

Editors' Foreword

This compilation of papers from the 1996 annual meeting of the English section of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association offers an interesting mixture of topics and approaches. The subjects range from seventeenth-century feminine spirituality in New France to the diplomacy engendered by the imprisonment of a missionary bishop in Communist China, and include Irish Radicalism in Montreal and Dublin in the 1830s, the history of Catholic education in Ontario, and the intrigues of an ambitious churchman for ecclesiastical preferment. Chronological breadth is featured as well, with the seventeenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries all represented. The volume closes with two shorter papers providing contrasting perspectives on historiographic issues. While the collection thus provides stimulating variety, it must be admitted that this happy result is due less to the foresight of the editors than the consequence of a rather haphazard process. Papers are volunteered for the annual meeting; some of these are volunteered for our journal. Expert scholars assess these papers, and, finally, available space constrains our choices. Even so, we are pleased with the final selection, which should appeal to a wide variety of readers.

Our volume opens with Mary Anne Foley's fascinating study of the way Marguerite Bourgeoys and her companions in the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame* came to understand and justify their lives as missionaries and educators in New France. When their insistence on remaining free of cloister put them in conflict with church leaders and church legislation, Bourgeoys drew on the missionary ideas of the Jesuits, and building on a spirituality centered on Mary, worked out an innovative theological justification for their lives as uncloistered missionaries and educators. By modeling themselves on "the life Mary led in the world," her *vie voyageuse* in Bourgeoys' terminology, the sisters claimed and exemplified a new way in which ministry and holiness could be lived by women.

With Maureen Slattery's paper on Irish Radicalism we turn from spirituality to politics, and from consecrated religious to politicians and journalists. Dr. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, the Irish Catholic *patriote* who served as Papineau's lieutenant and as editor of the Montreal newspaper *The Vindicator* in 1833-34, very deliberately drew a parallel between the *patriote* campaign for democratic responsible government in the Canadas and Daniel O'Connell's contemporary campaign for Catholic Emancipation in Ireland.

Slattery's careful study, by a detailed comparison of the discourses of the two men and the circumstances in which they were working, shows that while there were similarities between their settings and goals, there were also important differences between the situation in Ireland, where O'Connell could successfully enlist the support of the Catholic clergy, and in Lower Canada, where the vested interests of the hierarchy remained on the side of the *status quo*.

Michael Murphy's study of the making of the Catholic school system in London, Ontario in the period between 1850 and 1871 also shows how important it is for the historian to understand local circumstances. If separate schools came later to London than places like Toronto, Hamilton, and Kingston, the delay must be explained by detailed consideration of a host of factors, including the social and economic characteristics of the city's Catholic population, fluctuations in the local economy, particular local traditions of cooperation and tolerance, the peculiarities of the prelates involved, and the availability of religious teaching personnel as well as more general factors such as the influence of a provincial ultramontane movement insisting on Catholic schools for Catholic children.

At first glance, Robert Bérard's exploration of the intrigues of the colourful Bishop John T. McNally might appear to be nothing more than ecclesiastical gossip. However, McNally's efforts to secure the appointment of an English-Canadian cardinal involved two major contentious themes in the history of Canadian Catholicism: the rivalry between French-Canadian and English-Canadian Catholics for ascendancy within the Canadian Church, and the struggle to define relations between Church and State in Canada. By tracing McNally's career and his careful cultivation of a strategic friendship with R.B. Bennett, the Canadian prime minister whose influence McNally enlisted in his campaign to persuade Rome, Bérard provides an interesting footnote to the history of the Church in Canada and demonstrates again the importance of particular circumstances and personalities in the historical process.

Relations between Church and State are also at the heart of Robert Carbonneau's study of the role of the Canadian Office of External Affairs in the release of Canadian-born Passionist Bishop Cuthbert O'Gara from a Chinese Communist prison in April 1953. In contrast to R.B. Bennett's failure, the "quiet diplomacy" of External Affairs minister Lester B. Pearson succeeded in obtaining its goal. In the circumstances of the Cold War and the Korean War, Bishop O'Gara's plight aroused great sympathy in both the United States and Canada, especially among Catholics. Carbonneau, by judicious use of the O'Gara file in the National Archives of Canada, explains how Canadian diplomacy could accomplish what the American superpower could not.

Our last two papers, which were presented at a roundtable on Canadian Church History, explore the perspectives from which recent historians have been trying to understand the experience of Christianity and Catholicism in Canada. Brian Clarke's essay looks at the broader picture by examining works of synthesis dealing with all the Christian churches in both Canada and the United States. By relating the inclusive and ecumenical approach taken by H.H. Walsh, John Moir, and John Webster Grant in their classic trilogy on the Christian church in Canada (published between 1996 and 1972) to that taken by American historians Robert T. Handy (1977) and Mark Noll (1992) in their histories of the churches in both the United States and Canada, Clarke challenges historians of Catholicism in Canada to broaden their horizons and to become more aware of the importance of studying issues that interest the general historical profession. Mark McGowan provides a critical survey of impressive recent work by members of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association and on the history of Catholicism in Canada. His examination of recent general histories of Canada, however, reveals that this work has had a disappointingly small impact on the profession as a whole. His conclusion thus reinforces Clarke's challenge.

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