a generation. While not featured prominently, or sometimes even tangentially in the historiographical discussion, Catholics in the 1960s were implementing the seismic changes of Vatican II, while Canadian society itself was grappling with the civil, ecumenical, social, and moral transformation afoot in the Western world. In the 1950s, Catholics across the country had little inkling of the changes that were to come although, as has been argued recently by Michael Gauvreau in the context of Quebec, some Catholics may have already been agents of or at least antecedents of the changes at the grassroots level that were taking place within the flurry of the Quiet Revolution.[44] Over the next two decades, Church attendance everywhere in Canada dropped significantly and numbers of Canadians proclaiming that they had "no religion" rose dramatically. Catholics were not exempt from this, and by the 1980s Catholic attendance at regular weekly Mass and participation in Church life plummeted especially in Quebec. By 1998, Quebec had willing surrendered its denominational schools and replaced

them with a preferred system based on language. The Quebec state had taken control of education, health care and social services, and by the twenty-first century was even attempting to mandate its own generic course in morals and values in all publicly funded schools. In Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Territories, publicly funded Catholic schools continue to exist and, by some definitions flourish, but the reality is that these schools often provide the only "face" of the Church that its pupils will ever see.

In the public square, Catholics became deeply divided over a variety of moral questions that were brought to the fore by new legislation, human rights challenges, and decisions of the Canadian judicial system. Abortion, euthanasia, and equity and diversity issues seriously divided the Church in both French and English Canada. Catholics with a passion for social justice issues in Canada, have a long tradition and pedigree in Canada, with roots in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, Antigonish Movement, the Jeunesse movements, and Catholic Action, but they have lost much of their steam in the face of ecclesiastical retrenchment, renewed clericalism, and new interpretations of the Council which emphasise continuity over change.

On the other hand, Catholics who have retained more traditional or socially conservative positions on end-of-life life issues, abortion, genetic experimentation, family planning, and same sex marriage, have found they have much more in common with evangelical Protestant Christians than with many members of their own Church and, in particular, Catholic politicians who carefully separated their public positions from their private religious beliefs. It could be argued that it is this traditional group of Catholics, perhaps the mainstream today, who bear closest resemblance to their co-religionists prior to the 1960s. In the years following the Council there is little evidence to suggest that these practicing Catholics have ceased to believe that Canada was Christian at its heart, and that this relationship with the state has not been altered by the emergent religious pluralism in the Church, brought by immigrants of non-European origins, but perhaps strengthened by it. Catholics in Quebec, of course, have long departed the institution, save for moments best described now as rites of passage – catching, hatching and dispatching. When viewed over the long term, however, the notion that loyalty to the state, rendering unto Caesar, has been compatible, perhaps integral to being a good Catholic Christian, particularly to those Catholics living in English Canada. In this broad historical context, contemporary notions of strong Catholic citizenship in

a Canadian state grounded in Judeo-Christian values are hardly surprising. Moreover, in this light, the current political realignment of English-speaking Catholics, at the Federal level, may reflect more continuity with the past than a break from it.

Endnotes

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