PLANTING THE ROOTS OF IRISH CATHOLICISM IN AMERICAN PLURALISM

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> Take an average Irishman. I don't care where you find him--and you will find that the very first principle in his mind is, 'I am not an Englishman, because I am a Catholic.' Take an Irishman wherever he is found all over the earth, and any casual observer will at once come to the conclusion, 'Oh; he is an Irishman, he is a Catholic.' The two go together."[1]

During the past two years, the world has witnessed the expression of a phenomenon with which historians have long been familiar: people can tolerate extremely oppressive living conditions without seriously challenging their oppressors, but people with rising expectations of freedom tolerate barriers to those hoped-for freedoms much less willingly. Poles and Lithuanians are two examples of the latter group; Americans bristling under an English harness in the 1770s is another. Some pundits currently suggest that conditions under communism finally deteriorated in the late 1980s to the extent that Eastern Europeans were provoked into action. But historians may very well conclude that the 1980s were, relatively speaking, not much worse for those peoples than had been the 1970s, and that what finally unleashed revolt in that part of the world was not oppression but the belief that conditions could be improved.

Just how well a people realizes its new-found expectations, though, is much more difficult to quantify. In Eastern Europe, for example, conditions have been so poor that it would be hard to list exactly what has made it so intolerable. Denials of economic mobility, civil liberties, and religious freedom, and national or ethnic expression have all contributed to a general denial of "human rights," and have motivated the peoples of that region to reform and restructure their states and societies. As these and other oppressed peoples shed their multiple restraints during 1990, one thing has become clear: the economic oppression of Soviet domination that was so obvious to Americans failed to extinguish less evident religious and ethnic ambitions. In sum, many breaks from

oppression have been clearly marked and easily observed; but connecting those breaks and their aftermaths to the particular pursuits of freedom exhibited by different ethnic groups has been accomplished far less frequently.

Because the pursuit of freedom has often included emigration, immigrants in America present an opportunity for social historian to study how different ethnic groups have revealed the roots of their cultures through their markedly different pursuits of freedom. For many immigrants, local, community-owned enterprises served as a ladder toward economic success and acceptance in American society. In mid-nineteenth century Milwaukee, for example, German immigrants took advantage of a "dual opportunity" system to attain material and social goals.[2] William Julius Wilson described the withering of a similar process in African-American communities during the 1950s and 1960s.[3]

The seizure of economic opportunity and advancement for Irish immigrants has been a less glorious story. Oscar Handlin's Boston's Immigrants[4] described the bleak poverty surrounding emigrants from Famine-era (1845-1855) Ireland, although other historians have described the climb from the poorhouse to city hall. Many of these historians have suggested that Irish-Americans did not take advantage of the fruits of American freedom until the second generation, and that Irish immigrants did not demonstrate the energetic pursuit of freedom that one might expect from a people escaping potato-blighted, religiously oppressed Ireland and landing in Jacksonian America. David Emmons, in a recently published study of Irish immigrant laborers in Montana silver mines, complicates this picture. He showed that Irish immigrants pursued freedom in the form of labor rights, and were particularly driven in that respect when those rights were tied to Irish nationalism. Butte, Montana, silver miners not long departed from County Cork, Ireland, generously gave to the Irish independence movement.[5]

I contend that Famine-era Irish Catholic immigrants, those whose poverty and economic immobility have been so often recounted, did not ignore or fail to comprehend American freedom. They expressed that freedom, however, not in economic advancement, but in religion. What makes this expression confounding is that the religion to which mid-nineteenth century Irish immigrants attached themselves was a particularly authoritarian Roman Catholicism, which, to many observers, suppressed the freedom that America stood for.

In Ireland, Catholics had battled discrimination and oppression for centuries. Nevertheless, in both small towns and backward rural areas, clerics were social leaders in a society where religion, politics, and economics overlapped. The Irish Catholic laity included small scale merchants and farmers and a huge number of farm tenants or peasants. The Catholicism practiced by these Irish ranged from Latin masses in the cities to semi-superstitious practices in isolated, rural enclaves.

In America, the Catholic hierarchy contained a clearly evident Irish faction reputed for its strictness and ultramontanism, even during the years prior to the Famine-era wave of immigration. Many Irish-American clerics battled lay trustees in contests which, narrowly, concerned the legal title to church property but which, more generally, concerned the clergy's authority; these same clergymen adhered to Roman authority, and grew increasingly sensitive to Protestant influences on Catholics. The American laity, meanwhile, included Catholics of numerous backgrounds, French, German, Irish, and others. Laymen often served as parish trustees and did not exhibit belligerent hostility toward Protestantism.

In Ireland, the external forces influencing the Church included institutionalized discrimination within the confines of the United Kingdom. England's response to Irish Catholic calls for equal rights under the Act of the Union of 1801 was inadequate, but its

response to the devastation of the Great Famine was appallingly callous. During the Famine, the Catholic Church distributed food, performed the last rites, and provided emigrants with contacts in America; and in meeting these physical and psychological demands, the Irish branch of the Church gained strength, both in terms of a larger following and a more dedicated following.

In America, the external forces on Catholicism included American nationalistic fervor feeding on rapid territorial expansion, economic progress, and the success of the country's democratic system. Europe, to Jacksonian Americans, conjured up visions of corruption and bloody revolutions. Into this America, hundreds of thousands of immigrants flowed. Because of the conditions of their "exile" from Ireland, Irish immigrants expressed their American freedom by flocking to and supporting one of the few institutions familiar to them, the Catholic Church.

The Irish immigrants' membership, as well as their needs, augmented the strength and popularity of Irish Catholic leaders in America. But the undeniably foreign elements in the Catholic Church supported by Irish-Americans stirred America's latent anti-Catholicism and triggered repeated conflicts between Irish Catholic immigrants and native, Protestant Americans. As these conflicts blossomed, Irish Catholic immigrants, like other peoples whose raised expectations have been threatened, responded with even fiercer determination to satisfy those expectations. Expectations of religious freedom, challenged in emotionally charged conflicts with Protestant Americans, propelled many Irish-American Catholics toward a level of dedication to their native religion even greater than that shown in Ireland.

The development of Irish-American Catholicism was, thus, the product of internal ambitions and external influences. In the United States, Irish Catholics were freed from Protestants' explicit attempts to liquidate their religion and nationality. Nevertheless,

while Americans were relatively tolerant of the religious beliefs of Irish-American Catholics, they did not welcome a separate nationality within their borders. For Irish Catholics, however, religion and nationality were virtually inseparable. This American rejection of ethnic pluralism confronted Irish Catholics' pursuit of religious and ethnic freedom in the public school movement.

American school reformers hoped that public schools could provide children with basic skills, but with the advent of large scale immigration, the schools took on yet another important role: assimilator. As suggested, Irish immigrants saw separatism, not assimilation, as the path toward realization of ethnic and religious freedom; and the Catholic Church could respond to these needs since, as an institution, it already had a skeletal framework established in America. The Church had at least a start on an alternative school program, which could offer real and symbolic shelter to Catholics.

When Americans attacked American Catholic leaders for their dedication to Rome and Ireland, those leaders defended themselves, their institution, and their native country. When native Americans pushed Irish Catholics to sever their ethnic ties, Irish-American Catholics defended their freedom with even greater attachment to an institution having undeniable foreign influence as well as -- at least in mid-nineteenth century America -- a more subtle need for uniformity and orderly leadership. The interplay of the school battles helped spawn not only the American Catholic parochial school system, but an Irish nationalistic Catholicism in America. The battles also help illustrate why, for Irish Catholics, a principal component of American freedom was the freedom to retain at least a shadow of their ethnicity.

II - The Breakdown of Irish Culture, 1800-1845

The Act of the Union, made law in 1801, entitled the [Anglican] Church of Ireland to the government's financial support and maintained the civil and political rights of

Catholics at a level below that enjoyed by Protestants. Under the Act of the Union, parts of Irish culture other than Catholicism, including the language, the literature, the music, and the legal system increasingly reflected the dominant English culture.[6] The Ascendancy government, while breaking down the traditional institutions of Irish society, also spurred a counteraction of Irish nationalism, consisting of both political and religious leaders. Just how much English influence could be tolerated in Ireland, political leaders asked, before Ireland ceased to be Irish? The possibility that Ireland could violently defeat English authority in her Empire's backyard was virtually nonexistent. Consequently, Daniel O'Connell, Ireland's foremost political spokesman, accepted Ireland's membership in the United Kingdom, but contested England's denial to the Irish full and fair citizenship within the Union.[7]

Catholic Church leaders, meanwhile, asked how much Anglo-Protestant influence could be accepted before the religious distinctiveness of Ireland was lost? The Irish Catholic Church shifted from spokesmen for cooperation with England toward leaders who believed that, despite the deterioration of much of traditional Irish society, the Catholic Church was not required to accept the society's apparent death sentence. As an institution, the Catholic Church was struggling to keep up with Ireland's rapidly expanding population. While the ranks of the clergy had expanded by 35 percent between 1800 and 1840, the laity grew almost 50 percent: from 4.3 to 6.5 million. Nationwide in 1840, the laity outnumbered priests by almost 3,000 to 1; in some regions, the ratio was greater than 4,000:1.[8] In other words, even though the dramatic rise in the number of clergy suggested some strength, the laity was expanding too fast for the Church to maintain a visible clerical presence among the laity.

The Church, however, was able to build on its traditional position in society. Priests, for example, had been a fixture in Irish culture for centuries and enjoyed prestige on the

local level.[9] If a Catholic peasant had a dispute with his landlord or a local authority, he could ask a priest to articulate his position before the local "great man." In addition, many Catholics believed that priests held supernatural powers over sickness and prosperity. For many Irish Catholics, particularly those inhabiting rural areas, the priest embodied religious, social, and political leadership. He was not usually wealthy, but he was a man of recognizable authority.[10]

Priests, though, were not the only indicia of the Catholicism's role in traditional culture. Extensive poverty throughout Ireland had long precluded the erection of adequate church buildings. Consequently, sacraments such as baptism, confession, marriage, and the last rites, were often received in the home or at "sacred" wells believed to have supernatural powers.[11] A prayer or a chant recited at home or in a field before harvest had almost as much religious significance as one recited in the confines of a chapel and with the formal leadership of a priest in vestments. In sum, Catholicism in pre-Famine Irish society, shaped by centuries of isolated, rural poverty and English-imposed legal and religious restrictions, was not a clearly defined set of principals and sacraments administered by detached clerics. Rather, it was a compilation of practices driven by a mixture of secular and religious traditions and beliefs.

During the first third of the nineteenth century, the forces under which pre-Famine Catholicism had developed were in a state of flux. For generations, social leadership had been vested in the clergy and landowners. But as the nineteenth century progressed, Ireland's population boom made it more more difficult for priests to sustain their role as the local intermediary between the peasantry and the elites; economic and political pressures, moreover, caused a turnover among those elites, making social bonds more elusive. What was left of traditional Irish Catholic society on the eve of the Great

Famine was largely a state of mind: a perception of social dissolution, economic stagnation, and political repression.

