

Conflict or Consensus? Catholics in Canada and in the United States, 1780-1820*

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In the years from the early 1780s to the early 1820s the flood of immigrants from Europe in both Canada and the United States, the movement of people within North America, and the settling of the Maritimes, Upper Canada, and the American territory west of the Appalachians deeply changed the nature and composition of the North American Catholic community. In Canada, the Catholics of the old province of Quebec, which was subdivided in 1791 into Lower and Upper Canada, were soon surrounded by Catholics who had mainly arrived from Ireland, Scotland, and the United States.¹ In the United States, the formerly

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¹ For a general discussion of immigration and the Catholic community, see Terrence Murphy and Cyril K. Byme, eds., *Religion and Identity. The Experience of Irish and Scottish Catholics in Atlantic Canada* (St. John's: Jesperson Press, 1987); Luca Codignola, "The Rome-Paris-Québec Connection in an Age of Revolutions, 1760-1820," in Pierre H. Boulle and Richard A. Lebrun, eds., *Le Canada et la Révolution française. Actes du 6e colloque du CIEC. 29, 30, 31 octobre 1987* (Montreal: Centre interuniversitaire d'Etudes européennes/Interuniversity Centre for European Studies, 1989), p. 118. For immigration in general, see Robert V. Wells, *The Population of the British Colonies in America before 1776. A Survey of Census Data* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 46-47, 49, 61; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 111-112. For Nova Scotia, see Angus Anthony Johnston, *A History of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nova Scotia* (Antigonish, NS: St. Francis Xavier University Press, 1960), vol. I: 1611-1827, pp. 103-104; William Stewart McNutt, *The Atlantic Provinces. The Emergence of a Colonial Society 1712-1857* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), pp. 94, 117-119; Murphy, "James Jones and the Establishment of the Roman Catholic Church Government in the Maritime Provinces," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Study Sessions*, XLVIII (1981), p. 29; Murphy, "The Emergence of Maritime Catholicism 1781-1830," in Phillip A. Buckner and David Frank, eds., *The Acadiensis Reader* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1985), vol. I *Atlantic Canada Before Confederation*, pp. 69-71. For Prince Edward Island, see

unilingual small community of English origin was replaced by a very disunited church, ruled by a predominantly French-speaking hierarchy, and chiefly composed of people of Irish origin, who co-existed with Scots, Germans, Belgians, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italians.²

In both Canada and the United States this change was nothing less than traumatic. Yet the chart of episcopal appointments in the first two decades of the nineteenth century suggests a well-planned development that was successfully interwoven with the growth and expansion of North America. Whereas in 1796 there were only three bishops (in Quebec, Baltimore, and St. John's), in 1808 new bishoprics were erected in Boston (Ambrose Maréchal), New York (Richard Luke Concanen), and Philadelphia (Michael Francis Egan) on the eastern seaboard and in Bardstown, Kentucky (Benedict-Joseph Flaget) in the west. In 1815 Louis-Guillaume-Valentin Dubourg was appointed bishop of New Orleans, in

Andrew Hill Clark, *Three Centuries and the Island. A Historical Geography of Settlement and Agriculture in Prince Edward Island, Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), p. 55; Muriel Kent Roy, "Peuplement et croissance démographique en Acadie," in Jean Daigle, ed., *Les Acadiens des Maritimes: Etudes thématiques* (Moncton: Centre d'Études Acadiennes, 1980), pp. 170-176. For Cape Breton Island, see Public Record Office, London, Colonial Office [hereafter PRO, CO] 217, 5, 22-26, Francis Legge to William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, Halifax, 12 November 1774. For Newfoundland, see Raymond J. Lahey, "Church Affairs During the French Settlement at Placentia (1662-1714)," unpublished paper presented at the Placentia Area Historical Society, 1 December 1972, pp. 17-18; C. Grant Head, *Eighteenth Century Newfoundland: A Geographer's Perspective* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 82, 84-85, 88, 91-92, 98, 232; John J. Mannion, ed., *The Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography* (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977), pp. 6-7, 13; W. Gordon Handcock, "English Migration to Newfoundland," in *ibid.*, pp. 20-21, 27, 32-33, 40; Glanville James Davies, "England and Newfoundland: Policy and Trade 1660-1783" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Southampton, 1980), pp. 329-330, 340-341, 344; George Casey, "Irish Culture in Newfoundland," in Byrne and Margaret Harry, eds., *Talamh an eisc: Canadian and Irish Essays* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1986), pp. 208-209, 212; Hans Rollmann, "Religious Enfranchisement and Roman Catholics in Eighteenth-Century Newfoundland," in Murphy and Byrne, eds., *Religion and Identity*, pp. 34-52.

² Thomas Timothy McAvoy, *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp. 75-91; James Hennesey, *A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 55, 69-88, 102; Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 101-131. In 1785 the Capuchin Charles Maurice Whelan suggested that any priest in New York should at least speak Gaelic, English, French, and Dutch and that some Spanish and Portuguese were also advisable (Archives of the Sacred Congregation "de Propaganda Fide", Rome [hereafter APF], Congressi, America Centrale [hereafter C, AC], vol. 2, ff. 442rv-443rv, Whelan to [Giuseppe Maria Doria Pamphili], [New York], 28 January 1785).

1817 Edmund Burke became vicar apostolic in Halifax, and in 1819 Alexander Macdonell and Angus Bernard MacEachern were appointed vicars-general with episcopal powers respectively for Upper Canada and for the region comprising Prince Edward Island, Iles de la Madeleine, New Brunswick, and Cape Breton Island.³ A new step forward was taken in 1820, when the Irish John England and Patrick Kelly were appointed bishops respectively of Charleston and Richmond in the south and the French-Canadian Jean-Jacques Lartigue and Joseph-Norbert Provencher were entrusted respectively with the district of Montreal and with the Northwest, including Hudson Bay, as vicars-general of the bishop of Quebec. Meanwhile, the succession to the Newfoundland vicariate apostolic had been regularly provided, and Baltimore (1808) and Quebec (1819) were erected into archbishoprics.⁴ At the beginning of the 1820s, the only territory of North America which the Holy See had not provided for was the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, which, upon the suggestion of Joseph-Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, was left to the care of Russia or California.⁵

If we look at the ethnic origin of the members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Canada, what we see is quite consistent with the new ethnic composition of the country, which was, at the end of the 1810s, politically subdivided into Lower and Upper Canada, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Only three out of six bishops were of French-Canadian origin,

³ Cape Breton was attached to MacEachern's jurisdiction only in 1820. See APF, Acta, vol. 182, ff. 4rv-11 [a]ry, Proceedings of the General Congregation of 24 January 1820.