But despite the deteriorated state of Irish culture, the Catholic Church held forth the possibility of renewal. Importantly, the Church had its foundation outside Ireland. English oppression of Irish Catholics could not halt the stream of Roman influence in Ireland. And this was true whether the Irish Catholic was well versed in Roman doctrine or a superstitious peasant. One tale about old Ireland refers to a peasant who gains a handsome profit for a skin passed off as "the Pope's goolden bull's hide."[12] Clearly, an Irish peasant did not have to know what a "Papal Bull" on a given subject meant in theological terms for him to understand that the papacy and Rome were larger sources of power connected with his local source of authority, the parish priest. If the Irish Catholic was literate and could read and understand Rome's pronouncement on a given subject, well then that was fine also.

Thus, the Roman Catholic Church, while admittedly facing a culture on the verge of collapse, had before it a society with numerous potential foundations; but the Church lacked a clear means of building on those foundations. Capturing the Irish people's dedication would require conveying both an understandable view of the past and a conceivable, positive vision of the future. The Young Ireland movement of the late 1840s offered a romantic reincarnation of Gaelic culture rising to heights of intellectual and economic prosperity; it failed to stir much of a following outside intellectual circles. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, could use its widespread contact with the public to convey a much more vital message. A poor to middling Irish Catholic was much more likely to respond to the real question of whether he would receive extreme unction upon his death than to whether his country set new standards in intellectualism or education.

Yet minimum standards of education were the goal of the common school movement, which budded during the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Although the harshest anti-Catholic laws had been repealed during the eighteenth century, succeeding legislation had prohibited Catholic schoolmasters from taking into their schools anyone of the Protestant religion and required them to take an oath of allegiance to the state.[13] As priests had resorted to offering the liturgy at outdoor "mass rocks," Catholic schoolmasters, licensed by the local Anglican bishop, sometimes resorted to outdoor "hedge schools"[14] or private schools not specifically affiliated with the Church.[15] In sum, Irish schools in the early nineteenth century included scattered independent institutions, most having formal religious ties and others aiming at nonsectarian charitable purposes.

Ireland's Ascendancy government attempted to systematize public education much as it had introduced new economic and legal measures. English investors and landlords had pressured the Irish for decades to abandon traditional forms of inheritance, which repeatedly subdivided land into small lots which might support a subsistence farm of a few livestock and a field of potatoes, but which could not possibly support more profitable large scale grazing or grain farming. Some Irish modified their practices (land eviction laws left some with little choice) but traditional habits of pooling resources among a family or village were not quickly rooted out. Similarly, the Ascendancy government attempted to use education not only to instruct children in reading and writing, but to modernize Ireland and bridge its sectarian divisions.

Both Catholic and Protestant religious authorities were unwilling to surrender education to school administrators, who intended to eliminate explicit sectarian influences in the schools. When the Ascendancy government established the National School System in 1831, its implicit intent was to place on the sidelines the religious antagonisms between Catholic and Protestant Irish, while instructing children on the

"three R's." The System offered religious-affiliated schools financial support if they would separate dogmatic religious instruction from purely literary instruction. The system would provide in the same classroom identical and simultaneous "literary instruction" to Protestants and Catholics; religious instruction would be provided separately.[16] The government encouraged charity schools, including parish schools and schools run by the Christian Brothers, to join the system.

The National School System floundered. The country's three principal religious groups showed only lukewarm support for truly nonsectarian education, a response that, given the role of religious leaders in Ireland, virtually doomed the System. Anglicans and Presbyterians resisted the limitations on religious instruction and kept numerous schools from affiliating with the system. In southern Ireland, where Catholics were numerically dominant, limitations on religious instruction irritated Catholics: the Christian Brothers' schools left the national system after only a few years. Because all three denominations responded to limitations on religious influences by resorting to their own private schools, the National School System was, by 1840, an ineffective shadow of the assimilative, modernizing institution initially envisioned by its planners.[17]

For many Catholics the persistence of the sectarian strife associated with the schools fed a growing frustration with Anglicization and discrimination. Although the National School System had secular goals, Protestant evangelizing activities associated with a "second reformation" helped cast schools not as an opportunity for learning, but as part of a larger practice of offering social advancement only in return for the surrender of traditional values. The school system was coupled with general second-class citizenship for Catholics, delays in emancipating Catholics from legal strictures (such as the prohibition against sitting in Parliament and entering other avenues of public service[18]), and economic deterioration at the hands of a burgeoning English empire. The school

project, quite to the contrary of its goals, helped drive the sectarian wedge deeper into society. In sum, Catholic priests, a growing number of bishops, and the Irish Catholic laity perceived a unity among political disfranchisement, "rack rents" (exorbitant land rents and taxes which virtually institutionalized rural poverty), and state education.[19] Educators, who slipped into their teaching the values and moral lessons associated with Protestantism, added to the many complaints of Irish Catholics, while the clergy, on whom the laity had traditionally relied for social leadership, became spokesmen for religious freedom of an increasingly nationalistic color.

The Catholic hierarchy's disaffection with the Ascendancy government was not unanimous. Daniel Murray, the Archbishop of Dublin (and the nominal head of the Irish Catholic hierarchy during the 1830s and 1840s), believed in peace and compromise with Protestants. Murray enjoyed an amicable relationship with the established Church of Ireland[20] and opposed mixing religion and politics.[21] He backed the Ascendancy government's proposed nonsectarian school system as the best alternative to Protestant-dominated public schools. But finding the National School System a genuine threat to Irish Catholicism was John MacHale, the Bishop of Tuam. MacHale's diocese was located in Connaught, the poorest of Ireland's four provinces and the region where the lay-clergy ratio was the highest in the country.[22] MacHale came from a prominent family in the region. His strong defense of Irish nationalism and tenant rights -- illustrating a parish priest's leadership role on a grand scale -- did nothing to lessen that prestige.[23] The Catholic Church's authority, MacHale argued, was seriously compromised by the National School System. "From the extraordinary power now claimed by the state over mixed [Protestant and Catholic] education," he wrote, "it would soon claim a similar despotic control over mixed marriages, and strive to stretch its net over all ecclesiastical concerns."[24] MacHale, in objecting to a non-Irish Catholic institution's influence, revealed his determination to at least maintain the Catholic Church's position in society.

Moreover, his impassioned and nationalistic approach to the school and other issues (tenant rights, for example) suggest that he sought greater visibility for the Church: to move from an attachment shaped by negative reference (resistance to England and Protestantism) to one built by more positive social needs.

The Catholic clergy insisted that Catholic students use the Catholic (Douay) version of the Bible, which contains extensive explanatory notes not present in the Protestant (King James) version. Part of this issue's urgency was the genuine fact that Catholic interpretations of scripture differ from those of Protestants. Without the notes, the Catholic Church argued, the scriptures would be subject to a multitude of interpretations; it could encourage splits in the Church body, and the Irish community. But another, larger part of the issue was that, if Anglo-Protestants challenged the Irish Catholics' determination to employ the Douay Bible, it represented one more instance of intrusion, one more example of the denial of what Irish Catholics felt was rightfully theirs. When combined, the theological threats posed by the Protestant Bible and the implication that Catholics' rights could be violated, confirmed Bishop MacHale's argument that Irish Catholics, if they accepted the Protestant's Bible, were throwing another clod of dirt on their own graves.

As would be the case in American school Bible disputes, Protestants construed the Catholic clergy's insistence on the use the annotated Bible as oppressive and dictatorial. Moreover, critics charged that the clerical efforts to obtain greater control over the schools and school Bibles represented an extension of Roman authority within the United Kingdom. English and Irish Protestants suspected foreign subversion[25]; to the extent that the Irish Catholic hierarchy was educated in and drew on the support of Rome, the suspicion was right. But Pope Gregory XVI preferred to avoid political confrontations. Gregory acceded to Bishop MacHale's demand to hear his argument that mixed education

should be condemned[26] and camps representing both MacHale's position and Archbishop Murray's cooperationist argument presented their respective arguments to Gregory in 1840. In 1841, Gregory refused to denounce Ireland's National School System, but gave it only lukewarm support. The System, Gregory concluded, had not appeared to inflict "any injury" on Catholicism. But "all books which contain noxious matter," he said, should be removed, and "every effort [should] be made that none but a Catholic preceptor [should] give religious, moral or historical lectures."[27] The Pope's pronouncement failed to bring peace to the Irish Catholic Church's discord over education, which increasingly symbolized the question of the Church's relationship to the state.[28]

III - Catholics and Irish in America, 1800-1845

In the late 1840s, the Great Famine's devastation helped clarify the Catholic Church's role in Ireland as a whole and its role in education in particular. The accompanying pace of Irish emigration to America, meanwhile, prompted a redirection of the American Catholic Church, both in terms of the social structure the laity sought and the leadership the clergy offered.

Just prior to the immigrant wave of the 1840s, Catholic Americans numbered about 600,000 in a U.S. population of 20 million.[29] They had, for the most part, been left in peace: few Americans saw in the minority any real threat to themselves or to American institutions.[30] An English tradition of anti-Catholicism had been transplanted in the United States[31], but without the vitality it had possessed in England. Although Americans regarded Catholics with a certain amount of suspicion, American laws -- at least after 1789 -- did not deprive them of any rights bestowed upon Protestants. Although the term "Catholic" was to become by the 1840s associated with unemployed, impoverished, Irish, fifteen or twenty years earlier the characterization was not so clear. Religious oppression in America was not widespread (the burning of a convent was an

extreme, but rare example), and non-Catholic political leaders even considered the merits of gaining immigrants' allegiance.[32]

The American Catholic hierarchy, meanwhile, was composed of men born in England, France, Ireland, or the United States. Most of the clergy had received at least some education in Europe, although a few seminaries were operating in the United States. The most prominent man in the pre-1840 hierarchy was John England, the Bishop of Charleston, South Carolina. A native of Ireland, Bishop England nevertheless gained prominence, not from vocal, inflammatory defense of Catholic immigrant rights, but from cool explanations of the Church's compatibility with the United States.[33] Bishop England pressured his fellow prelates at the Provincial Council of 1829 to adopt resolutions demanding that Church lay-trustees surrender to bishops the title to church properties[34] -- a measure that would, obviously, enhance the "strength of ecclesiastical authority," and which would help unify the Church.[35] But England was no ultramontane extremist. Addressing the United States Congress, he had given his assurance that the Pope would have no voice in how Americans exercised their civil liberties.[36]

The question of Catholicism and American civil liberties, however, was much more complicated than whether the Pope would tell American Catholics how to vote or what to say. On a broad scale, Catholicism raised the question of whether there could be erected in the United States an institution based on conformity to a rigid system, adherence to specific practices and beliefs, and compliance with the directives of clerics not answerable to American authorities. That sort of system could flourish in Ireland, where dedication to Catholicism meant, primarily, dedication to one's own culture and resistance to an invader. But to many Americans, devout Catholicism meant dedication to a foreign culture at the expense of allegiance to American institutions. In the midst of the Second Great Awakening, most Americans could accept the notion of competing

religious visions offered by various Protestant faiths; those visions, at least, had been cultivated in American universities and divinity schools. A religion rooted in the Old World was another matter.