⁴ James Louis O'Donel, the first vicar apostolic of Newfoundland, was Irish and ruled upon a flock that was mostly Irish. This paper will not deal with Newfoundland, which contemporaries regarded as independent from the jurisdiction of Quebec at least since the Treaty of Utrecht (11 April 1713). On the religious history of Newfoundland, see Michael Francis Howley, *Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland* (Boston: Doyle and Whittle, 1888); Daniel Woodley Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records* (New York: Macmillan, 1895). On the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, see Lahey, *James Louis O'Donel in Newfoundland, 1784-1807: The Establishment of the Roman Catholic Church* (St. John's: Newfoundland Historical Society, 1984); Byrne, ed., *Gentlemen-Bishops and Faction Fighters: The Letters of Bishops O'Donel, Lambert, Scallan and Other Irish Missionaries* (St. John's: Jesperson Press, 1984); Hans Rollmann, "Gentlemen-Bishops and Faction Fighters: Additional Letters Pertaining to Newfoundland Catholicism, from the Franciscan Library at Killiney (Ireland)," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XXX (April 1988), pp. 3-19. Lucien Lemieux, *L'Etablissement de la Première Province Ecclesiastique au Canada, 1783-1844* (Montréal and Paris: Fides, 1968), pp. 87-136; Hennesey, *American Catholics*, pp. 89-100; Codignola, "Rome-Paris-Québec Connection," pp. 7-8.

⁵ APF, Congregazioni particolari [hereafter CP], vol. 146, ff. 676rv-679rv, Joseph-Octave Plessis to Propaganda, Rome, 17 November 1819; copy in Archives de l'Archidiocèse de Québec, Quebec [hereafter AAQ], 10 CM, III, 151. See also Codignola, "Rome-Paris-Québec Connection," p. 8.

Plessis (Montreal 1763), Lartigue (Montreal 1777), and Provencher (Nicolet 1787). The other three bishops, one Irish, Burke (Portlaoighise, 1753), and two Scots, Macdonell (Glen Urquhart 1762) and MacEachern (Kinlochmoidart 1759), were responsible for the regions of the most recent European and American migrations, Upper Canada and the Maritimes.⁶ In the United States the opposite was true, in that the organizational chart of the Catholic Church was strikingly inconsistent with the new reality of the former colonies. Four out of eight bishops were not only francophone, but actually born in France or in the former French colonies. They were the Sulpicians Maréchal (Ingré 1764), Lefebvre de Cheverus (Mayenne 1768), Flaget (Contournat 1763), and Dubourg (Cap Français, Haiti 1766). The three non-francophone bishops were the Irish John Connolly (Monknewtown 1751), who had replaced the late Concanen,⁷ England (Cork 1786), and Kelly (Kilkenny 1779). At first glance, one might think that, sixty years after losing Canada, the French-speaking church had more than regained in the United States what it had lost north of the border. In reality, however, the francophone ecclesiastical network was losing ground north and south of the border.

It took the bishops of Quebec some time before they were able or willing to recognize the presence and needs of the non-francophone Catholic communities of Canada. At first they had tried to deal with the Maritimes, where most of the non-francophones were, as if they were a simple extension of the St. Lawrence valley. Whenever they could spare one, they would send a French-speaking vicar-general or missionary to Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, or Prince Edward Island.⁸ This was hardly an adequate solution, since the Acadians and the Indians,

⁶ One could add that O'Donel, the vicar apostolic of Newfoundland, was also born in Ireland (Knocklofty, ca. 1737).

⁷ The first Bishop of New York was Richard Luke Concanen (1747-1810), an Irish Dominican who was appointed in 1808 but died in Naples before being able to reach his destination. He was replaced by John Connolly, who reached New York in 1815. See Vincent R. Hughes, *The Right Rev. Richard Luke Concanen, OP: First Bishop of New York, 1747-1810* (Fribourg: Studia Friburgensia, 1926); McAvoy, *History*, pp. 82, 85-86; Codignola, "Rome-Paris-Québec Connection," p. 7.

⁸ After Pierre Maillard's death in 1762, Bishop Jean-Olivier Briand sent Charles-François Bailly de Messein (1768-72), Jean-Baptiste de La Brosse (1771-73), and Joseph Mathurin Bourg (1773-95) to the Maritimes. Bailly de Messein and Bourg were appointed vicars-general. See AAQ, 20 A, I, 106, Briand to the Acadians, Quebec, 16 August 1766; copy in AAQ, 22 A, III, 274; AAQ, 20 A, I, 156, [Briand] to the Catholics of Ile Saint-Jean [Quebec, 16 September 1770]; AAQ, 12 A, C, 247-248, Briand to Bailly de Messein, Quebec, 13 October 1768; AAQ, 12 A, C, f. 250, Briand to La Brosse, Quebec, 11 April 1770; AAQ, 22 A, IV, 417, [Briand] to [Bourg], Quebec, 8 November 1773; copy in AAQ, I CB, II, 2. See also Johnston, *History*, pp. 91-96, 106-111; Leslie F. S. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists: Indian-White Relations in the Maritimes, 1713-1867* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979), pp. 67-68; Léon Thériault, "L'Acadianisation de l'Église catholique en Acadie," in Daigle, ed., *Acadiens des Maritimes*, pp. 303-305; Murphy, "Jones," p. 27; Murphy, "Emergence," pp. 72-73; Codignola,

the only francophone peoples in the region, were rapidly becoming a small minority, overwhelmingly surrounded by English- and Gaelic-speaking immigrants from Ireland and Scotland. Bishop Louis-Philippe Mariauchau d'Esglis realized the necessity of Irish missionaries in Nova Scotia and had ordered Bourg to arrange with John Butler, Bishop of Cork, their arrival. Yet it was Bishop Jean-François Hubert who, in 1787, for the first time emphasized that the problems of the Maritimes were not similar to those of Quebec and that, for example, Halifax needed Irish, not French, priests.⁹ Because their resources were limited, and because they felt their primary responsibility was towards the French-Canadian community, there was not much Hubert and his successors could or would do to fulfil the needs of their Irish or Scottish flock. Bishop Plessis certainly took a more active role than his predecessors in tending to the needs of the Maritimes. He personally visited them in 1811, 1812, and 1815¹⁰ and consistently tried to recruit English-speaking priests. Yet his efforts did not solve the basic problems faced by the anglophone Catholics of the Maritimes, who continued to feel isolated, subject to the random initiatives of far-away bishops, discriminated against, and deprived of their rightful spiritual assistance.