American Catholic bishops of non-Irish backgrounds (some raised in America, others members of the French Order of St. Sulpice) perceived this distinction. When Bishop England advocated stronger clerical authority over lay Catholics, he ruffled the feathers of lay-trustees; his support for greater direction from Rome (on prompting regular episcopal councils in the United States, for example), instead of bishops' autonomy irritated non-Irish bishops. Both conflicts had the potential to raise ethnic and theological disputes within the Church. Francis Kenrick, then the Bishop of Philadelphia, confirmed Bishop England's frustrations regarding his proposed reforms, and wrote his friend Paul Cullen, the rector of the Irish College in Rome, that more could have been accomplished at the Provincial Council of 1829 "had there been more personal courtesy, fraternal charity, and less bias, less anti-Irish feeling."[37]

Kenrick, also an Irishman, resented the non-Irish bishops' prejudice, which he saw as narrowminded. He had rejected Ireland's own Maynooth Seminary, where Gallicanism was reputed to have gained a hold during the 1820s, in favor of an education at the Irish College in Rome. He denied allegiance to any cause but Roman Catholicism.[38] And in his later studies at a seminary in Bardstown, Kentucky, he attracted significant praise with his writings on Papal supremacy, not Irish nationalism.[39] Paul Cullen agreed with Kenrick's appraisal of the American hierarchy's division, and reported that Bishop England had attempted to impress the Pope with the necessity for holding a national council in the United States, but that the English-born Archbishop of Baltimore had resisted that suggestion for fear of surrendering too much influence to Bishop England.[40]

Although the American prelates adopted Bishop England's lay-trustee resolution, they voted down his suggestion that the American Church conquer its chronic shortage of priests by importing missionaries from Ireland, where the increasing flow of emigration had provoked the Catholic Church to focus attention on emigration and to train priests specifically for missionary work in the United States. Bishops outside of the Irish clique did not have to fear a oligarchy of imported Irish clerics to understand that raising the Church's profile in American society was not absolutely necessary in the 1830s and might even be unwise. A French-American bishop confided to Kenrick that the American hierarchy's rejection of Bishop England's missionary proposal constituted "an evident disregard and defiance of the Irish interest" at the Council. "Little was done" at the subsequent Provincial Council of 1833, Kenrick told Cullen, "in consequence of the suspicion with which every measure emanating from Bp. England was viewed."[41]

Kenrick disliked the non-Irish bishops' suspicion of his motives, but reliance on Irishmen to erect a more centralized Church was, for him, unavoidable. This was confirmed when, just as the missionary and trustee questions subsided, the American common school movement emerged. The missionary and trustee questions had subtle ramifications outside of the Church; they brought unwanted attention and highlighted traits the institution would have preferred to keep in the background. The common school, particularly as it took on the role of an assimilator of immigrants, was an institution with the potential to exacerbate and spill into a wider forum the Church's reliance on immigrant leaders and its stiffening hierarchy. Moreover, the nationalistic religion desired by Irish immigrants (i.e., in which priests would preach with references to Ireland and help maintain communication with Old World relatives) threatened to make these conflicts even more acute.

The American school reform movement had its genesis in a positive ambition. The Irish National School System had been implemented by persons foreign to Irish Catholics and with the intention of bringing literacy and other skills to the island; the System was part of a larger restructuring of Irish society. On the other hand, American school reformers, responding to the nation's rapid growth and expansion, saw adding common schools to the country's public institutions as a means to boost young Americans' skills and to enable them to take greater advantage of the country's opportunities. During the first third of the nineteenth century, prosperous Americans hired tutors to instruct their children, while middle class artisans and professionals able to spare their children from the work place sent them to church-affiliated schools or the occasional public institution.

During this period, moreover, Irish immigrants, in American schools and American society generally, did not distinguish themselves by their anti-Protestantism. For example, chapters of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a social and philanthropic group, were founded in numerous cities and offered friendship and support to all Americans of Irish descent, regardless of religious affiliation. The Baltimore chapter of the AOH, founded in 1803, used a prominent Irish Protestant merchant's bequest to found a charity school for "children of Irish parents." The school disavowed any sectarian connections and sought to shape Irish children of Catholic or Protestant faiths into "intelligent and respectable members of society."[42]

The American Catholic Church, for a time, operated its own schools and attempted to cooperate with common school advocates, suggesting that systems of both a secular and sectarian nature could coexist and produce similar benefits for society. When the American school reform was in its early stages, before Irish Catholics attained a majority of the American Church, the American hierarchy favored the establishment of parochial schools. The bishops decreed in 1829 that, because many poor Catholics were "exposed .

. . to great danger of the loss of faith or the corruption of morals . . . we judge it absolutely necessary that schools should be established in which the young may be taught the principles of faith and morality, while being instructed in letters."[43] The bishops also noted that Catholic doctrine was distorted in "the books used in most schools." They urged that, "as soon as possible, books, completely cleansed of error, in which nothing is contained which could bring forth hatred of the faith or ill-feeling, be edited."[44]

The flavor of the 1829 Council's decrees on education, although showing a consciousness of the need to have Catholic dogma presented truthfully, suggests that the bishops were concerned primarily with poor children losing their faith among the temptations of American society.[45] The bishops' appeals were to God and family ("God has made [parents] the guardians of those children to lead them to His service upon earth . . . ."[46]) -- matters on which Protestants and Catholics of all varieties could agree. The Catholic Church's position toward public education, however, shifted noticeably with the influx of Irish immigrants.

As the Famine-induced immigration from Ireland (as well as heavy immigration from Germany) altered the character of the American Church's clergy and laity, the public school's purpose likewise shifted from an institution designed to provide a minimal amount of instruction into a key element in assimilating into America a huge number of foreigners. Some states had already resorted to asylums to reform and control children of poor Americans. Massachusetts law, for instance, permitted the Boston House of Reformation to take "all children who live an idle or dissolute life, whose parents are dead, or if living, from drunkenness, or other vices, neglect to provide any suitable employment, or exercise any salutary control over said children."[47]

By the mid- to late 1840s, the school reform movement had gained a broad range of supporters: from urban and professional middle classes, who hoped that schools could

cool social tensions in growing American cities, to early labor leaders, who saw education as a path to economic and political empowerment.[48] Leading the movement was Horace Mann, who called public schools "the great equalizer of the condition of men" and an inculcator of "all Christian morals."[49] School reformers used carefully worded readers to teach children the importance of self-control and punctuality and respect for authority. After conceding the primary moral influence of mothers, a popular reader stated that "next in rank and in efficacy to that pure and holy source of moral influence is that of the schoolmaster."[50] The public school, Mann and other advocates indicated, would be good for Americans, good for America, and supportive of Christian morality.

But the public school, while it could complement American values, could also challenge departures from American norms. The emphasis school reformers placed on the schoolmaster and Christian (implicitly Protestant) morals conflicted with the role played by the Catholic priest and the Catholic faith. In addition, public schools caught the imagination of many evangelical Protestants, who saw the institutions as complements to Sunday schools and Bible tract societies. Partly due to general insensitivity, but also partly due to hostility, some school books contained passages of this sort:

> As for old Phelim Maghee, he was of no particular religion. When Phelim had laid up a good stock of sins, he now and then went over to Killarney, of a Sabbath morning, and got *relaaf* by *confissing* them out o' the way, as he used to express it, and sealed his soul up with a *wafer*, and returned quite invigorated for the perpetration of new offences.[51]

General ridicule of superstitious Irish Catholicism was offensive. But to Irish immigrants in America, reciting the passage in a state-sanctioned school echoed of Anglo-Protestant taunts voiced in Ireland.

The American Catholic Church, increasingly dominated by Irish immigrants, responded to the common school's broadening role with an approach that, while similar to that taken in Ireland, served the particular needs of Irish-Americans. This new American Catholic Church formulated its response to public education with rhetoric and symbols important to Irish immigrants. By advocating Catholic schools clearly separate from state influences, the Church drew the support of Irish immigrants, but alienated Protestants and Catholics of non-Irish backgrounds, who complained that the Church was dedicating its loyalty to foreign leaders.

When Francis Kenrick was transferred from Bardstown, Kentucky, to become the coadjutor-bishop of Philadelphia, home of one of the country's largest Catholic populations, he immediately confronted trusteeism and the school question.[52] With the assistance of a young Rev. John Hughes, Kenrick succeeded in wresting the Philadelphia church, in particular the aging bishop's residence and the diocese's endowment, from lay trustee control.[53] He spent the remainder of his time in Philadelphia having new church buildings erected, organizing a seminary, and writing theological volumes "used regularly in American seminaries and cited frequently by European scholars."[54]

As the American Catholic Church's most distinguished theologian and a confidant of the rector of the Irish College in Rome, Kenrick was watchful of developments outside of the Philadelphia diocese. When a vacancy arose in the co-adjutorship of the Diocese of New York in 1837, Kenrick advised Cullen in Rome that he had been unable "to find in the country Priests of that exalted merit which is desirable in Prelates, except such as are absolutely required elsewhere."[55] (Hughes had temporarily fallen out of Kenrick's favor.) Having kept himself abreast of developments in the Irish Church, Kenrick recommended three candidates for New York: one a professor of theology at an Irish seminary, the second a Rome-educated priest in Dublin, and the third a priest in County Carlow,

Ireland. None of the three would likely be accepted by the American prelates, Kenrick conceded, pointing to the opposition of French clergymen of the Sulpician Order.[56] Kenrick withdrew himself from consideration for the job and Hughes won the appointment[57], thus adding the large and prestigious New York Archdiocese to the list of bishoprics filled with Irishmen.

Kenrick's fears of ethnic hostility were confirmed as both he and Hughes were subsequently engulfed in riotous school controversies, which placed at issue Irish-Americans' allegiance to the United States. In Philadelphia and New York City, the two bishops showed little enthusiasm for nonsectarian common schools and demanded the right to have Catholic children instructed in a way that would elevate, not eclipse, the church's past position in American society. (This could be accomplished with the use of Catholic instructors, reading books portraying Catholics as at least the equals of Protestants, and, where resources allowed, school buildings operated by the Church.) In Ireland, the multitude of grievances held by Irish Catholics caught education in a web of contentiousness. The Ascendancy-backed government pushed for common schools as part of a process of converting one culture to another. Similarly, the American public schools were intended to place a floor of knowledge beneath American children, while at the same time helping to transform outsiders (immigrants) into Americans.

There was a difference, however, between the Irish and American common school movements, and it was largely one of perception. Irish Catholics could perceive that, in Ireland, the schools were intended to serve as a blanket thrown over traditional Irish culture, finally smothering its remains. In the United States, on the other hand, public education was intended to elevate society, while helping complete a transformation that Americans expected of one who migrated from the Old World. In sum, when the Protestant-Catholic school battles finally broke into open view, it was more a product of

the underlying tension between education perceived as subjugation and education for assimilation than it was of whose Bible had explanatory notes and whose did not.

The Catholic Church's earlier disputes over trusteeism and Irish missionaries previewed some of the issues surrounding the school question, including the use of the annotated Catholic Bible in public schools and the establishment of separate Catholic schools (most likely staffed with Irish teaching orders). The pre-Famine Irish Catholic Church had realized that the Church's strength and cohesion depended upon orderly compliance with the hierarchy, exploitation of the social aspects of sacramental rites, and use of the Catholic Bible in the schools. In other words, it preserved itself by playing to its strengths: its influence and assets held outside the reach of the Ascendency government and its deep roots into Irish culture. The American Catholic Church, on the other hand, did not fear the same sort of institutional oppression experienced in Ireland, but did have to be cautious of American xenophobia. To its hindrance, though, the American Catholic Church lacked the cultural roots enjoyed by its Irish counterpart.

Bishops Kenrick and Hughes helped provide the institutional framework for Catholicism's survival in America. From a theological standpoint, they were convinced that unannotated, unguided scripture would preclude a unified Catholic faith, and could foster excessive independent opinion. But from a cultural standpoint, they also realized that Irish Catholicism could flourish -- not simply survive -- if it provided some of the cultural aspects present in Ireland. To be sure, these cultural aspects would not include "mass rocks" and holy wells. But they might include Catholic schools, convents, churches, and a body of clerics freed from government suppression. In other words, America offered Kenrick, Hughes, and the Catholic Church in general, the opportunity to fully utilize the skeletal framework already in place. For example, church buildings could double as schools and nuns, priests, and brothers could be employed as teachers.

The support offered by the laity would determine precisely how the restructured Church would function in American society.

When the Pennsylvania legislature proposed to make (Protestant) Bible reading mandatory in the public schools, Kenrick voiced his vigorous opposition. Apparently using the pseudonym "Sentinel" in writing a number of articles in the Philadelphia diocese's newspaper, Kenrick argued that religious and literary instruction should be conducted separately, "unnatural [though] it may be," so that Catholic children might be sheltered from Protestant proselytizing.[58] Make no mistake, separating religious instruction from broader education flew in the face of the cultural/religious unity Kenrick desired. But within a few weeks, "Sentinel" concluded that compartmentalizing religious and literary instruction was not appropriate and argued that public schools were an intrusive institution propagating heretical beliefs. The nondenominational school, "Sentinel" wrote, "is founded on a Protestant principle, it is managed chiefly by Protestants, and the books, even if free from direct invective against Catholics, which is not often the case, are all of a Protestant complexion."[59] "Sentinel" did not elaborate on the meaning of "Protestant complexion," but, given Kenrick's published opinions, one can surmise that the bishop found in the books disrespect for Catholicism, and found the nondenominational school an improper divorce of the secular and sectarian realms.

As Kenrick pressed school administrators to permit Catholics to use the Catholic version of the Bible, his argument was distorted by Protestant leaders -- both clerics and laymen -- who claimed that he was demanding that all Bibles be removed from the schoolroom and that that demand was rooted in foreign (Irish and Roman) manipulation.[60] Kenrick's continued insistence that the King James Bible was sectarian inflamed American tempers, while Protestant American refusals to grant the annotated Catholic Bible equal time in the classroom aggravated Catholics. In May 1844, anti-Irish

Catholic violence replaced formal debate and rioters burned thirty Catholic homes.[61] Marchers displayed a ripped American flag bearing the inscription, "This is the flag that was trampled under foot by the Irish papists." It accused Irish Catholics, the "degraded slaves of the Pope,"[62] of attempting to remove God from the schools. The nativist press blamed the riots on "'foreign ecclesiastics, foreign in birth, foreign in education, and foreign in the objects of their mission' who fostered discord with their charge that the Bible was a sectarian book."[63] Kenrick failed to have the Protestant version of the Bible removed or have Catholic children granted the opportunity to use the Catholic version.

Kenrick, not eager to debate the Catholic Church's rights in America, refused to surrender to school reformers his right to speak for Catholics in his diocese. Instead, just as the May 1844 riots cooled, he wrote Paul Cullen in Rome, asking that either he or the Irish College's assistant rector, Tobias Kirby, "cross the Atlantic and become my partner."[64] Kenrick's solution to the school problem, he told Cullen, would be the establishment of schools run by the Christian Brothers. "Education here is in a sad condition," he wrote. "The Public Schools are everywhere conducted in a way to leave the children without any religious impression or to impress them with sectarian views."[65]

The "everywhere" to which Kenrick referred included New York City, where Hughes, his former assistant, had been "fairly worsted by [Protestant sects]."[66] The controversy had begun in 1840 when Governor William Seward recommended "the establishment of schools in which [the children of foreigners] may be instructed by teachers speaking the same language with themselves, and professing the same faith."[67] Up until this time, the New York City Public School Society, a private organization with close ties to the city's major Protestant communities, controlled operation of the city's schools, from the curriculum to hiring of teachers. Seward, however, believed that many immigrants were failing to take advantage of public education "in consequence of prejudices arising from

difference of language or religion."[68] Seward, while offering political and social opportunity consistently denied Irish Catholics in Ireland, did not reason that those immigrants should retain values different from other Americans. He simply believed that, if schools ceased to offend or threaten immigrants, they would take attend them and reap the same benefits received by native Americans.

Bishop Hughes did not respond immediately to Seward's proposal, because he was in Rome, where, as Paul Cullen noted, "delegates of both sides of the [Irish] education question" were "preparing vigorously their documents for the consideration of the Holy See."[69] As indicated earlier, Pope Gregory did not take decisive action on mixed education. And whether Hughes' stood in Bishop MacHale's anti-mixed education camp or held an accommodationist view is uncertain. But when he returned to New York, Hughes proceeded to handle the situation much as had Ireland's Bishop MacHale, arguing that school funding laws were depriving Catholics of their legal rights.

Accepting Seward's proposition, Hughes petitioned the Board of Aldermen of the City of New York for a share of public school funds. He emphasized that the Public School Society had committed itself to "the importance of religious instruction," and that religious instruction in the city's public schools had been sectarian.[70] Catholics requesting a portion of the school fund, Hughes argued, wanted only the vindication of their "*guarantied* [sic] rights, civil and religious."[71] He stated that tax dollars for Catholic schools would be spent on only the secular facets of instruction and that Catholic schools and their teachers would remain subject to the city's inspection.[72] In sum, Hughes was willing to agree to state controls over how state money would be spent, as long as he could erect explicitly Catholic institutions. During the ensuing conflagration, Bishop Hughes teamed with the New York Democratic Party and succeeded in ousting the Public School Society from control of the city's schools.[73] The fight subsided in 1843

when the city denied Catholic schools a share of the common school fund. "Let parochial schools be established and maintained everywhere," Hughes then declared. "The days have come, and the place, in which the school is more necessary than the church."[74]

Hughes' remark, while most often used as the benchmark for the beginning of the American parochial school system[75], is more broadly relevant. The school Bible controversies had uncovered not only the religious tension highlighted by Hughes, but the more subtle question of resistance to assimilation in America. In Philadelphia, the Protestant marchers' directed their most vicious charges at Kenrick and the clergy. The marchers' rhetorical emphasis was on the Pope's tyranny and the Church's foreign influences. Rhetoric aside, though, it was the homes of lay Catholics that Philadelphia Protestants attacked first; only on the third day of battle did rioters set fire to two churches.[76] The aim of native Americans' hatred was primarily the papist laymen accused of trampling the American flag. Pope Gregory and foreign ecclesiastics might be spooky figures, but the laymen slavishly dedicated to those figures were the real problem facing Americans. Irish Catholic immigrants probably presented a bewildering sight for native or assimilated Americans, who saw in the immigrants' dedication to their foreign-affiliated institution a seeming intention to remain within poverty's confines while refusing to unite with other Americans in a pursuit of self-improvement.

At least superficially, then, the conflict was over an attachment to foreign clerics and the assertion that the King James Bible was sectarian. But more importantly, it was, to expand on native American rioters' words, the Irish Catholics' degradation of American solidarity. The common schools, by this point, were part of a larger strategy of dealing with the onslaught of poor, unskilled, violent, immigrants. They were part of a developing plan, which included temperance, orphanages, jails, and formal city police

forces. With Irish immigrants streaming into the United States, showing greater proclivity for producing children than almost anything else, the schools not only remedied a current problem, they held forth the promise that the American assimilative process could ease the immigrant problem in the future.

The two alternatives suggested by Kenrick and the American Catholic Church threatened the common school's rationale. Splitting religious from "literary" instruction would weaken the common school effort by recognizing that Americans were not homogenous and that some Americans preferred to remain that way. Still, Governor Seward and numerous school reformers believed that America could remain strong despite society's growing heterogeneity. But the second alternative -- erecting and maintaining a distinct school system run by and for Catholics -- erased one of the greatest potentials for the schools. Theoretically, Catholic schools could provide Catholic children with some of the instruction necessary to begin ascending from poverty. But the celebration of American assimilation and unity of purpose made explicit by the common public school would, in the Catholic school, be made only implicit. The assimilation and unity, in other words, would have to take place not on the ground of common institutions, but on the ground of commonly held desires for separate institutions accomplishing some common purposes. This was not an impossible leap: Americans prized their freedom to be left alone to their own pursuits. What the behavior of Irish Catholics suggested, however, was that they preferred to pursue freedom on a community- or religion-wide scale. What they suggested was a desire for American pluralism, not simply liberalism.

The Catholic Church, particularly the Irish Catholic Church, placed tremendous emphasis on the family's and the community's total welfare, as opposed to the individual's success. Those who strayed from the Church -- by failing to abide by set moral standards, by failing to attend church, by sending their children to a public school

instead of a Catholic school, or by failing to follow the priest's declaration on any of these matters -- broke with the community. Admittedly, many Irish Catholics did not heed the words of Irish-American bishops, who denounced the public schools. Neither Hughes nor Kenrick succeeded in forcing all Catholic parents to withdraw their children from public schools in favor of parochial ones. But as the tide of immigration increased, and the problems that posed to American cities became more obvious, the symbolic value of the Church and its schools became more evident.

For a separate parochial school system to become a reality, Kenrick and Hughes knew that teaching orders would have to be trained in, or imported from, Ireland; this was what non-Irish American bishops had resisted in the Provincial Councils of 1829 and 1833. Just a short time before Hughes declared that schools would be the keystone of the American Catholic Church, Paul Cullen had advised Bishop Kenrick that "if you had in America some of the institutions they have in Ireland for the education of the poor, religion would be much better preserved and take deeper root among that class." The priests, Christian Brothers, and nuns of Ireland, Cullen told Kenrick, could provide an answer to the rising education question.[77] (During the early 1840s, the Catholic Church established a seminary in Dublin for the express purpose of training priests to be missionaries to Irish emigrants.[78]) Cullen then conceded, however, that parochial schools run by the Christian Brothers "may be . . . a thing not suited to the particular wants of your country."[79]

Cullen was correct in realizing that the situations in the two countries might not call for identical responses. But he sensed correctly that Irish Catholic emigrants, either in Ireland or in America, lacked a sense of direction or institutional leadership. Cullen, Hughes, and Kenrick correctly believed that schools were a necessary component of the Irish Catholic community's continued survival, both in Ireland and in America. Catholics

in Ireland had been promised that membership in the United Kingdom and adoption of English culture would bring about prosperity; but, for a number of reasons, the shift between cultures was not transpiring painlessly. All three prelates recognized that America, even Know-Nothing America, was not Ireland; but they also recognized that emigration to America was not complete when the ship docked in New York.

School reformers, even when they strove to free public schools of any sectarianism, reached only part of the problem. Irish Catholic immigrants -- clerical or lay -- could readily appreciate a relief from proselytism and ridicule. But converting Irish Catholics into Americans would require a shift in the mindsets of both the immigrants and native Americans. While non-Irish American Catholics may once have been tempted to embrace nonsectarian schools[80], Irish Catholics, who found in their religion the last remnant of their native culture, had almost no choice but to call for Catholic unity and separation from outside influences.