In the absence of an effective role played by the bishops of Quebec, the initiative was left to the new communities to find their own solutions to their particular needs. In some instances, priests were called to Canada by communities of immigrants who had informed their friends in Ireland or in Scotland. This was the case, for example, of the Irish Capuchin James Jones (Halifax 1784),¹¹ of the

“Rome-Paris-Québec Connection,” pp. 118-119; J. Wilfrid Pineau, *Le Clergé Français dans l’Île du Prince Edouard 1721-1821* (Quebec: Les Editions Ferland, 1967), pp. 37-55; Léo-Paul Hébert, “Le Père Jean-Baptiste de La Brosse à la Baie des Chaleurs 1771-1773,” *Revue d’histoire et des traditions populaires de la Gaspésie*, LII (October-December 1975), pp. 175-182; Francis C. Blanchard, “The French and Acadian Period,” in Michael F. Hennessey, ed., *The Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island 1720-1979* (Summerside, PEI: The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation, 1979), pp. 17-19; Edgar Godin, “Établissement de l’Église catholique au Nouveau-Brunswick,” *La Société Canadienne d’Histoire de l’Église Catholique, Sessions d’Étude* (1981), p. 47.

⁹ AAQ, 20 A, II, 10 [Louis-Philippe Mariauchau d’Esglis] to Bourg, Quebec, 23 October 1785; copy in AAQ, 22 A, V, 187; APF, Congressi, America Settentrionale [hereafter C, AS], vol. 1, ff. 466-467 [Jean-François Hubert] to [François Sorbier de Villars], Quebec, after 15 October 1787; copy in AAQ, 312 CN, I, 12; and in AAQ, 22 A, V, 270. Historian Thériault criticizes Hubert for his pro-Irish stance (Thériault, “Acadianisation,” p. 301). See also Murphy, “Jones,” pp. 27-29; Murphy, “Emergence,” pp. 72-73; Codignola, “Rome-Paris-Québec Connection,” p. 119.

¹⁰ See Plessis’ journals of his visits in Anselme Chiasson, ed., “Le journal des visites pastorales en Acadie de Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis 18 11 1812 1815,” *La Société Historique Acadienne, Les Cahiers*, XI, (March-September 1980), pp. 5-311.

¹¹ AAQ, 20 A, II, 11, Mariauchau d’Esglis to John Butler, Quebec, 23 October 1785; copy in AAQ, 22 A, V, 189; AAQ, 12 A, D, 95-96, Mariauchau d’Esglis to James Jones, Quebec, 20 October 1787. See also Johnston, *History*, pp.

Irish Recollet O'Donel (St. John's 1784),¹² and of the Scottish secular priest MacEachern (Prince Edward Island 1790).¹³ In other instances, priests migrated to North America with their flock and continued to minister to them in the New World. This was the case, for example, of the Scottish secular priest James MacDonald, who accompanied to Prince Edward Island a group of settlers from South Uist¹⁴, or of Macdonell, who went to Upper Canada with a group of Scottish emigrants.¹⁵

112-115; Murphy, "Jones," pp. 2729; Murphy, "Emergence," p. 72; J. Brian Hanington, *Every Popish Person. The Story of Roman Catholicism in Nova Scotia and the Church in Halifax 1604-1984* (Halifax: Archdiocese of Halifax, 1984), p. 52; Codignola, "Rome-Paris-Québec Connection," p. 119.

¹² Westminster Diocesan Archives, London [hereafter WDA], A, vol. 42, no. 44, James Keating, Patrick Gaul, and John Cummins to [James Talbot], Waterford, 14 January 1784; copy in APF, Scritture Originali Riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali [hereafter SOCG], vol. 867, ff. 32rv-33rv (also Lewis Maddock among the writers); WDA, A, vol. 42, no. 47, William Egan to [Talbot], Clonmel, 4 February 1784. See also Howley, *Newfoundland*, pp. 185-205; Codignola, "Rome and North America, 1622-1799. The Interpretive Framework," *Storia nordamericana*, I, 1 (1984), pp. 5-6; Lahey, *O'Donel*, pp. 6-8; Codignola, "Rome-Paris-Québec Connection," p. 119.

¹³ AAQ, 210 A, I, 197, Hubert to Angus Bernard MacEachern, Quebec, 21 January 1791. See also John C. Macmillan, *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island* (Quebec: Evenement, 1905), p. 50; Francis W. P. Bolger, "The First Bishop," in Hennessey, ed., *Catholic Church in PEI*, pp. 24-25; Allan F. MacDonald, "Angus Bernard MacEachern, 1759-1835: His Ministry in the Maritime Provinces," in Murphy and Byrne, eds., *Religion and Identity*, pp. 53-67; Codignola, "Rome-Paris-Québec Connection," p. 119.

¹⁴ Macmillan, *Early History of PEI*, pp. 43-48; Johnston, *History*, pp. 98-100; Joseph-Henri Blanchard, *The Acadians of Prince Edward Island 1720-1964* (Charlottetown: Le Droit and Leclerc, 1964), pp. 71-73; R. Maclean, "The Highland Catholic Tradition in Canada," in William Stanford Reid, ed., *The Scottish Tradition in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 99-100; Thériault, "Acadianisation," p. 304. Of special value, John Michael Bumsted, "Highland Emigration to the Island of St. John and the Scottish Catholic Church, 1769-1774," *The Dalhousie Review*, LVIII (Autumn 1979), pp. 511-527; Bumsted, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America 1770-1815* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1982), pp. 57-61; Bumsted, *Land, Settlement, and Politics on Eighteenth-Century Prince Edward Island* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), pp. 55-60; and Bumsted, "The Scottish Catholic Church and Prince Edward Island, 1770-1810," in Murphy and Byrne, eds., *Religion and Identity*, pp. 18-33.

¹⁵ Hugh Joseph Somers, *The Life and Times of the Hon. and Rt. Rev. Alexander Macdonell, D.D., First Bishop of Upper Canada, 1762-1840* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1931); Robert Choquette, *L'Église catholique dans l'Ontario français du dix-neuvième siècle* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1984), pp. 35-39. Kathleen M. Toomey, *Alexander MacDonell: The*

One cannot say there was much of a plan there, on the part of either the bishops of Quebec or of the Irish and Scottish communities, but rather a number of unrelated efforts, some of which proved successful.¹⁶ The bishops of Quebec were certainly not opposed to these initiatives and actually supported them when they could. They were quite conscious that their jurisdiction was immense and were relieved to see their own burden eased.¹⁷ They felt, however, that they had neither the time nor the personnel nor the personal strength sufficient to tend to the needs of their faraway diocesans, who, one must not forget, were scattered in the whole of North America, except for the United States, Newfoundland, and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon.¹⁸ The fact remained that the relations between the bishops

Scottish Years 1762-1840 (Toronto: The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, 1985) does not deal with Upper Canada, but a sequel is in preparation. According to MacEachern, by 1824 eight missionaries had accompanied emigrants from Scotland (APF, Acta, vol. 187, ff. 644rv-645rv, MacEachern to Pietro Caprano, near St. Andrew, PEI, 8 July 1824; copy in AAQ, 310 CN, 1, 90).

¹⁶ For example, the application of the Irish Recollets John McManus and Francis McGuire was rejected by Propaganda, although they claimed that they had been called to Halifax by the local community. See APF, C, AC, vol. 2, ff. 423rv-424rv, McManus and McGuire to Pius VI, [1784]; APF, Lettere, vol. 244, ff. 981v-982r, [Propaganda] to Sorbier de Villars, Rome, 23 December 1784; APF, C, AS, vol. 1, ff. 423rv-424rv, Sorbier de Villars to [Propaganda], Paris, 17 January 1785; APF, Lettere, vol. 246, ff. 82v-83rv, [Propaganda] to Sorbier de Villars, [Rome], 19 February 1785.

¹⁷ See the instances of Mariauchau d'Esglis and Hubert, mentioned above. As to Plessis, see, for example, APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 134rv-135rv, Plessis to Denis Boiret, Quebec, 25 May 1802; APF, SOCG, vol. 913, ff. 368rv-373rv, Plessis to Michele Di Pietro, Quebec, 17 February 1806; copies in APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 147rv-152rv; and in AAQ, 20 A, III, 56 (dated 18 February); printed in Henri Têtu and C.-O. Gagnon, eds., *Mandements Lettres pastorales et circulaires des évêques de Québec*, vol. 3: (Quebec: A. Coté, 1888), pp. 16-19. Also APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 172rv-173rv, Plessis to Lorenzo Caleppi, Quebec, 12 September 1809; APF, SOCG, vol. 917, ff. 902rv-903rv, Plessis to [Lorenzo Litta], [Quebec], 23 November 1814; copies in APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 222rv-225rv; and in AAQ, 210 A, VIII, 279; APF, SOCG, vol. 917, ff. 329rv, 334rv, Plessis to Edmund Burke, Quebec, 10 September 1816; copy in AAQ, 210 A, VIII, 543; APF, SOCG, vol. 919, ff. 148rv-151rv, Plessis to Litta, Quebec, 6 December 1817; copy in AAQ, 210 A, IX, 284 (dated 1 December); APF, CP, vol. 146, ff. 674rv-675rv, Plessis to Henry Bathurst, Earl Bathurst, London, 20 August 1819; APF, CP, vol. 146, ff. 676rv-679rv, Plessis to Propaganda, Rome, 17 November 1819; copy in AAQ, 10 CM, III, 151.

¹⁸ Saint-Pierre et Miquelon were under Propaganda's direct jurisdiction and were ministered by missionaries sent from France. A prefecture apostolic was established in the islands in 1765. See Jean-Yves Ribault, *Histoire des Îles Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. (Des origines à 1814)* (Saint-Pierre: Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1962); Ribault, *Histoire des Îles Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. (La vie dans l'Archipel sous l'Ancien Régime)* (Saint-Pierre: Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1962); Ribault, "La Population des Îles Saint-Pierre et Miquelon de 1763 à 1793," *Revue française d'histoire d'Outre-mer*, LIII, 190-191 (1966), pp. 5-66; Lemieux,

of Quebec and the spiritual leaders of the Irish and Scottish communities proved to be strained, being based on mistrust and suspicion rather than cooperation and mutual understanding. Burke, MacEachern, and Macdonell fought against Plessis, accusing him not only of neglect towards his flock, but also of resisting their efforts aimed at the establishment of independent bishoprics throughout Canada.

Burke was foremost in this attitude. He was six years older than MacEachern and nine years older than Macdonell and had arrived in North America respectively four and eighteen years before his two colleagues. What probably set him apart from them was, however, his exposure to Quebec society (where he was a teacher in the Seminary from 1786 to 1791 and parish priest in the Ile d'Orleans from 1791 to 1794) and to the reality of another missionary outpost (Upper Canada, 1794-1801), prior to his final destination (Nova Scotia). He was soon convinced that the bishops of Quebec did not care much for the English-speaking Catholics of their diocese. In 1790 he asked John Thomas Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, to obtain on his behalf a mission in the west,¹⁹ and in 1794 he was actually sent to Upper Canada as vicar-general, on the understanding that he would have never been promoted prefect apostolic.²⁰ Three years later he was so convinced that a reorganization of the diocese was necessary that he wrote to Cardinal Giacinto Sigismondo Gerdil, the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" in Rome, suggesting the erection of a bishopric in Montreal and of a vicariate apostolic in Upper Canada.²¹ The plan fell on deaf ears, since those were the years of Rome's utmost disarray.²² The way Burke moved was, however, revealing of his profound distrust in Hubert, whom the Irish missionary had not even cared to inform of his projects.²³

As vicar-general in Nova Scotia, Burke's attitude towards Quebec did not change. In the summer of 1815, feigning medical reasons, he travelled to Ireland,

Établissement, pp. 4-5, 10.

¹⁹ Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Halifax, (Biography, Edmund Burke, Burke Letters, no. 4), Burke to John Thomas Troy, Quebec, 21 October 1890; APF, SOCG, vol. 894, ff. 170rv-171rv, Troy to Cesare Brancadoro, Dublin, 31 December 1790; APF, Lettere, vol. 260, ff. 177rv-182rv, [Leonardo Antonelli] to Hubert, [Rome], 6 April 1791; APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 12rv-13rv, [Antonelli] to Hubert, [Rome], 28 November 1792. See also George Paré, *The Catholic Church in Detroit, 1701-1888* (Detroit: The Gabriel Richard Press, 1951); Michael Power, *A History of The Roman Catholic Church in the Niagara Peninsula 1615-1815* (St. Catharines: Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Catharines, 1983), pp. 155-173, particularly p. 158.

²⁰ APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 61 rv-64rv, Hubert to Antonelli, Quebec, 21 November 1794.

²¹ APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 72rv-83rv, Burke to Giacinto Sigismondo Gerdil, Quebec, 15 August 1797; APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 69rv-70rv, [Concanen] to [Propaganda], [Rome, January 1798]. See Power, *History*, p. 164.

²² Codignola, "Rome and North America," pp. 21-23; Codignola, "Rome-Paris-Québec Connection," pp. 6-7.

²³ Hubert was informed via Rome by Antonelli. See APF, Lettere, vol. 260, ff. 177rv-182rv, [Antonelli] to Hubert, [Rome], 6 April 1791.

England, and eventually to Rome in order to campaign for the erection of Nova Scotia into an independent vicariate apostolic. Before the cardinals of Propaganda he depicted Bishop Plessis as a weakling, too busy to properly perform his duties, and too old. (In actual fact, Burke, born 1753, was ten years older than Plessis, born 1763.) He suggested that the jurisdiction of Quebec over Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island be terminated and that he be appointed prefect apostolic in the area. Furthermore, according to Burke, Lower Canada was to be subdivided into three or at least two bishoprics, and Upper Canada into two prefectures apostolic.²⁴ As he had done twice in the 1790s, Burke acted without informing his bishop, from whom he was expecting fierce opposition.