IV - Ireland, the Church, and the Famine Emigration

By the mid-1840s, Irish and Catholic rights had grown increasingly synonymous on both sides of the Atlantic. The half-century immediately preceding the Great Famine (1845-1854) saw a gradual breakdown in the Irish traditional economic, political, and social conditions. Economically, Irish peasants lived in poorer conditions than almost any class in Europe: the country had the densest population in Europe, and a large proportion of the peasants lived in windowless shacks, where parents, children, and possibly a few pigs and chickens shared one roof. Many Irish escaped squalid poverty and lack of opportunity at home by abandoning their home altogether and enlisting in the English armed forces. Others emigrated to England or North America. The rural Irish who stayed in Ireland continued to subdivide family plots of land into smaller and smaller parcels and grew increasingly dependent upon the potato for their sustenance.

But despite their relative poverty and primitive economy, Irish peasants rarely died of cold or starvation. Potatoes, when not touched with the blight, kept them adequately fed. The small Irish middle class, made up of shopkeepers and small landowners, did not face such privation. Their complaints more often centered on discriminatory English trade laws and social constraints on Catholic mobility.[81]

Politically, Irish Catholics flocked behind Daniel O'Connell, in part because he preached law and order and fair treatment in the United Kingdom, and because he was a heroic figure, a symbol of hope. O'Connell, even while leading "monster meetings" of supportive Irish Catholics, realized that violent resistance to England was virtually out of the question. But he failed to grasp that Irish Catholics -- at least the peasantry -- was no more ready to rally for legally explicit political rights than they were to take up arms or initiate a modern economy. O'Connell's political movement went to the grave with him in 1849.

Culturally, Irish Catholics were adrift, somewhere between traditional values cultivated in isolated rural villages and modern, capitalist values injected by a changing economic conditions controlled by forces well beyond the local village or landlord. To this audience, Bishop MacHale and the Catholic Church held out explicitly religious means of satisfying Irish aspirations. MacHale, like O'Connell, could not promise a clear, unobstructed road from the extant poor, fractured society to the complete realization of Irish Catholic freedom and prosperity. But the rewards the Church did offer -- community cohesion, a continuance of traditional social roles, faith in a better life in the hereafter, and the sanction of God in the here and now -- could be obtained even in the absence of democratic government or modern technology.

In both Ireland and America, Irish Catholics were promised that detaching themselves, at least partially, from the Roman Catholic Church, would clear their path to the fruits of

modern society. But the gradual dissolution of their society, capped by the catastrophe of the Great Famine, convinced most Irish Catholics that those promises were hollow. The Famine's devastation was unparalleled in Irish history. Hundreds of thousands starved to death. From a population of about 8.5 million, nearly two million emigrated between 1845 and 1855, about 1.5 million ending up in the United States.[82] Earlier emigration had skimmed individuals from the society's middle ranks, as well as from its poor. But the Famine induced whole families, including thousands of the most desperate poor, to leave at once.[83] Entire villages were abandoned in a matter of a few years. Wholesale emigration became, for the Irish, more than a pursuit of happiness; it was a forced exile from their homeland and their culture.

Inclusion in the United Kingdom brought Famine-stricken peasants little consistent relief. Some English landlords paid for passage to America for their tenants, but the man England placed in charge of Famine relief opposed granting too much aid to Ireland for fear that it would discourage industrious work habits.[84] Charles Trevelyan, England's Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, was from a prominent English family and was religiously devoted to Bible reading as well as a laissez-faire approach to economics.[85] Trevelyan disbelieved early reports of Famine devastation and consistently resisted efforts to provide direct relief to starving Irish. When the modest relief was virtually halted in 1846, Bishop MacHale responded that England "might as well issue an edict of general starvation as stop the supplies."[86] In fact, despite the reality of human starvation, English landlords continued to export from the country wheat, oats, and barley. The government provided military escorts to discourage any attempt to halt the exports. "It was a sight," one historian has observed, "which the Irish people found impossible to understand and impossible to forget."[87] In sum, the Famine bludgeoned Irish Catholics with starvation and dislocation, while giving fresh meaning to their conviction that they were anything but English and anything but Protestant.

Because a religious revival is generated by psychological, rather than physical, needs and equipment, the Catholic Church was able to strengthen itself while the Famine lashed at Ireland. Both before and after O'Connell captured the country's imagination, the Irish had shown their proclivity for rallying around heroes. Their ability to give intense devotion to another, to achieve success by proxy, reappears throughout the country's history. Brian Boru's victory over Viking invaders at the Battle of Clontarf (1014), "Red Hugh" O'Donnell's fight against English Protestants (1590s), the exile of the "Wild Geese" following a failed uprising (1798), and the martyrdom of the Easter Rising's leaders (1916) all created legendary figures in the fight against English rule. In virtually every case, a brave few individuals took responsibility for freeing the entire mass of the Irish. None included wholesale revolutions. There are many reasons for the Irish people's creation of heroes instead of armies, including the country's clannish background and the relative lack of opportunity for many to succeed at once.

Fitting into this tradition, the Catholic faith promised the Irish fulfillment, not merely for the "elect," but for the devout, the humble, those who keep within the fold. Catholicism also fit into Irish tradition on the basis of its hierarchy. Irish Catholic clergy fit, at least imperfectly, into the hero role so evident in Irish history. The parish priest was the local leader. For his strong will, Bishop John MacHale became known as the "Lion of St. Jarlath's." In other words, Ireland's traditional culture, although in serious disrepair, continued on in the shape of the Catholic Church. The Great Famine, coinciding with other crises in Irish society, brought Ireland to its knees; and in doing so, it brought the Irish closer to the Roman Catholic Church.

Irish Catholic leaders such as John MacHale, who were able to articulate Catholic grievances against Anglo-Protestant hostility, helped direct the cries for tenants' rights, civil rights, freedom of worship, and freedom from the additional antagonism of secular

or Protestant schools. It took no clever twisting of words for MacHale to defend Catholicism and simultaneously promote Irish nationalism. In sum, the Irish Catholic devotional renaissance, which emerged in earnest in the wake of the Famine, confirmed the Irish people's heritage, while at the same time using the nation's psychological resources to confront new threats.[88]

The Catholic hierarchy's uncompromising demands for freedom from English Protestant interference increased significantly during the Famine. Bishop MacHale, witnessing the emigration of more than one-third of his Connaught province's population, became ever more determined to rid Ireland of Anglo-Protestant influence. Meanwhile, the Church's narrower confrontation with Anglo-Protestant educators entered a new phase when Paul Cullen, for seventeen years the rector of the Irish College in Rome, returned to Ireland in 1849 with Rome's call for greater ties to the Papacy and a denunciation of mixed education. Cullen had long believed the Irish Catholic Church would be well served with closer ties to Rome. Writing Philadelphia's Bishop Kenrick years earlier, he had declared that "[t]here were never so many Irish students in Rome before the present year. I hope they will be the means of introducing Roman maxims in Ireland and uniting that church more closely with the Holy See."[89]

Cullen proceeded to leave no doubt that he intended to draw Irish Catholics closer to a uniform Church and to draw the Irish Catholic Church closer to Rome. In the first of these two strategies, clearly, Cullen could count on the support of virtually all of Ireland's Catholic clergy and, probably, a good part of the laity, which saw greater expression, not suppression, in the practice of Catholicism. With respect to the second strategy, Cullen could count on his influence in Rome to assure that vacant bishoprics in Ireland would be filled by men sharing Cullen's ultramontane sympathies.

Cullen's priorities for appointing bishops illustrate his determination to succeed traditional Irish culture with a culture tied more explicitly to Roman Catholicism. For example, when Cullen weighed his choices for a new Bishop of County Kerry, a western, Gaelic-speaking region, he threw his favor behind David Moriarty, who was a native of Kerry as well as the president of a Dublin seminary for missionary priests. "If the [Roman] Propaganda wish to promote discipline," Cullen said, "they must appoint Moriarty. He is fond of order, a disciplinarian, a good preacher, and a man of piety. I dare say the old [incumbent] bishop [would] not like him -- but it is good [that] the Church . . . be looked to, not the whim of the good old man." John O'Sullivan, a parish priest in Kerry, an Irish-speaker, and the favorite of the incumbent, was "unfit to be a bishop," Cullen said, calling him "a boisterous, rough man."[90] Moriarty won the appointment.

The episode is instructive on two counts. First, it illustrates Cullen's demand that bishops be dedicated to hierarchical uniformity and Roman authority. Second, it reveals Cullen's concern that Catholics in the heart of traditional, Gaelic Ireland, where the formal practice of Catholicism had been significantly weaker than in more developed, English-speaking areas[91], turn their allegiance from the Gaelic-speaking parish priest to the centralized Church hierarchy. This realignment was particularly crucial for American ramifications, because County Kerry was among the areas hardest hit by the Famine and emigration. Bishop Moriarty, Cullen likely hoped, would employ his expertise in missionary work while on, effectively, a mission in Ireland. In choosing Moriarty for the post, Cullen gave Kerry Catholics a man with local ties. But, Cullen believed, Moriarty had subordinated those local ties to his respect for Roman Catholic order. In Kerry, Moriarty could enhance the Catholic hierarchy's position in the minds of Irish who were in Kerry in 1850, but who might very well be in the United States by 1855. Reforms in

Ireland, Cullen had earlier written Kenrick, might bring to America "a more moral class" of emigrants.[92]

Cullen's determination to erect a powerful, centralized Catholic Church in Ireland dovetailed with MacHale's aim of raising the Church's profile, particularly as it related to education. The two leaders agreed, moreover, that the threat to Catholic education was not simply Protestantism; it was English Protestantism. On the eve of the Famine, Tobias Kirby, Cullen's assistant in Rome, notified Kenrick that the English government's proposed Queen's Colleges made him and Cullen "uneasy about the education question in Ireland: [English Protestants] may again prostrate our Irish Church at the feet of her ancient enemies."[93] Neither the half-starved Irish parents living in the country, nor their counterparts in the towns and cities, had as their top concern the sort of Bible their children might read should they attend a school, or the heresies that could be engendered in nonsectarian "Queen's Colleges" proposed by England in 1846. But the school issue, within the snowballing unity of Catholicism and Irish nationalism, took on greater symbolic importance among more and more Irish Catholics.

Rome, through Cullen and other Irish clerics, was well acquainted with Ireland's larger woes as well as its contentious education question. Pope Pius did not denounce mixed education immediately upon taking office in 1846, but eventually he did just that. It would oversimplify matters, however, to conclude that Pius's pronouncements were part of a papal invasion cloaked in Irish nationalist rhetoric. Cullen, a longtime friend of Pope Pius, had for years provided Rome with news of Irish religious strife. MacHale, the Church's most popular representative in Ireland, had left no doubt about his views on mixed education. And Kenrick, who appears to have exercised influence in Rome both through Cullen and in his own right[94], likely communicated to Rome the conditions surrounding the Philadelphia riots sparked by Catholic education.[95] In sum, Pius's

pronouncement against mixed education did not add to the list of English Protestant institutions against which Irish Catholics were ordered to resist as much as it formalized resistance already evident in numerous other areas.