MacEachern was not as convinced as Burke that the only way to deal with Plessis was to fight or to circumvent him, yet his experience in Prince Edward Island and in the adjacent territories had proved that little, if anything, could be expected from Quebec. The knowledge of English and Gaelic, he maintained, was a necessity in the Maritimes, but Plessis and his French Canadian missionaries spoke only French. Furthermore, the diocese was so vast that it required not one distant francophone bishop but a good number of vicars apostolic who would be familiar with the languages, the customs, the institutions, and the national features of the people they led. In 1819 MacEachern reported that his flock consisted of 600/700 Scots, 300 Acadians, and 70 Micmacs, besides Irish, German, and English families, all of whom required suitable missionaries. But even the French-speaking priests that he needed were not sent. The only two who had reached the island had been promptly called to Quebec by the bishop.²⁵ In fact, it was from Scotland, not from their rightful bishop, that the Catholics of Prince Edward Island received their missionaries.²⁶ By 1824 both MacEachern and Macdonell had lost all hope in Quebec, and the latter decided to follow Burke's example and to personally take his case before the cardinals of Propaganda in Rome. Like the late vicar apostolic of Nova Scotia in 1815, Macdonell did not inform the Bishop of Quebec of his initiatives. He was eventually appointed

²⁴ APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 200rv-201rv, Plessis to Burke, Quebec, 2 January 1814; APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 257rv-258rv, Burke to Doria Pamphili, Rome, 12 December 1815; APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 267rv-268rv, Burke to Di Pietro, Rome, 16 January 1816; APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 261rv-262rv, Burke to Litta, Rome, 12 February 1816; APF, Acta, vol. 179 (1816), ff. 34rv-42rv, 48[b]rv-49rv, Antonio Dugnani to Propaganda, [Rome, March 1816]; APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 243rv-245rv, Burke to [Litta], London, 16 September 1816; APF, SOCG, vol. 917, ff. 31orv, 313rv, Burke to Litta, Halifax, 11 October 1816.

²⁵ They were Jacques-Ladislas-Joseph de Calonne and Amable Pichard, who sojourned in Prince Edward island from 1799 to 1803-04 and were recalled to Quebec by Bishop Pierre Denaut. See MacEachern's complaints in APF, SOCG, vol. 929, ff. 452rv-455rv, MacEachern to Francesco Fontana, Halifax, 9 November 1819. See also Bolger, "First Bishop," p. 31.

²⁶ APF, Acta, vol. 187, ff. 644rv-645rv, MacEachern to Pietro Caprano, near St. Andrew, PEI, 8 July 1824; copy in AAQ, 310 CN, I, 90. See also Bumsted, "Scottish Catholic Church."

Bishop of Kingston with jurisdiction over Upper Canada.²⁷

No matter what Burke, MacEachern, and Macdonell thought, they were in substantial agreement with the bishops of Quebec, and with Plessis in particular. Hubert had always been in favour of a subdivision of his immense diocese.²⁸ Moreover, Burke, MacEachern, and Macdonell had always been Plessis's candidates, as he had repeatedly written to the Holy See.²⁹ Burke was, in fact, very surprised when Plessis not only readily approved the erection of a vicariate apostolic in Nova Scotia (of which he had not been informed beforehand), but stated that he would have been even happier had Burke been appointed full bishop.³⁰

Plessis doubted whether, in both the cases of Burke and Macdonell, it was the right time to make such important changes in the ecclesiastical structure of Canada. He wrote to Pietro Caprano, Archbishop of Iconium and Secretary of Propaganda: "Entre nous, Je crois que Dr Macdonell se laisse un peu aveugler comme avait fait Dr Burke de la Nouvelle Ecosse par le desir d'épiscoper, sans assez Considerer ses moyens."³¹ According to Plessis, the erection of Nova Scotia into a vicariate apostolic had actually worsened the situation of the church there, because Burke had failed to provide new priests either from Ireland or from the local seminary, and the French Canadian priests, now in a "foreign" land, had promptly returned to the St. Lawrence valley.³² Macdonell – Plessis was sure – was going to run head on into the same kind of difficulties. He did not, however, withhold his endorsement of the impatient Scotsman's promotion, although he qualified it with so many unrealistic targets (more revenues, more missionaries, more schools, more government subsidies, immediate appointment of a successor to whom large properties had to be bequeathed), that his "yes" ended up being more a challenge than an approval.³³

²⁷ APF, SOCG, vol. 929, ff. 452rv-455 rv, MacEachern to Fontana, Halifax, 9 November 1819; APF, SOCG, vol. 935, ff. 22rv-29rv, Alexander Macdonell to Propaganda, [Rome, April] 1825.

²⁸ APF, SOCG, vol. 894, ff. 160rv-163rv, Hubert to [Antonelli], Quebec, 24 October 1789; copies in APF, C, AS, vol. 1, ff. 497rv-500rv; and in AAQ, 210 A, I, 81. See also Lemieux, *Etablissement*, pp. 24-25.

²⁹ See, for example, APF, SOCG, vol. 919, ff. 148rv-151rv, Plessis to Litta, Quebec, 6 December 1817; copy in AAQ, 210 A, IX, 284.

³⁰ APF, SOCG, vol. 917, ff. 329rv, 334rv, Plessis to Burke, Quebec, 10 September 1816; copy in AAQ, 210 A, VIII, 543; APF, SOCG, vol. 917, ff. 31Orv, 313rv, Burke to Litta, Halifax, 11 October 1816.

³¹ APF, SOCG, vol. 936, ff. 348rv-349, Plessis to William Poynter, Quebec, 25 March 1825.

³² See, for example, APF, SOCG, vol. 933, ff. 64rv-65rv, Plessis to Burke, Quebec, 14 and 20 October 1816; copy in AAQ, 210 A, IX, 11; APF, SOCG, vol. 935, ff. 34rv-35rv, Plessis to Poynter, Quebec, 28 October 1824; copy in AAQ, 210 A, XII, 124 (dated 29 October).

³³ APF, SOCG, vol. 936, ff. 360rv-361rv, Plessis to Giulio Maria delta Somaglia, Quebec, 4 October 1825.