Cullen, immediately after his consecration as Bishop of Armagh, acted on Rome's formal grant of authority to call a national council, or synod. At the Synod of Thurles, held in September 1850, the Irish hierarchy approved regulations designed to give the Church greater uniformity throughout the country. The rules concerned the powers and duties of bishops and priests, as well as the form and situs of the sacraments.[96] The synod also resolved "that the separate education of [C]atholic youth is, in every way, to be preferred to [mixed education]." Noting that in England the British government had provided aid to separate Catholic schools, the Irish bishops demanded the same for Ireland.[97] Whenever Catholic children attended a school conducted by Protestants, the bishops resolved, at least one Catholic schoolmaster should be present in the school; and whenever Catholic children made up a majority of the pupils, the headmaster should be a Catholic. The bishops decreed that they alone would judge books used for the religious instruction of Catholic children.[98]

Implicit in these demands was the belief on the part of Cullen and other Irish bishops that they had sufficient lay and clerical backing to prevent the government from giving money to aid Protestant education without giving similar aid to Catholic schools.[99] The bishops made their preference clear in their synodical address, which was published in several American Catholic newspapers:

> Education, the source of all intellectual life, by which the mind of man is nurtured and disciplined, his principles determined, his feelings nurtured and disciplined, his feelings regulated, his judgments fixed, has been forcibly dissevered from every connection with religion, and made the vehicle of that cold skepticism and heartless indifferentism which have [deluded] and corrupted youth, and, by necessary consequence, shaken to its centre the whole fabric of social life.[100]

The British government's proposed Queen's Colleges, the Irish bishops concluded, would "not fail to carry moral disease and death" to the Catholic value system.[101] Emphasizing the strength to be gained through Roman Catholicism, the Irish prelates noted that Pope Pius IX drew on the authority of Saint Peter, to whom had been given the "'keys to the Kingdom.'" Pius, the bishops said, had denounced mixed education as fraught with "'grievous and intrinsic dangers,'" and the tool of "modern enemies of religion and human society, with a most diabolical spirit."[102]

Murray's minority contingent of bishops, having failed to carry a more moderate stand, appealed to Rome to reject the synod's resolutions.[103] But Cullen also lobbied Rome, telling Pius that "the real question to be decided is whether one ought or ought not to obey the decisions of the Holy See; whether the Pope ought to rule the Church in Ireland through the majority of the bishops, or whether, on the other hand, the English government ought to rule it" through Dublin's Bishop Murray.[104] Cullen, clearly, was concerned that the Irish Church follow Rome's leadership. But even his dedicated ultramontanism appears to have been grounded partly in respect for Rome and partly in opposition to England. Cullen, like his former assistant in Rome and like the mass of Irish Catholics, objected most to the notion of Ireland again being laid prostrate at the "feet of her ancient enemies."

In contrast to Pope Gregory's wavering in 1840, Pope Pius quickly confirmed the decrees of Thurles.[105] He disapproved of the separation of religious and general education and stated that the laity should not have a voice in education matters[106] -- a restriction that would seem to confirm charges that the Catholic clergy were overly authoritarian. But, given that the biggest concern for Irish lay Catholics was expelling English influence, not designing an education curriculum, Pius's restriction on lay rights is almost superflous. His first point, that religious and general education should be kept

united, would enjoy clerical and lay support, regardless of the poor prospects for erecting schools in Famine-era Ireland. Taken as a whole, the Irish Church's declaration against mixed education and religious education separated from literary instruction, and Pope Pius's support for clerical leadership in education, laid out a blueprint for Irish Catholic society. The new society would include a more explicit rejection of English Protestant influences in society, and an explicit cooptation of modernizing influences -- schools, for example -- affecting the Irish Catholic community.

V - Linking Irish-American Catholicism to the Schools

As the Catholic Church surged into greater prominence in Ireland and Irish schools, the flood of Irish immigrants in America prompted a tangential crisis in the American Catholic Church, while bringing to a head the question of Catholic education. The Famine emigration depopulated Ireland, leaving the Irish Catholic Church with fewer individuals dependent upon its charity and religious services, but greater explicit attachment to the Church institution. In America, the Famine-era wave of immigrants boosted the American Catholic Church's membership tremendously, while giving the Irish numerical dominance of both the hierarchy and the laity. Accompanying this rise in numerical strength was a noticeably different worldview of militant Catholicism and Irish nationalism.

The Catholic Church's controversies over missionaries, lay trustees, and schools had revealed some ethnic tension, but even non-Irish clerics had condemned Protestant oppression of Catholicism in Ireland. But when they did so, they revealed anti-English sentiments acceptable in America, not anti-Protestant feelings that would have been attacked. Americans could agree that the United States' independence and distinction from England was to be applauded. In commemorating this separation, however, Americans frequently overlooked the cultural ties between the two nations. Whether the

American Catholic hierarchy drew these distinctions with special care not to offend American Protestants or out of true conviction, it condemned anti-Catholicism in America by portraying England, not Ireland, Rome, or Protestantism, as the foreign influence dangerous to America.

In March 1845, not long after the Philadelphia anti-Irish Catholic riots, the *United States* (Baltimore) *Catholic Magazine* published an article entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation," which focused almost entirely on Daniel O'Connell's appeals for political equality. O'Connell's argument, despite having limited utility in Ireland, had great rhetorical value in America, where political expression entailed more tangible rights. A second article in the *Magazine*, "Ireland and the Irish," recounted episodes of English domination, again in a manner intended to rekindle American anti-English sentiments. Deploring an "overweening partiality for England and for every thing English," the article questioned America's true independence from England: "Have we entirely shaken off [England's] yoke? . . . or are we not, on the contrary, still the unconscious slaves of English prejudice?"[107] In essence, the newspaper tried to garner sympathy for Irish-Catholics by draping their opponents, in both Ireland and America, under a Union Jack.

Was the Church simply mimicking nativists, who had scorned Irish Catholics' slavery beneath the Pope and foreign ecclesiastics, or was it saying something more? The emerging desire for Catholic separatism suggests the latter. As noted in connection with the Philadelphia and New York school riots, the heart of the question of Irish Catholicism's compatibility with America was whether the meaning of American freedom could be altered. Advocates of a single common school, a single curriculum, and a single Bible held the conviction that institutional unity was a foundation stone of American strength. Supporters of separate schools for certain groups of Americans held

the conviction that freedom from state interference, freedom to believe differently from the majority, and, implicitly, the *freedom to maintain one's own separate community* was a fundamental tenet of America, and not a principle at odds with American strength. Opposition to this type of freedom, the Catholic Church essentially argued, established one as the "unconscious slave of English prejudice."

By the late 1840s, however, the debate over who was enslaved to what became more onesided, as Catholicism and Irish became increasingly interchangeable terms and both terms became associated with poverty and backwardness. About 50,000 Irish immigrants arrived in the United States in 1845. By 1848 (the third year of the Famine) that figure had tripled. And in 1851 Irish emigration to the United States peaked at 219,232.[108] The American Catholic Church estimated that the number of Catholics in the country more than doubled during the Famine years: from 811,800 in 1845 to 1,844,000 in 1855.[109] The great majority of this one million increase were Irish.

The Irish Catholic Church, meanwhile, stepped up its missionary ambitions, sending hundreds of priests to the United States on the heels of the Famine exodus. The American Catholic clergy numbered 709 in 1845 and 1,728 in 1855.[110] In fact, the influx of Irish priests was so large and so sudden that the Catholic Church's national directory, *The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory*, published in 1850 not only a listing of the American clerical body, but a parish-by-parish listing of Catholic clergy in Ireland.[111] From familiar accents and names to guidance in settling in American cities, the Catholic Church was establishing informal and formal ties between its American and Irish branches.

The Irish onslaught in America, clearly not welcomed by non-Catholics, was also hardly greeted happily by the fast-shrinking minority of non-Irish in the Catholic Church. The (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, while publishing detailed accounts of the Catholic

Church's activities in Ireland, printed a letter from a paid pewholder in one of Baltimore's parish churches who complained that new, poor parishioners, mere "counterfeits of humanity," should "be required to [pay] their share of the burden" of church upkeep.[112] An immigrant unable to pay for a seat in a pew complained that those "who had the largest purs [sic] and the finest garment may sit next to God," while the poor were relegated to the aisles or the doorway.[113] Although generalizing about Irish immigrants from this one episode is risky, it is noteworthy that the pewholder's characterization of his fellow Catholic is not far from that offered by the Philadelphia nativist press during the school Bible riots. Moreover, the immigrant's complaint was against the church that would elevate the rich above the poor at least as much as it was against the rich pewholder.

Aware of the shifting character of its laity, the Catholic hierarchy shifted its approach from one emphasizing American legal rights and Daniel O'Connell to one emphasizing the more vital conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. By 1849, Pius was in his third year as Pope and, in the wake of a series of European revolutions, was developing more rigidly anti-Protestant views. In Ireland, O'Connell's voice of moderation died with him. The American Catholic Church, with Irish immigrants standing in the aisles, moved to take formal steps intended to foster an institution closer in its consistency to its Irish counterpart.

The bishops at the Provincial Council of 1846 remained mute on educational matters[114], probably because the issue had become so volatile, both within the Church and between the Church and the American public. Ignoring the issue hardly caused it to disappear. Disputes arose in New Orleans in 1850[115] and Baltimore between 1849 and 1852.[116] Moreover, twin catalysts, the force of Irish immigration and the persistence of

the education reform movement, compelled the American Catholic Church to come to grips with the issue, to present a unified response.

During the twenty years preceding the flood of Irish Catholic immigrants to America, and before the common school accumulated its multitude of purposes, the American Catholic Church had suggested that parents were primarily responsible for educating their children.[117] But by midway through the Famine immigration, the makeup of the Church had changed significantly. The Catholic parents the Church had addressed during the 1820s or 1830s were far more likely to have rudimentary reading and writing skills that could be passed on to their children than were the Irish starved out of their isolated homes. Leaving education to Irish immigrant parents during the 1850s would have brought immigrant children virtually nothing in terms of communication skills or social orientation. The meaning of education, moreover, also had been transformed. Once the cause of a few well-intentioned reformers, public schooling had become an issue over which blood was shed and homes were torched.