Nor was there any major difference between Plessis and his Scottish and Irish colleagues in what could have been another potential issue – their relationship with the British government. It was true that Burke had accused Plessis of being too subservient to the British and that he did not dare “do anything without the consent of the commander in chief,” because he ruled “to the discretion of the government,” in fact granting faculties only to those missionaries who showed to him their government-issued passports. Yet the same Burke had been called to Detroit by the Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, to cooperate in quelling some republican agitators.³⁴

This cooperation was nothing but common practice and had started immediately after the Conquest.³⁵ The British government considered Macdonell’s presence in Upper Canada crucial in keeping good order among the Irish, and he received from the British substantial emoluments, something that came as a surprise to Rome but was deemed to be quite normal by the vicar-general. In fact, when asked to provide an assessment of his revenues which could prove his ability to maintain a bishopric in Upper Canada, Macdonell showed to the cardinals of Propaganda that he was indeed a wealthy man of many incomes and that a good portion of them came from British sources. To be sure, his promotion from vicar-general to bishop would have meant another £400 per year.³⁶

Clearly, the dissension between Plessis and the Irish and Scottish prelates had more to do with psychology than real differences in the issues at stake. Their different attitudes towards change were deeply rooted in their ethnic background, that is, in their personal and national history. Plessis and his francophone clergy were afraid to change a *status quo* which was seemingly favouring the orderly development of the French Canadian community. Burke, MacEachern, and Macdonell, on the contrary, had experienced discrimination at home, had no entrenched privileges in North America that could be lost, and their only hope was to pursue new solutions that would have allowed them to better care for their unfortunate flock.

From the Conquest onwards all the bishops of Quebec have been accused of

³⁴ Quotation from APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 261rv-262rv, Burke to Litta, Rome, 12 February 1816. An almost identical letter in APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 267rv-268rv, Burke to Di Pietro, Rome, 16 January 1816. See also APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 244rv-245rv, Burke to [Litta], London, 16 September 1816. For Burke’s political role, see Power, *History*, pp. 160162; Choquette, *Église catholique*, p. 37.

³⁵ For example, soon after the end of the Seven Years’ War, William Campbell, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, petitioned Guy Carleton, Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, for a priest. To the priest eventually selected, Bailly de Messein, the British authorities paid a regular salary as long as the missionary remained active in the region. On this, see PRO, CO 217, 50, 147-159, F. Legge to Earl of Dartmouth, Halifax, 25 August 1774; Johnston, *History*, pp. 92-95; Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, p. 68. On the English practice of using Catholic missionaries, see MacNutt, *Atlantic Provinces*, pp. 118-119.

³⁶ APF, SOCG, vol. 936, ff. 352rv-353rv, Macdonell to Poynter, [London, before 9 August 1825]. See also Choquette, *Église catholique*, pp. 38-39.

being too subservient to the British regime. One must not forget, however, that the Conquest had come as a practical and psychological catastrophe, soon to be replaced by a sort of disbelief of how religion thrived and progressed under a foreign and Protestant domination. As early as 1766 Pierre de La Rue, abbé de L'Isle-Dieu, was admitting that never had the practices of the Catholic religion been as free as under the new regime.³⁷ In various forms, this opinion was expressed by all the bishops of Quebec, from Jean-Olivier Briand³⁸ to Plessis. The latter, in fact, stated that not only the Catholics of Canada enjoyed more freedom than those living in countries where Catholicism was the religion of the state, but that its isolation and “parfait devouement au Saint Siege”³⁹ had spared them the ravages of the French Revolution and had entitled them to “quelque droit spécial [*sic*].”⁴⁰ The Catholics of Canada had strived to obtain these privileges. They had fought the Americans in the 1770s and the 1810s and the French ideas in the 1790s, proving to be the most loyal subjects of His Majesty. They had been amply rewarded, and in 1817 Plessis had been offered a seat in the Legislative Council of Lower Canada, an honour that he promptly and hurriedly accepted.⁴¹ There is no doubt, however, that the bishops of Quebec lived in constant fear that their hard-earned privileges could be withdrawn as easily as they had been bestowed upon them, at the whim of a discontented governor or of an offended minister in London. Obviously, all Canadian prelates, of whatever nationality, watched the personal attitudes of the British ministers with keen interest. Yet this cautiousness and fear of sudden change are distinct features of the bishops of Quebec.

If in Canada difficulties owed more to the personalities of the Catholic leaders involved rather than to their differences in the issues at stake, in the United States the opposite was true. In fact, the preconditions for an orderly progress that Plessis was seeking in Canada did apparently exist south of the border. Catholic religion was as free as any other cult, and no government could take away what it had not given. Furthermore, Baltimore had been made an archbishopric in 1808, a condition that allowed the archbishop to maintain some control over all other bishoprics in the United States. (Plessis, too, had been made an archbishop in 1819, but the opposition of the British government had prevented him from assuming his new status.) With the exception of Connolly in New York, there was a substantial uniformity among the other bishops, three of whom were French-born (Maréchal, Lefebvre de Cheverus, and Flaget) or Sulpician (Maréchal, Flaget, and Dubourg). Yet the deep crisis of the American church that

³⁷ Vatican Secret Archives [hereafter ASV], Missioni, vol. 53, no ff., Pierre de La Rue, abbé de L'Isle-Dieu, to Giuseppe Maria Castelli, Paris, 17 November 1766. See Codignola, “Rome-Paris-Québec Connection,” p. 116.

³⁸ A good example, but only one of many, in ASV, Missioni, vol. 53, no ff., Briand to L'Isle-Dieu, Quebec, 10 October 1768.

³⁹ APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 269rv-270rv, Plessis to Litta, Quebec, 23 November 1816; copy in AAQ, 210 A, IX, 67.

⁴⁰ APF, C, AC, vol. 3, ff. 564rv-565rv, Plessis to Litta, Quebec, 26 April 1817.

⁴¹ Lemieux, *Établissement*, pp. 82-85.

began during John Carroll's term (1789-1815) and came to a turning point during Maréchal's years (1817-28) fell just short of producing a schism on more than one occasion.⁴²

As in Canada, the contrasting psychologies of the church leaders accounted for some of their difficulties. The American Revolution had freed the Catholics from a number of legal constraints, and they had certainly profited from their new status from then on. During the black years of Europe at the turn of the century, the shores of the United States had been regarded by many Catholics as the new promised land of a reborn Catholicism.⁴³ If in 1818 Maréchal could proudly announce that, "[i]l faut l'avouer, [Baltimore] c'est la perle de la Catholicité Américaine,"⁴⁴ it is no wonder that he and a number of his colleagues would have changed as little as possible. Yet in the United States differences and difficulties were much more rooted in the reality of the country than in Canada. At the time of the American Revolution, the vast majority of the settlers were of English origin, of whom scarcely one per cent (or about 25,000) were Catholics, mainly served by English Jesuits. In the following years immigration changed the outlook of the former colonies and of their Catholic community.⁴⁵ In 1818 Maréchal reported that his flock now consisted of 100,000 faithful and that those of his own diocese were ministered by fifty-two priests, of whom fourteen were French, twelve American, eleven Irish, seven Belgian, four English, three German, and one Italian.⁴⁶

Although, starting from the incidents caused by the Germans at the Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia in 1788,⁴⁷ the general trend seemed to be for each Catholic community to ask for and sometimes obtain clergy of the same origin, ethnic rivalries soon focused on the clash between the established francophone hierarchy and the English-speaking community, of which the Irish were a

⁴² Hennesey, *American Catholics*, pp. 89-100.