American Catholic bishops grew increasingly concerned with the social ramifications of a poverty-stricken laity adrift in society, and grew more belligerent toward evangelistic Protestant reformers who, although perhaps well meaning, had little understanding of the cultural wants of Irish immigrants. Drawing on the words of Ireland's most prominent Catholic, a series of articles appearing in the Catholic press under the pseudonym "Inquirer" ripped into the notion that religious and secular education could be accomplished separately. Nonsectarian public schools, "Inquirer" said, were "'godless,' an epithet which the clear head and bold pen of Archbishop MacHale has appropriately fixed to the government colleges now being erected in Ireland."[118] "Inquirer" continually berated "godless schools," while suggesting that the responsibility for educating children would likely fall to the clergy. Although not

denying parents' rights to instruct their children, Inquirer wrote that "many parents are unwilling or unable to discharge their duty in this respect."[119] The Catholic Church, Inquirer assured his readers, "should and *will* do all in her power to have *Christian* schools, schools bearing her own glorious name, *Catholic*."[120]

"Inquirer's" articles, as well as numerous others appearing in the Catholic press, drew a direct connection between the Irish Ascendancy government's strategies and those of American school reformers. Conditions in the two countries were, obviously, dramatically different: the Irish common school was one of the occupying foreigner's (England's) tools for liquidating Irish society, while the American common school was a tool for neutralizing cultural differences and uniting Americans of divergent backgrounds. But conditions were similar in that attempts by persons outside the Irish Catholic community to alter that community's structure or content, by calm persuasion, cool logic, or brute force, engendered ever greater determination by Irish Catholics to defend what they had. Reluctance to leave Ireland until conditions were absolutely life-threatening, reluctance to leave lice-ridden shacks in American cities for western farmland, and reluctance to leave the traditional social containment of Irish Catholicism were symptoms of a central desire on the part of Irish Catholics to insulate their own communities. Thus, when "Inquirer" blamed the "original sin of Protestantism -- *private opinion*,"[121] for banishing religion from the schools and declared that "[a]uthority is necessary to [religion's] existence"[122], he was not constraining Irish Catholic immigrants as much as he was stating a general truth for them: that authority could preserve the community's existence; and that taking matters into one's own hands was dangerous and treasonous to one's people, if not downright foolish. American Catholic leaders, like their counterparts in Ireland, proved willing to give Irish Catholics a coherent voice. In the fall of 1850, just after the Irish hierarchy finished revamping the Church and its education policy at the Synod of Thurles, which was covered extensively and with

glowing admiration in the American Catholic press[123], New York's Bishop John Hughes delivered "The Decline of Protestantism," a speech predicting not only the inevitable fall of a fractured religion, but the necessity of authority in the face of disintegrating faith. "If [a Protestant] preaches error," Hughes argued, "what right has any authority on earth to rebuke him? He can answer, 'Look at your charter. Is it not the privilege of the Protestant -- is it not my right? By what claim of superiority will you dare to raise your judgment against mine?' Protestantism cannot check infidelity."[124]

Hughes' remarks show, in addition to a shocking amount of cheek, an amazing confidence that Catholics would support him. Effectively, he was confessing that Catholics would accept rebuke, would forsake the privilege of free thought, and would concede superior judgment to another. Every count appears to support the nativists' charge that Irish Catholics were enslaved by foreign ecclesiastics. And yet Irish Catholics backed Hughes, particularly after he absorbed the taunts of Protestant Americans. Irish immigrants thus revealed two principles of their persona: that they would rally around a hero who defended them against outsiders, and that they were a people more in search of communal, cultural confirmation than individual prosperity.

Rome's choice to finally orchestrate the American Catholic Church's formal shift of policy to one tailored to an immigrant laity was Philadelphia's Bishop Kenrick, who had demonstrated a dedication to Roman authority[125] and the ability to deal cooly with outbursts of violence. In eighteen years in Philadelphia, Kenrick oversaw a dramatic increase in number of priests and churches in the city. Not dissuaded by the school Bible riots, he had even initiated the construction of a cathedral.[126] Using methods less flamboyant than those of Bishop Hughes, Kenrick had also revealed his belief that the Church's growth should be extended to education. As Ireland's Bishop Cullen prepared for the Synod of Thurles in 1850, Kenrick briefed him on American bishops' failure to

heed Rome's denunciation of mixed education[127] and suggested the importance of education in the American and Irish wings of the Church.

Rome signalled its support for Kenrick's methods and convictions when it transferred him from Philadelphia to Baltimore and gave him authority to preside over the country's first national council. In Ireland, the response to Kenrick's appointment was favorable. Hugh O'Brien Clinche, who had supervised schools for poor Catholics in Ireland, wrote Kenrick that he found his "strength of body and mind refreshed in considering what great advantage to the Cause of our Holy Religion among the Irish Catholic Nation in the United States of America is likely to come of the Advancement of Your Lordship in the Government of the Churches of that extensive Commonwealth." According to Clinche, Kenrick's "guidance of the Irish Catholic People on the other side, and on this side of the Ocean," had been a valuable asset to Irish Catholicism.[128]

Shortly after Kenrick assumed the helm in Baltimore, the diocese's official voice, the *Catholic Mirror*, was placed in the hands of a new editor and published two lengthy editorials explaining the need for a Catholic university in Ireland. The *Mirror* denounced the religious inadequacy of the Ascendancy government's proposed Queen's Colleges, calling the institutions "mere decoys, places of irreligion." The *Mirror* also pointed out that the "hostile [English] government" controlled the colleges. The *Mirror's* use of the word "decoy" is particularly insightful in this discussion, for Irish Catholics had placed their hopes in numerous English decoys, only to have those hopes dashed. Coupling "irreligion" with "decoys" rekindled in Irish Catholics' minds the notion that departure from Ireland's Catholic roots in pursuit of government-sponsored education was wrong and could put them at the feet of their enemies. And, as if there was any doubt that Irish Catholics would fail to appreciate the Church's importance on both sides of the Atlantic,

the *Mirror* added that "[t]he Catholic world can point to Ireland as a powerful witness of the incorruptibility of divine truth."[129]

On the eve of the Baltimore Plenary (national) Council of 1852, Dublin's Archbishop Cullen wrote Kenrick with the hope that "[t]he proceedings of your first national council will . . . produce most beneficial results." He then hinted that the American prelates would be wise to follow the strong positions taken two years earlier at the Synod of Thurles and that firming up the Church's transatlantic connections would benefit both Irish and American Catholics. "Decent and frequent communication upon [emigrants] and other important matters between the Prelates of the two Countries where their interests are common, might be the means of impeding many of the evils, to which our poor exiles are subjected while flying from their native land."[130]

When the first Plenary Council was held in 1852, the American hierarchy dealt with the education issue directly for the first time in fifteen years. The Council, led by Kenrick, Hughes, and other Irish-American bishops, forged the American Church's first unambiguous declaration of support for separate education. A committee of theologians directed by the council to study the education issue reported "[t]hat considering the lamentable evils which follow from the frequentation of the schools in which no impressions of true religion are made upon the mind of youth, the establishment of parochial schools is indispensible for the security of faith and morals among Catholic Children."[131] This much had been said before, by Catholics as well as Protestants. But the committee went further, emphasizing the distinctiveness that the Catholic community would maintain in the schools: it specified that Catholic schools would not admit non-Catholic children and would be conducted by teachers approved by the pastor. Although the American Catholic Church's earlier conversion of prominent intellectual Orestes Brownson had reflected an institution eager to reach out to non-Catholic Americans, its

decisions to exclude non-Catholic children from its schoolrooms and to vest priests with authority over the schools confirmed the dramatic philosophical change engendered by Irish immigration.

While Famine conditions had emboldened the Catholic Church in Ireland to challenge English power on a broad level, the flood of Irish immigrants in America persuaded the Church hierarchy that stricter clerical control was desirable and necessary. The Council's education committee supported throwing the school net around not only recent immigrants likely to support the Church's institutions in any event, but also those American Catholics tempted to break ranks and send their children to public schools: the theologians recommended that parents with children in state schools withdraw them from those institutions on the penalty of being denied the sacraments.[132]

When one considers the relatively restrained approach toward education by previous councils, the American bishops' 1852 resolutions take on a clearly evident Irish Catholic color. That reflection was confirmed in the bishops' pastoral letter issued at the conclusion of the council. The letter urged that no sacrifice be spared in erecting Catholic schools and once again recalled the hero role in Catholic Ireland. After citing Pope Pius's encyclical letter supporting separate education, the American bishops stated:

> We are following the example of the Irish Hierarchy, who are courageously opposing the introduction of a system based on the principle which we condemn, and who are now endeavoring to unite religious with secular instruction of the highest order, by the institution of a Catholic University -- an undertaking in the success of which we necessarily feel a deep interest, and which, as having been suggested by the Sovereign Pontiff, powerfully appeals to the sympathies of the whole Catholic world.[133]

Shortly after the American council concluded, Paul Cullen, who had recently replaced the deceased Daniel Murray as the Archbishop of Dublin, took evident pleasure in informing Ireland's Catholics of the American developments. Passing on to them the American council's resolutions on education, Cullen emphasized that, led by their

"distinguished countryman, the Archbishop of Baltimore," the American bishops "[confirmed] to us the fact that what is called mixed education, or education without religion, has been to thousands of Catholics in America, the occasion of irreparable ruin."[134] He then provided the following statement from Kenrick:

> The fathers of the council have charged me to express to your grace, their deep sympathy with the Irish hierarchy, in the great struggle in which they are engaged, to preserve the growing youth from religious indifference . . . The children of Catholic parents, who frequent the public schools of this country in which this system prevails, insensibly imbibe the errors of their teachers, who, in affecting to avoid distinctive doctrines, sap the foundations of faith, and dispose their pupils to indulge religious indifference. Since this happens in a state in which all interference with the religious convictions of the children is disclaimed, and even forbidden by law, the danger is manifestly greater where there is no such provision. We rejoice, then, that the Irish bishops, under the guidance of your Grace, and the encouraging patronage of the Holy See, are determined to guard the youth of their country against the dangers inherent in the system of mixed education.[135]

V - Conclusion

The meeting of minds in 1852 between Bishops Kenrick and Cullen evidenced the Catholic Church's ability to bridge the distance between Ireland and America, between the Old World and the New. But even those two men, who were deeply convinced that Catholicism was a vital part of Irish culture, would have agreed that the school policy formalized by the American and Irish branches of the Church was the product of significantly different events transpiring in both countries. The most important single development was the decimation of traditional Irish culture, which had been closely associated with Catholicism in terms of social philosophy, belief in a hierarchy, and its view of outsiders.

Catholics in Ireland had endured generations of brutal poverty and oppression. The nineteenth century, however, saw an unprecedented burst in the Irish population, followed quickly by the onset of unprecedented starvation. With that starvation came massive emigration and social disintegration. One of the few native institutions left

standing during the decline was the Catholic Church, which was able to capture what was left of Irish culture and to rise to greater strength than ever. Catholicism did not promise its adherents material rewards and did not demand of them material proof of grace bestowed by God. Instead, it preached the importance of maintaining community cohesion and sustaining solidarity behind distinctly Irish Catholic leaders.

Like many of the world's religions, Irish Catholicism revealed a mixture of religious doctrine bestowed from above and the need for social confirmation generated from below. This interplay of social leadership and social needs ricocheted from Famine-stricken Ireland into a youthful United States. There, Irish Catholics' social needs were not eliminated, but they did find new forms of expression. In Ireland, for example, the traditional, native, Catholics culture had been so beaten down by 1845 that Irish Catholics resented countless modernizing influences, so many of which had been forced upon them by Protestant England, never producing the gains promised by England and often producing greater misery. In the United States, on the other hand, Irish Catholic immigrants were greeted by demands that they abandon their culture and their values at America's doorstep. Not that a culture based on stasis was not illsuited to Jacksonian America; it most assuredly was. America was growing stronger and Americans were believing as much as ever that their nation had a special mission, one of democracy, freedom, and prosperity. In this American society, Irish Catholics did take advantage of the freedoms they were offered, but in ways different than those expected -- sometimes demanded -- by America.

Irish Catholics suffering through overpopulation and the Great Famine had been forced to stand by while landlords exported food from their country. The English-backed government prevented them from seriously challenging their miserable conditions. But in America, when Irish Catholics were challenged -- by nativists denouncing the Catholic

Church and its school policy, for example -- they could fight back, both with violence of their own and with construction of their own community. In Ireland, there was no escaping discrimination imposed by the government and constraints imposed by traditional society. Departing from the local extended family or Catholic community carried the subtle taint of conceding to England. In America, these pressures and constraints were renewed, but in a system that could support a measure of separatism. Americans did not welcome Irish Catholic separatism; to the contrary, they saw it as a sore that refused to heal. But America was resilient enough to survive the influx, and the Catholic Church in America was strong enough to absorb it.