⁴³ Codignola, "Rome and North America," pp. 22-23; Codignola, "Rome-Paris-Québec Connection," pp. 123-124.

⁴⁴ APF, SOCG, vol. 921, ff. 374rv, 378rv, Ambrose Maréchal to [Litta], Baltimore, 4 November 1819.

⁴⁵ Hennesey, *American Catholics*, p. 55; Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, pp. 101-131; James S. Olson, *Catholic Immigrants in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1987), pp. 9, 19.

⁴⁶ APF, SOCG, vol. 922, ff. 25rv-36rv, Maréchal to Litta, Baltimore, 16 October 1818.

⁴⁷ Hennesey, *American Catholics*, p. 83; Olson, *Catholic Immigrants*, pp. 7-8. See also *Historic Philadelphia from the Founding Until the Early Nineteenth Century: Papers Dealing with its People and Buildings with an Illustrative Map*, American Philosophical Society, *Transactions*, XLIII, 1 (1980), p. 206; Lambert Schrott, *Pioneer German Catholics in the American Colonies (1734-1784)* (New York: The United States Catholic Historical Society, 1933), who sees no "serious consequences" in the "incipient differences between the races" in the 1770s (*ibid.*, p. 99); Vincent J. Fecher, *A Study of the Movement for German National Parishes in Philadelphia and Baltimore, 1787-1802* (Rome: Universitas Gregoriana, 1955).

substantial portion. The ecclesiastical hierarchy that ruled the United States did not, as I have already noted, reflect the reality of the new ethnicities, but had been superimposed upon them by a small group of French clergy, mainly rooted in the shrinking community of *émigré* priests of the revolutionary period, who represented one of the smallest ethnic groups in the United States.⁴⁸

According to Maréchal, the Irish were at the root of the disturbances in “Charleston, Norfolk, Philadelphia, etc. etc.”⁴⁹ In Charleston, South Carolina, a predominantly Irish board of trustees opposed the French priest Pierre Joseph Picot de Clorivière, who had been sent there by Carroll in 1812. In Norfolk, Virginia, the Irish trustees opposed another French priest, Jacques Lucas. In Philadelphia, conflicts between the Irish and the French had made it impossible for six years (1814-20) to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Bishop William Egan.⁵⁰ In retrospect, one cannot but agree with the explanation offered by Bishop Connolly of New York, whose diocese had also been heavily hit by the clash between the French and the Irish, that unrest was caused by the stubbornness of the French hierarchy, who imposed French, Swiss, German, and Italian priests on

⁴⁸ For example, Dolan shows that of the twenty-three bishops appointed to work in the West during the first half of the nineteenth century eleven were French, three Irish, three American, two Belgian, two German, and two Italian (Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, pp. 118-119). See also Leo F. Ruskowski, *French Emigré Priests in the United States (1791-1815)* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1940); Codignola, “RomeParis-Québec Connection,” pp. 121-122. For *émigré* priests in Canada, see Narcisse-Eutrope Dionne, *Les ecclésiastiques et les royalistes français réfugiés au Canada à l’époque de la Révolution 1791-1802* (Quebec: n.p., 1905); Claude Galarneau, *La France devant l’opinion canadienne (1760-1815)* (Quebec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1970).

⁴⁹ APF, SOCG, vol. 922, ff. 25rv-36rv, Maréchal to Litta, Baltimore, 16 October 1818.

⁵⁰ Hennesey, *American Catholics*, pp. 94-100; Richard R. Duncan, “Catholics and the Church in the Antebellum Upper South,” in Randall M. Miller and Jon L. Wakelyn, eds., *Catholics in the Old South: Essays on Church and Culture* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), pp. 84-86; Miller, “A Church in Cultural Captivity: Some Speculations on Catholic Identity in the Old South,” in *ibid.*, pp. 24-25. See also James F. Connelly, ed., *The History of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 1975); Francis E. Tourscher, *The Hogan Schism and Trustee Troubles in St. Mary’s Church, Philadelphia, 1820-1829* (Philadelphia: Peter Reilly, 1930); Peter Keenan Guilday, *The Church in Virginia (1815-1822)*, New York: The United States Catholic Historical Society, 1924; Guilday, *The Life and Times of John England: First Bishop of Charleston, 1786-1842* (New York: America Press, 1927); James Henry Bailey, *A History of the Diocese of Richmond: The Formative Years* (Richmond: Chancery Office, 1956); Patrick W. Carey, *John England and Irish American Catholicism, 1815-1842: A Study of Conflict*, Ph.D. thesis, Fordham University, 1975.

a Catholic community that spoke only English.⁵¹ This, in turn, must be seen against the different impact of immigration on the Catholic church in the United States as opposed to that of Canada. In Canada on the whole the various ethnic groups did not mingle with the others and managed to produce their own leaders, who by and large reflected the ethnic origin of their community. In the United States, on the contrary, immigrants from various countries poured into the same areas, especially in the towns of the eastern seaboard, and there fought for the control of local churches (through the election of trustees)⁵² and for the appointment of bishops of their own ethnic background.

Very soon, both in the United States and in Canada, but with particular virulence south of the border, the issue of ethnic representation degenerated into a vicious and slanderous confrontation between the French and the Irish, fought along national lines and using well-known and much-abused racial stereotypes.⁵³ Both Plessis and Maréchal, that is the two leading figures of North American Catholicism in the early nineteenth century, were in agreement as to their judgement of the Irish. Plessis often referred to “la canaille irlandaise,” and after a visit to the United States he became convinced that the local French bishops were much loved by all, except for the Irish, who were stirred up by “des moines ambitieux, qui pour malheur de ces diocèses voudroient y occuper les premières places.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 448rv-455rv, Connolly to [Fontana], New York, 10 March 1820. There were, of course, exceptions to the rule of ethnic allegiance: the francophone administrator (1814-20) of Philadelphia, Adolphe-Louis de Barth de Walbach, felt he was not the right man for a diocese whose Catholics spoke only English and German (APF, SOCG, vol. 921, ff. 415rv-424rv, de Barth to [Litta], Philadelphia, 11 November 1818), or William Taylor, a New York priest who sided with the French against his Irish compatriots. He blamed the “spirit of liberty” prevailing in the United States and the misbehaviour of the Irish priests who fled to America because they were not wanted at home (see APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 430rv-439rv, William Taylor to Fontana, [Rome, April/May 1820]).

⁵² The issue of trusteeism is very familiar to students of Catholicism in the early republic of the United States. For a discussion of trusteeism in Nova Scotia, see the innovative Murphy, “Priests, People, and Polity: Trusteeism in the First Catholic Congregation at Halifax, 1785-1801,” in Murphy and Byrne, eds., *Religion and Identity*, pp. 68-80.

⁵³ The officials of Propaganda, who had no particular liking for either party, were caught in the middle of the dispute and tried to win popular favour in the United States by curbing the influence of the francophone clergy. See, for examples not mentioned above, APF, SOCG, vol. 921, ff. 415rv, 424rv, de Barth to [Litta], Philadelphia, 11 November 1818; APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 430rv-439rv, Taylor to Fontana, [Rome, April/May 1820]; APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 598rv-599rv, Pierre-Antoine Malou to [Fontana], New York, March 1821; APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 609rv-612rv, Malou to [Fontana], 8 February, 20, 24, and 30 March 1821.

⁵⁴ APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 416rv-417rv, Plessis to Fontana, Quebec, 6 September and 4 October 1820; copies in APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 328rv-329rv; and in AAQ, 210 A, X, 94 (dated 7 September).

For his part, Maréchal considered the Irish more dangerous than the Protestants, drunkards that could not be removed from their posts because the “lowest Irish populace” (“*infirmi plebs Hiberniorum*”) would create the most vicious disturbances. In writing to Plessis, he strongly complained that Propaganda had listened to the grievances of the Irish of Philadelphia and had apparently appointed one of them, the Dominican Thomas Carbry, as their new bishop. He was convinced that, were the Irish granted their own bishops, the progress of religion in the United States would have been seriously jeopardized. Yet, he maintained, he was not biased and did not discriminate against them, as proved by the fact that the majority of the theology students in his own seminary in Baltimore were of Irish origin.⁵⁵

The Irish were not less vociferous in expressing their resentment towards the French. They claimed that the Catholics of North America were oppressed by a French conspiracy, led by Jesuits and Sulpicians, with their affiliates north and south of the border, whose aim was to do away with the Irish.⁵⁶ In agreement with the British government and with the “scribes of the Court of Rome,” they wanted, as Charleston priest Simon Gallagher put it, to “establish the despotic regime of the Gallican church, with all the ordinances of their clergy and of the despotic government of that country under the Bourbons.” In order to fight the “system of ecclesiastical tyranny” that was imposed upon the Irish, some of them would go as far as declaring that “Canon law is here impracticable”; hence new bishops could be consecrated in Utrecht by the local schismatic prelate. This rupture with the established church was fully justified: “[T]he Catholic religion in this country is not much more than twenty years old, and consequently pretty nearly in the same State, in which it was at the first preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles, without any settled discipline, or church laws, except those of general conformity in the administration of the Sacraments.”⁵⁷

Gallagher's extreme views were not shared by all the Irish Catholics of the United States, yet they show how far some of them were prepared to go in order

⁵⁵ APF, SOCG, vol. 922, ff. 25rv-36rv, Maréchal to Litta, Baltimore, 16 October 1818; APF, SOCG, vol. 921, ff. 374rv, 378rv, Maréchal to [Litta], Baltimore, 4 November 1818; APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 426rv-429rv, Maréchal to [Fontana], Baltimore, 23 December 1819; APF, C, AC, vol. 4, ff. 675rv-676rv, Maréchal to Plessis, [Baltimore, 21 September 1820]; AAQ, 7 CM, I, 28, Maréchal to Plessis, Baltimore, 3 October 1820; APF, C, AA, vol. 4, ff. 65rv-66rv, Poynter to Robert Gradwell, [London], 29 December 1820.

⁵⁶ APF, C, AC, vol. 3, ff. 533rv-536rv, Trustees to Pius VII, Norfolk, 31 May 1817; APF, SOCG, vol. 921, ff. 356rv, 359rv, Thomas Carbry to *abate* Faraldi, New York, 22 November 1818; APF, SOCG, vol. 73, ff. 669rv-676rv, Thomas Stoughton to [Pius VII], [New York, May 1819]; APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 449rv-455rv, Connolly to [?Fontana], New York, 10 March 1820; APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 641rv-642rv, Connolly to Paul Macpherson or Vincenzo Argenti, New York, 7 May 1820. See also Joseph William Ruane, *The Beginning of the Society of St. Sulpice in the United States* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1935), p. 92.

⁵⁷ APF, SOCG, vol. 921, ff. 346rv-352rv, [Simon Gallagher] to Thomas Carbry, Charleston, 4 January 1819. See also Hennesey, *American Catholics*, p. 100.

to defend what they regarded as their rights, as Irish and as Americans. Nowhere was this struggle between the two ethnicities better exemplified than in New York, where in the late 1810s and early 1820s Connolly was caught in the middle of a virulent dispute that focused around two priests of dubious virtues, Charles Ffrench, an Irish priest who was accused of libertine behaviour in Ireland, Portugal, New Brunswick, Quebec, and New York and of personal use of funds collected under the pretence of building a new church, and Pierre Malou, a Belgian Jesuit with a long European and American history of apparent misdeeds. Plessis had been all too happy to see Ffrench leave his diocese in 1817⁵⁸ and bitterly complained that the 15,000⁵⁹ Irishmen who supported him were “la canaille irlandaise [...] populace ignorante & sauvage toujours prête [*sic*] à prendre parti, sans raisonner, pour quiconque se familiarise avec elle.”⁶⁰

The years from 1780 to 1820 represent a crucial period in the history of Catholicism in North America that is perhaps too multi-faceted to be constrained into general patterns of development. Prince Edward Island was different from Upper Canada, New York was not Charleston, and the archbishopric of Quebec was certainly not comparable to the archbishopric of Baltimore. It seems to me, however, that in depicting Canadian Catholicism in this period, historians have too often stressed conflict rather than consensus, in that they have placed the all-too-well-grounded grievances of the Irish and the Scots against the background of French Canadian neglect and chauvinism. Yet a comparison between a similar reality in the United States, where division, disarray, and conflict were the rule, seems to suggest that in Canada differences between the old francophone establishment and the new Irish and Scottish hierarchy were less acute and that people like Burke, MacEachern, and Macdonell were able to represent their ethnic communities and to be officially recognized as church leaders much sooner than their American counterparts.

⁵⁸ APF, C, AS, vol. 2, ff. 328rv-329rv, Plessis to [Fontana], Quebec, 6 September 1820; copy in AAQ, 210 A, X, 94 (dated 7 September).

⁵⁹ APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 781rv-782rv, Lewis Willcocks to Plessis, New York, 12 January 1820.

⁶⁰ APF, SOCG, vol. 925, ff. 416rv-417rv, Plessis to Fontana, Quebec, 6 September and 4 October 1820. For the story of the dispute between Malou and Charles Ffrench, see the many documents calendared in Ivanhoë Caron, “Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis. Inventaire de la correspondance de Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis, archevêque de Québec,” *Rapport de l’Archiviste de la Province de Québec (1927-28)*, pp. 213-316; (1928-29), pp. 87-208; (1932-33), pp. 1-244; and in Codignola, *Calendar of Documents for the History of Canada in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation “de Propaganda Fide” in Rome, 1820-1830*, preliminary typescript edition (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1988).