From their positions on opposite sides of the Atlantic, the Irish Catholic Church and the Irish-American Catholic Church demonstrated an ability to strengthen one another in ways more subtle than money sent from America or missionaries sent from Ireland. When Irish Catholic bishops like Paul Cullen or John MacHale cited the accomplishments of "distinguished countryman" such as Francis Kenrick and John Hughes, they mirrored thousands of Irish laymen who bragged about the success of their sons or daughters in America. But even beyond this usage of Irish-American advancements, the Irish Church could argue truthfully that, in America, education without religion threatened Irish culture as the Irish knew it.

And on the American side, the Catholic Church, both laity and clergy, could, for once, draw upon the philosophical leadership of Ireland without suffering all the social limitations present there. In America, an Irish Catholic could respect the leadership of the Irish bishops acting under the "encouragement of the Holy See." He could take heart in the Church's erection of its own social institutions without the interference of the state. He could, despite the poor physical conditions surrounding him, hold some sense of achievement, of independence, of freedom. This is not to suggest that Irish Catholics

were permanently bound to finding expression of their freedom in their Church. Quite to the contrary, an Irish-American Catholic could, with much fewer inhibitions than his countryman in Ireland, disregard the Church's social leadership. In America, that would mean cutting himself off from a large part of his society, but it would not entail casting himself into social limbo or complete social ostracism.

The important point is that Irish Catholic immigrants, like so many other immigrants in America, experienced freedoms and pressures to erect a community that responded to their needs and ambitions. That community confirmed Irish Catholics' heritage, while still leaving outlets for them to redefine their future as Irish-Americans. It has been suggested that an ethnic group's strength is evidenced not so much in its ability to transmit its values to others, but in its continual reproduction of its characteristics within American society.[136] Irish Catholics demonstrated the extent to which that reproduction is the product of not only an ethnic group's makeup, but the American institutions surrounding it.

Table 1[1]

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AMERICA

	Laity	Priests in Ministry	Churches
1840	600,000*	399	454
1845	811,800	709	675
1850	1,233,330	973	1,073
1855	1,844,000	1,556	1,824

Table 2[2]

IRISH EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

1845 50,207	1851 219,232
1846 68,023	1852 195,801
1847 118,120	1853 156,970
1848 151,003	1854 111,095
1849 180,189	1855 57,164
1850 184,351	

/1/ This table is a compilation of figures reported in the *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory*, 1840-1855.

/2/ *Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems, 1948-1954: Majority Report* (Irish Ministry for Social Welfare, 1954), pp. 309-311, quoted in Arnold Schrier, *Ireland and the Emigration, 1850-1900* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), p. 157.

* The 1845 edition of the *Catholic Almanac* noted that previous estimates of America's Catholic lay population (which had ranged over 1,000,000) may have been excessive. I arrived at my estimate for 1840 by treating the Church's 1845 figure as roughly accurate, and then subtracting for immigrants who arrived in the United States between 1840 and 1845.

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This collection of letters includes the correspondence of a number of clergymen with individuals at the Irish College in Rome. According to historians Vincent P. Lannie and Bernard C. Diethorn, the originals are at the Irish College, but handwritten copies were made by F. Kittle and later printed in the *American Catholic Historical Society Records* (1896-1898). The bulk of the correspondence is between Kenrick and Cullen. Vincent P. Lannie, Bernard C. Diethorn, "For the Honor and Glory of God: The Philadelphia Bible Riots of 1840," *History of Education Quarterly* 8 (Spring 1968): 96.

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73. Benson, *Concept,* p. 119.

74. Burns, *Principles*, p. 375.

75. For examples of the argument that Hughes acted pragmatically and was forced into a separatist position, see: Henry J. Browne, "Public Support of Catholic Education in New York, 1825-1842: Some New Aspects," *Historical Records and Studies of the United States Catholic Historical Society*, 41 (New York: U.S. Catholic Historical Society, 1953): 14-41; F. Michael Perko, S.J., ed., *Enlightening the Next Generation: Catholics and Their Schools, 1830-1980*, Vincent P. Lannie, "The End is the Beginning" (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), pp. 1-14; Neil G. McCluskey, S.J., *Catholic Education Faces Its Future*, (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1969), p. 55. But also see Thomas J. McAvoy, "The Formation of the Catholic Minority in the United States, 1820-1860." *Review of Politics*, 10:24-26 (January 1948), for an argument that Hughes led "the first great manifestation of a foreign nationalism in the American church." McAvoy concludes that Hughes "set back the progress of the Irish immigrant at least a generation . . . ."

76. Montgomery, "Shuttle and the Cross," p. 432.

77. Cullen to Kenrick, Rome, 21 January 1843, AAB Kenrick Papers, 28-S-2.

78. Arnold Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigraiton, 1850-1900* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), p. 63.

79. Cullen to Kenrick, Rome, 21 January 1843, AAB Kenrick Papers, 28-S-2.

80. Meiring, *Educational*, p. 96.

81. Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger* (New York: Old Town Books, 1962), pp. 28-35.

82. *Census of Ireland, 1901*, quoted in Schrier, *Ireland*, Tables 2 and 3, p. 158.

83. Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 195-196, 280-286.

84. Miller, *Emigrants*, p. 283.

85. Woodham-Smith, *Great*, p. 58.

86. Woodham-Smith, Great, p. 110.

87. Woodham-Smith, *Great*, p. 77.

88. Larkin, *Historical*, p. 83.

89. Cullen to Kenrick, 9 December 1833, Rome, AAB Kenrick Papers, 28-R-3.

90. Larkin, *Making*, p. 211.

91. David W. Miler, "Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine," *Journal of Social History*, IX, no. 1 (Fall 1975): 81-98.

92. Cullen to Kenrick, 11 December 1841, Rome, AAB Kenrick Papers, 28-S-1.

93. Kirby to Kenrick, 28 June 1845, Rome, AAB Kenrick Papers, 30-I-4.

94. Larkin, *Making*, p. 257.

95. Kirby to Kenrick, 28 June 1845, Rome, AAB Kenrick Papers, 30-I-4.

96. Connolly, *Priests*, p. 72.

97. Akenson, *Education*, p. 255.

98. Akenson, *Education*, p. 256.

99. Akenson, *Education*, p. 256.

100. (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, 12 October 1850, p. 321; *Pittsburgh Catholic*, 19 October 1850, pp. 249-250; (Cincinnati) *Catholic Telegraph*, 16 November 1850, pp. 2-

3; *Boston Pilot*, 12 October 1850, pp. 5-6; and (New York) *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*, 12 October 1850, pp. 2-3.

101. (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, 12 October 1850, p. 321.

102. (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, 12 October 1850, pp. 321-322.

103. Whyte, *Political*, p. 9.

104. Whyte, *Political*, p. 10.

105. Keenan, *Catholic*, p. 208.

106. Larkin, *Making*, p. 35.

107. (Baltimore) *Catholic Magazine*, April 1845, p. 208.

108. *Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems 1948-1954: Majority Report* (Ireland Ministry for Social Welfare), quoted in Schrier, *Ireland*, Table 1, p. 157.

109. *The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory*, 1845 ed., p. 185; *Catholic Almanac*, 1855 ed., p. 258.

110. *Catholic Almanac*, 1845 ed., p. 185; *Catholic Almanac*, 1855 ed., p. 258.

111. *Catholic Almanac*, 1850 ed., p. 253.

112. *Catholic Mirror*, 25 May 1850, p. 165.

113. Thomas Spalding, *The Premier See: A History of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1789-1989* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989) p. 160.

114. Meiring, *Educational*, p. 116.

115. (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, 1 June 1850, p. 172.

116. McCormick, *Church-State Relationships in Education in Maryland* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1942), pp. 169-184.

117. Akenson, *Education*, p. 11; "Address to Parents, on the Religious Education of Their Children," (Baltimore) *Catholic Magazine*, January 1842, p. 18.

118. (Baltimore) *Catholic Magazine*, 15 September 1849, p. 585. These articles are not the unambiguous proclamations of a provincial council, but their appearance in four major Catholic newspapers--the (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, the (Charleston, South Carolina) *Catholic Miscellany*, the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, and the (New York) *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*--suggests that the new position enjoyed official support.

119. (Baltimore) *Catholic Magazine*, 13 October 1849, p. 648.

120. (Baltimore) *Catholic Magazine*, 13 October 1849, p. 649.

121. (Baltimore) *Catholic Magazine*, 20 October 1849, p. 665.

122. (Baltimore) *Catholic Magazine*, 24 November 1849, p. 747.

123. The Irish hierarchy's actions on education at the Synod of Thurles was reported in the (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, the (Charleston) *Catholic Miscellany*, the (Cincinnati) *Catholic Telegraph*, and the (New York) *Freeman's Journal*.

124. (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, 30 November 1850, pp. 377-378.

125. McAvoy, *Clergyman*, p. 13; Kenrick to Cullen, 20 March 1834, Philadelphia, PAA, ICC.

126. Kirlin, *Catholicity*, pp. 343, 350.

127. Cullen to Kenrick, 5 July 1850, Rome, AAB Kenrick Papers, 28-T- 2.

128. Clinche to Kenrick, 16 October 1851, Dublin, AAB Kenrick Papers, 28-G-6.

129. (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, 15 May 1852, p. 157.

130. Cullen to Kenrick, 19 April 1852, Dublin, AAB Kenrick Papers, 28-T-4.

131. Meiring, *Educational*, p. 137.

132. Meiring, *Educational*, p. 140.

The number of Catholics attending recently established public schools at this time is hard to determine. The *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory* for 1847 indicates that fewer than 450 children attended schools affiliated with the Church in Philadelphia. The *Almanac's* listings for two schools offering instruction in "classical" and mathmatical subjects do not include the number of pupils. The *Almanac* stated that "Sunday schools" offering Christian instruction attracted from 300 to 1,000 individuals in each of the diocese's half dozen parishes. *Metropolitan Almanac*, 1847, p. 173. By 1852, the *Almanac* no longer indicated the existence of the two "classical" schools, but stated that parochial free schools offering "all the branches of a plain English eduction" had been established "in most of the parishes in the city of Philadelphia, and many of the county parishes." *Metropolitan Almanac*, 1852, p. 84.

Although these figures do not disclose how many Catholics attended non-Catholic schools, they do suggest that before the Church committed itself to separate schools in 1852, thousands of children went without any education, while a relatively small core of children attended school regularly. After the Church made that commitment, it shifted its focus from academies for the better off and to parish schools operated out of church basements. It is not unreasonable to suspect that the parents of the children who had previously attended the Church's schools -- particularly its "classical schools" -- placed their children in private institutions or public schools rather than send them to new parish schools.

133. McCluskey, *Educational*, p. 81.

134. (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, 28 August 1852, pp. 276-277.

135. (Baltimore) *Catholic Mirror*, 28 August 1852, pp. 276-277.

136. Olivier Zunz, "The Genesis of American Pluralism," *The Tocqueville Review*, 9 (1987/1988): 213.

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